

Bringing Home the Harvest

Newsletter of Rural Roots:
The Inland Northwest Community Food Systems Association

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“No New Round, We’ll Hold Our Ground”

Thousands Rally in Seattle for Family Farms and Food Security

By Bonnie Rice, Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network

On December 2nd, thousands of people from across the world came together for “Food and Agriculture Day” civil society events associated with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial in Seattle. Food and Agriculture Day was a huge celebration of family farms and local food systems. The day began with a wonderful farmer-to-farmer organic breakfast; farmers from many countries came together to share the bounty of Western Washington farms. Much of the food for the breakfast was grown, prepared and donated by the farmers of Vashon Island. Following the breakfast, a press briefing educated many in the media about the WTO’s adverse effects on independent family farmers, rural culture and communities, and the ability of countries to grow food for their own consumption.

Several panels of internationally recognized experts and activists at the United Methodist Church spoke passionately and eloquently against the WTO and the export-oriented, corporate agriculture model that WTO policies promote. Speakers from country after country said the same: Trade and investment policies of the WTO and other institutions such as the World Bank are destroying small farmers around the world. These policies seriously threaten the ability of countries to ensure a safe, secure food supply for their people and the public’s right to know how food is produced.

On the positive side, a highlight of the morning panels was the Northwest regional perspective and examples of innovative local food systems initiatives given by Anne Schwartz, President of Washington Tilth Producers (a state-wide association of organic and sustainable farmers). Community Supported Agriculture, farmers’ markets and institutional support for small farms and sustainable agriculture are all growing significantly in the Northwest, and many exciting new partnerships are being formed.

At noon, the crowd spilled onto the street and marched to Victor Steinbrueck Park near Seattle’s Pike Place Market,

joining up with several thousand others from all walks of life – labor, environmentalists, religious groups, human rights activists and others – to rally for family farms and local food systems. Ralph Nader, Jim Hightower, Vandana Shiva, French farmer Jose Bove and other activists and experts on the corporatization of agriculture led the rally. It was truly an inspiring event and proved to the world that people everywhere are concerned about the effects of globalization, and that they care deeply about their food source and their ability to obtain food produced in a sustainable manner by independent, family farmers.

Following the rally, a thousand people marched north to the large grain elevator (built with public tax dollars) leased by giant grain trader Cargill, to protest Cargill’s policies and the many recent agribusiness mergers (including Cargill/Continental), which have contributed to the demise of family farmers around the world. Others participated in several workshops designed to keep the international dialogue and organizing among farmers and other activists going beyond the WTO Ministerial.

(Many of the panel speeches from Food and Agriculture Day are available on the Internet at <http://www.wtowatch.org>)

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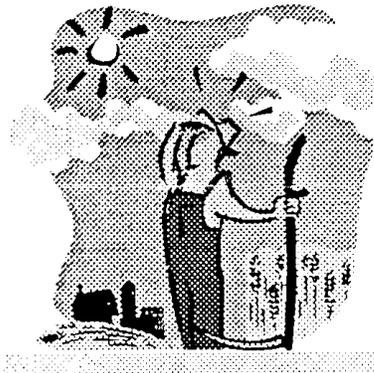
Progress on the Inland Northwest Marketing and Distribution Cost/Benefit Study

By Steven Peterson

The proposed Inland Northwest Marketing and Distribution study examines the market potential for expanding the production, distribution, and consumption of agriculture products grown in the 5 northernmost counties of Idaho (Benewah, Kootenai, Shoshone, Bonner, and Boundary) and the 4 adjacent counties of Washington (Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Lincoln). The study will examine market potential on the demand side and assess the needs of potential buyers. It will also examine potential on the supply side (farmers and producers) and assess their needs as well. The study will conduct cost/benefit analysis on proposed improvements of the region's infrastructure. The study will also assess the economic impact of keeping food dollars local.

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The proposal is nearing completion. The Marketing and Distribution study advisory committee met by phone the week of January 31st to discuss the draft before putting it into final form. If you have any questions or would like to receive a copy of the proposal, contact Steven at stevenp@uidaho.edu or 208-885-6611.



