



Regional Networking Meetings (continued)

agriculture. Show off your favorite recipe by bringing something made with local produce or ingredients from your own farm. While the hosts are opening their farms and ranches for your visit, please ensure your own comfort by bringing: a non-alcoholic beverage, place service with silverware, and a chair or seat.

We look forward to seeing you! It will really help us to know if you are coming! Please RSVP by calling (208) 883-3462 or e-mailing kate@ruralroots.org and we will send you directions. Details are available on-line at www.ruralroots.org. Here is more information about the fall meeting sites:

Affinity Farm, Moscow, ID Sept. 9, 2 PM - 5 PM

Hosts Kelly Kingsland and Russell Poe invite you to visit their 5-acre farm located in North Central Idaho where views of Paradise Ridge and Moscow Mountain might be eclipsed by the sight of their nearly weed-free property.

Kingsland admits that the clear fields come with a cost of hard work but pay off with savings in water and time. She and Poe have put the same thoughtful efforts into developing the diversity of their crops so that when people ask what they grow the response is typically "well, we don't grow okra." Any limit to their selection comes as a result of their climate and their region.

With neighbors all around and a close proximity to downtown Moscow, Kingsland realizes that many people watch their work with wonder and it has earned their property the nickname "Fishbowl Farms."

Now it's your turn to see what's going on next door. Visit them Sept. 9 during the first Regional Networking Meeting.

Rocky Ridge Ranch, Reardan, WA Sept. 16, 3 PM - 6 PM

Hosts Gary and So Angell invite you to visit their 400-acre ranch and farm located in Eastern Washington where fields stretch to meet the edges of big sky. The property boasts natural grass-fed beef, free-range poultry, and pastured pigs in addition to its thriving gardens.

Gary, a former RR board member, is breaking new ground this year by expanding his operations into raising heritage breeds of pigs. The imported breeds - the Chinese Meishan and the Austrian Mangalitsa - will join his staple Berkshires.

The Angell's specialties also include growing gourmet Asian garlic which has earned notice for its zesty yet mild flavor that is retained even after cooking. Find out more about this unique farm by stopping by Sept. 16.

Morning Owl Farm, Boise, ID Sept. 30, 3 PM - 6 PM

Host and board member Mary Rohlfing invites you to visit her 8-acre farm located in the Boise Foothills of southern Idaho. Come check out her operations that boast the largest duck egg production in the state. While she pulls in 70 to 90 dozen eggs a week from her 250 ducks, Rohlfing also counts on those flourishing birds to serve a larger role in the system of her farm by eating weeds and pests and fertilizing the nearby pastures.

But the work doesn't end there. The farm houses a greenhouse operation for selling starts as well as a delivery service for members that are a part of the farm's produce CSA, cut flower CSA, or herb CSA. Find out what's next for the farm when you visit Sept. 30.



Serving all of Idaho & the Easternmost Counties of Washington and Oregon

BRINGING HOME THE HARVEST

Rural Roots Quarterly Member Newsletter Volume 9 Number 2 Fall 2007

Member-driven outreach starts on farm

By Kate Baldwin

Beth Rasgorshek loves to talk about