Country Life & Farm Expo in Spokane

What: The new, Country Life & Farm Expo is designed to meet the needs of small-scale farmers and rural property owners.

When: Friday - Sunday, March 24 - 26, 2000. Show Hours: Friday — 12 noon to 8 p.m.; Saturday — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: The Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds and Expo Center

How: The Expo will feature over 200 exhibitors and live demonstrations. Educational workshops will be a major part of the show with over 75 one-hour seminars presented over the course of the three day event. Topics for these seminars include: organic pest management, herb production, organic certification, woodlot management, vegetable production and marketing.

Who: Produced by volunteers of the Ag Bureau of the Spokane Area Chamber of Commerce who have coordinated the Inland Northwest's largest farm equipment show for large-scale producers, the Spokane Ag Expo and Farm Forum. Representatives from University Extension Offices are also involved in the orchestration of the Country Life & Farm Expo.

Additional information: Entrance fee is \$5 per person; 12 and under are free. Parking is free along with shuttle service that will move people around the fairgrounds. In cooperation with WSU Cooperative Extension, the expo will feature a "Farm Safety Camp for Children" to be held on Saturday, March 25. The objective is to provide kids information about small farm safety.

For more information about the show call: Myrna O'Leary, Assistant Show Manager at 509-459-4114, or 1-888-374-EXPO (after Jan. 15). For exhibit booth information call: Chuck Gildersleeve at 509-459-4129.

CODLING MOTH CONTROL USING DEGREE-DAY MODEL AND PHEROMONE TRAPS

By Tonie Fitzgerald, WSU/Spokane County Cooperative Extension Agent

Bringing Home the Harvest is a quarterly newsletter of Rural Roots: The Inland Northwest Community Food Systems Association.

Bringing Home the Harvest shares the knowledge and experience of people working in community food systems and the opportunities and challenges facing small acreage farmers and market gardeners in the Inland Northwest. In addition to sharing information and resources, **Bringing Home the Harvest** helps make connections between producers and consumers in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. It encourages sustainably produced foods, and works to enhance the economic viability of small scale producers and the communities where they live.

Articles for publication and letters to the editors are welcome and must include the name and address of the author. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Rural Roots.

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Correct timing of insecticide sprays (organic or otherwise) is critical in obtaining adequate control of tree fruit pests with a minimum of insecticide usage. For a number of years, apple growers in the Green Bluff area, 15 miles north of Spokane, have been using pheromone traps and degree-day records to help pinpoint the correct timing for codling moth control.

To understand this technique, it is necessary to know the pest's life cycle. Codling moths overwinter as mature larvae in cocoons in sheltered locations on the tree. Moths emerge from the cocoons in early May, which is about when Red Delicious apples are in full bloom. After mating, females lay eggs on or near developing apples. After egg hatch, the larvae find fruit and begin eating their way in. Any spray control is aimed at protecting the fruitlets before the young larvae can burrow in. If a grower does not know when to target spray application, he or she must spray trees frequently in hopes of "catching" the codling moth larvae before they enter the fruit.

In warm temperatures, insects (and other organisms) develop more quickly than in cool temperatures. So, if there is warm weather during and after bloom, codling moth larvae will show up a lot faster than if the weather were to stay cool. Timing a spray to be made 14 days after full bloom, then, is not accurate. It may be too early or too late, depending on the temperatures. If it's done too early, the product may wash off or degrade before the pest shows up. If too late, the larva is already inside the fruit and not affected by the spray.

Accurate timing is possible by measuring degree-days. Degree-days measure insect development based on the heat experienced by that insect rather than on calendar days. Degree-days are calculated by taking the average temperature in a 24-hour period (maximum + minimum temperature divided by 2) minus 50. On a day in which the high temperature is 82 and the low is 52, there would be 17 degree-days recorded. Degree-days are totaled for each 24-hour period and accumulated from a point called BIOFIX. Orchardists mark Biofix as either the date of full bloom in Red Delicious apples or the day when the first codling moth is caught in pheromone traps, which are placed in trees prior to bloom.

When 250 degree-days have accumulated, orchardists apply the first spray for codling moth. Research shows that 250 degree-days is the amount of time, based on the temperature, required for the first codling moth larvae to emerge. That first spray prevents codling moths from eating into the young fruit.

Guthion is the insecticide many orchardists use for codling moth control. A second spray should go on 21 days after the first. This 21-day period is based on the residual property of Guthion. The two cover sprays give 42-day protection against codling moth, which is adequate timing for all of the first generation eggs to hatch. If other insecticide products are used, they may have to be applied more frequently after the first treatment at 250 degree-days, based on the residual properties of that product.

There are normally two generations of codling moths each year. Timing for the 2nd generation (which may come from other areas or from nearby unsprayed trees), occurs at 1250 degree-days. This is when a third cover spray is applied, if needed. In orchards where little pressure exists and where there is no external source, 2 cover sprays adequately control codling moth.

New Marketing Grants Will Support Farmers' and Ranchers' Profit-making Strategies For Sustainable Enterprises

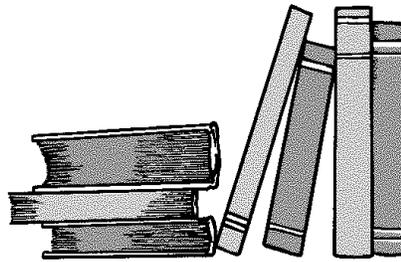
A federal competitive grants effort is being launched to encourage sustainable producers to try new marketing practices that will increase farm and ranch incomes and contribute to thriving rural communities.

U.S. Department of Agriculture partners, the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE) program and the Agricultural Marketing Service, are offering a special call for proposals to producers who reside in the Western U.S. for innovative marketing projects that can benefit individuals and be applied to other agricultural enterprises. **The deadline for grant proposals is March 15, 2000.**

Individuals can apply for grants of up to **\$10,000**; **producer groups** (three or more farm/ranch operations working cooperatively) can apply for up to **\$20,000**. A total pool of \$120,000 is available in the region for the one or two-year grants. The starting date for marketing projects may vary but all work must be completed by December 31, 2002.

Applicants can gather background information, ideas and potential strategies for projects at the Agricultural Marketing Service's Farmer Direct Marketing Internet site at www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing.

To request application materials, contact the Western SARE headquarters office at Utah State University at (435) 797-2257 or wsare@mendel.usu.edu. To request by mail, write to Western SARE, Utah State University, 4865 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-4865. The call for proposals is also available on the Western SARE Web site at <http://wsare.usu.edu/>



Check out the Latest Resources!

“CSA Farms in the United States 1999-2000, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A new partnership between farmers and consumers.” This new publication was compiled by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) and Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) in collaboration with the CSA community. A state by state listing of over 450 community supported agriculture farms across the country. Compiled to provide a source of information on the availability of fresh nutritious food, it serves as a connection between consumer and grower.

“Diversify Crops to Boost Profits and Stewardship” highlights ways for producers to explore new cropping options in response to today's tough economic conditions. This twelve-page, color publication includes farm and ranch diversification strategy examples from producers across the nation and a detailed list of excellent resources.

“Put Your Ideas to the Test: How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch.” A new, 12-page bulletin for farmers, ranchers and extension educators outlines how to conduct research at the farm level. The bulletin offers practical tips for both crop and livestock producers, as well as a comprehensive list of more in depth resources. Real-life examples -- from a Pennsylvania vegetable farmer testing new rotations to a Montana producer experimenting with a

legume called black medic to build soil and prolong pasture -- may stimulate research ideas.

“Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers”, the latest publication from SAN, is focused on marketing. This twenty-page pamphlet is very nicely done and covers all aspects of direct marketing to consumers. It will be of interest to both small acreage farmers and large-scale farmers looking for new niche markets.

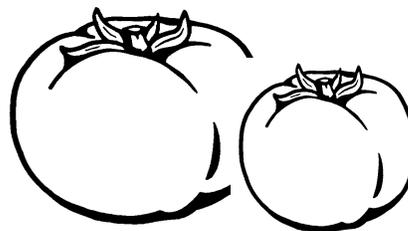
The above publications are all available through the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), a part of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. You may want to check out the SAN/SARE web site at <http://www.sare.org/san/> where you can download an Adobe Acrobat file of these publications for printing. To receive color copies by mail, email SAN at aadeyemi@nal.usda.gov or call 301-504-6422.

“The Legal Guide to Direct Farm Marketing”, by Neil D. Hamilton. Neil is the Director of the Agricultural Law Center at Drake University and author of the nationally award winning book “What Farmers Need to Know About Environmental Law” -- plus, he is a market gardener and an overall nice guy. This book (ring bound, 224 pages) is an eminently readable how-to on everything a farmer needs to know for direct farm marketing. Chapters address issues associated with labor, leasing land, insurance and inspections (as well as a host of other issues). There is also an excellent appendix that provides a state by state list of direct farm marketing resources. The book can also be ordered for \$20 from Drake University Agricultural Law Center -- 515-271-2065 (discounts for bulk orders).



High Tunnel Tomatoes At Crossroad Farm

By Ted Blomgren, Area Extension Educator,
Cornell Cooperative Extension



Crossroad Farm is situated in the Green Mountains, high above the Connecticut River, in Post Mills, Vermont. Tim and Janet Taylor, who started their diversified farm 20 years ago, produce 36 acres of vegetables, about half of which are retailed through their farm stand and at one farmers' market. The farm is in the heart of climate zone 4, where the growing season is a scant 90 days. It's not exactly the kind of country that comes to mind when thinking of tomatoes, especially early in the season, but the Taylor's do a brisk business in tomatoes. And all of them are grown in high tunnels. They have built a reputation on earliness and high quality, which Janet believes helps attract people to their farm stand in the early part of the season.

The Taylor's use gothic-shaped, tubular steel structures with high sides to maximize air-flow through the tunnel. Most of their tunnels measure 14' X 96', and are covered with a single layer of 6 mil greenhouse plastic. The structure is ventilated by means of roll up sides, which are operated manually. The unit is essentially unheated, but a backup heater is in place for particularly cold nights. The ground is covered with 6 mil black plastic to help warm the soil, control weeds, suppress diseases and conserve moisture. A current estimate for the cost of the structure and the labor to erect it is \$1,375; and the cost of the plastic cover and mulch and the irrigation tubing is about \$360.

Raw cow manure is added to the empty greenhouse in the fall, and allowed to compost in place. In addition to this, a 9-45-15 fertilizer is added at planting. They add potassium nitrate at fruiting through their drip irrigation system. The Taylor's set out their first high tunnel tomatoes (six-week old plants grown in 4" pots) in mid-April, and then plant successive structures every week or two, until mid-June, when all eight structures are full. Each tunnel is planted to four rows of tomatoes, spaced about 3.5' apart, and plants are spaced 18" apart within the row. Two lines of drip irrigation are used per row of tomatoes. The tunnels are watered every day, and fertilizer is added using a Dosatron injector.

For the most part, the Taylor's don't prune their tomatoes; instead, they'll remove just the suckers growing at

the ground. They use short stakes and a weave system for trellising in most of their tunnels, and are pleased with the results. In one or two other tunnels, they use strings tied to lengths of re-bar which rest on top of the tunnel's steel trusses. Tomatoes grown in these houses are pruned to one stem. The tomatoes are attached to the strings using clips that are available through greenhouse suppliers. Because fruit loads can be heavy, each tomato truss is individually supported using a plastic "crutch".

The Taylor's have had few insect problems, and they attribute their good fortune to two preventative practices: they allow the structures to freeze deeply every winter, and they produce their own plants. Although they had some problems with early blight and Septoria leaf spot when they produced field-grown tomatoes, the Taylor's have not had problems with diseases inside their tunnels. Soil borne pathogens have also caused minimal losses, despite the fact that tomatoes have been grown continuously in some tunnels for several years (16 years in one case). The Taylor's think that high-quality plants, a healthy soil, good ventilation and use of plastic mulch have all contributed to disease suppression at their farm. As a consequence, they don't use any pesticides.

The first high tunnel harvest gets underway around the third week in June at Crossroad Farm. A single high tunnel will yield 2,500 lb of tomatoes. During each of the past 5 years, the Taylor's have begun the tomato season with a retail price of \$2.40/lb. By mid-August they will drop their price to \$1.80/lb, where it remains for the balance of the year. The wholesale season starts at \$2.00/lb, and gradually drops to \$1.20/lb. They appear to face a good deal of competition from other growers in the area, but nevertheless sell approximately 27,000 lb of tomatoes each year at these prices.

A detailed economic analysis, called Guidelines for Using High Tunnels for Tomato Production, by Otho Wells, is available by calling the Albany Regional Office of Cornell Cooperative Extension (518-462-2553).

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Inland Northwest Harvest: Rural Roots Directory to Producers and Retailers

By Beth Malouf

After some quality brainstorming, the "Directory" now has an official name — Inland Northwest Harvest: Rural Roots Directory to Producers and Retailers. This will be a booklet in which producers who provide information about their operation and pay a small fee can be included. Producers will be asked about what they grow, raise or harvest, how consumers can purchase their goods, and how their practices fit into a mission of sustainability. Retailers who serve as outlets for producers who are listed will be included so that consumers can more easily track down locally produced food and fiber.

Ideally, the directory will be where consumers can look to find out who is producing what, when it's available and where to buy it. The benefits of the directory will hopefully be felt not only in the connections between consumers and producers, but also among producers who can use it to address their common goals and obstacles. This directory will also serve as a way to let people know about Rural Roots and its other activities, possibly encouraging more people to join or support the cause.

The design for the directory is based on the model shared with us by Montana's AERO (Alternative Energy Resources Organization). They have been very helpful in supplying the written materials they used to collect information as well as the database that they used for organizing the directory.

As a pilot project, this year's directory will be limited to the five northern counties of Idaho (Benewah, Kootenai, Shoshone, Bonner, and Boundary) and the adjacent counties of eastern Washington (Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Lincoln). This region corresponds to the area included in the market and distribution cost/benefit study, allowing us to save time and money by using only one survey for both. This will not necessarily be the geographic region we include in future directories, depending on the response to this first attempt.

We hope that producers who are current Rural Roots members will participate in this first year of the directory and help build the foundation for a comprehensive guide to locally produced food and fiber. We also encourage everyone who would like to assist in the development of the directory to join us by contacting Rural Roots at 208/883-3462.

Inland Empire and Idaho Panhandle 2000 Farm Direct Buying Guide Updates

By Cathy Weston

In November and December, we invited producers in the Inland Northwest to list their farms in one of two new farm fresh buying guides. The guides are tri-fold brochures that tell customers how to buy directly from the farm. They include the farm name, contact information, what is grown and how to order. There is also a regional map with approximate farm locations, a seasonal produce/livestock calendar, product reference guide and some reason to support local agriculture.

We have had a positive response to the original invitations and are in the process of set up and lay out for printing. However, we know there are more of you out there and have chosen to **extend the deadline for applications to February 29, 2000**. If you are interested in applying please contact: Cathy Weston @ 208-773-9420 for an application form and or more information. Cost for listing in the guide is \$8.00 for Rural Roots members and \$10.00 for non-members.

Small Acreage Farmer Explores Organic Weed Control Options

by Vickie Parker-Clark, University of Idaho Extension Educator

Weed control is a major challenge for organic growers, especially for warm season crops, such as basil. Small acreage farmers spend a third of their time or more hand weeding and cultivating high value crops. If other methods controlled weeds as well as hand weeding and could save time, small acreage farmers could utilize that additional time for marketing efforts.

In the 1999 growing season, Kootenai County Extension partnered with Barbara Arnold, owner of Nothing But Herbs in Hayden, Idaho, to do on-farm research on organic weed control options for basil. Basil is a warm season annual crop that does not compete well with weeds. We examined four methods: 1) cultivation between the rows and hand weeding within the rows; 2) oat cover crop - mowed; 3) straw mulch throughout the plot; 4) corn gluten broadcast and incorporated before transplanting with a follow-up application within the rows after transplanting.

The entire plot area was rototilled on May 16th. Basil was not transplanted until June 19th. Cold temperatures and rain delayed transplanting. On June 10th, a fairly hard frost occurred.

Cultivation between the rows in the cultivation treatment plots was accomplished with a 3-hp rototiller. Weeds were cultivated/pulled no more than once/week.

The oat cover crop was planted on May 17th, and had grown to 5 inches before the basil was transplanted. The rototiller was used to cultivate out planting strips in the oat cover crop. After transplanting the basil, the oat mulch was kept mowed to a 3 inch height.

The straw mulch was spread after the basil was transplanted. It was approximately 3 inches thick.

The corn gluten was applied at 20 lbs./1000 ft. sq. and incorporated with a rake approximately 20 days before the basil was transplanted. When the basil was finally transplanted, a side dressing of corn gluten was applied.

Cold temperatures and 1 1/2 inches of rain in late June (38 degrees F. on June 25th) and early July slowed basil growth in all plots. Deadheading started on August 25th and damaging frost occurred on September 3rd.

All three rows of each plot were weeded and the time involved recorded. Quality ratings were taken on the middle row of each plot. Yield data was not taken because a hard frost occurred in early September when harvest was just beginning.

Results

- ◆ Cultivating the plots took the least amount of time. However, on a field scale, the grower must hire someone to do the cultivation because she cannot operate the larger equipment needed.
- ◆ Corn gluten was ineffective for controlling any of the weed species. These included lambsquarter, volunteer buckwheat, smart weed, Russian thistle, chickweed, and morning glory. Because of the failure of the corn gluten, we managed these plots as weed mulch plots - the weeds in-between the rows were mowed and the weeds within the rows were hand pulled.
- ◆ Weeding the oat mulch and weed mulch plots took 50% longer than weeding the cultivated plots. The grower liked these options, however, because she could do the weeding herself and thus control weeds when they were small.
- ◆ The quality of the plants in the weed mulch and oat mulch plots appeared to be better than in the other plots. Plants were bigger, and not as many were lost to mechanical damage.
- ◆ Straw mulch plots took the least amount of time to weed, but a 50% seedling loss occurred due to damping off. Soil temperatures under the straw mulch were 3-5 degrees colder than temperatures in the other plots.
- ◆ A large population of aphids occurred in the oat mulch plots, but they did not migrate to the basil. The aphids attracted lady beetles and many egg masses and lady beetle larvae were observed in the oat mulch plots.
- ◆ Barbara indicates that this season she will incorporate the weed mulch and oat mulch methods into her farm plan. Because of the total in-effectiveness of the corn gluten in the experiment (as well as other areas of the farm), we will not include it in this year's trials. We will include other living mulches in trials at her farm this year.



Rural Roots



Inland Northwest Food and Farming Calendar

February 15. **Community Food System workshop**, Spokane WA. For more information, contact Chrys Ostrander at (509) 725-0610 or email at bright@famrc.org

February 25-26. **PNW Farmers' Direct Marketing conference**, Tswwassen BC. For more information, contact John Thompson (509) 653-2589.

March 4. **Third Annual South Central Idaho Small Farm Conference**, Weston Plaza, Twin Falls ID. For more information, contact JoAnn Robbins (208) 788-5585.

March 7-9. **Farming and Ranching for Profit, Stewardship, and Community**. USDA Western SARE conference. Information at <http://wsare.usu.edu/2000> or contact Gina Hashagen at (541) 737-5477.

March 15. **SARE Marketing grants** submission deadline. Information about the grants can be viewed at <http://wsare.usu.edu>

March 24-26. **Country Life and Farm Expo**. For more information, contact John Fouts or Tonie Fitzgerald at WSU Spokane County Extension. (509) 533-2048.

April 1. **Kootenai County Farmers' Market Assoc. Spring meeting**. For more information, contact Barbara Arnold (208) 772-6608.

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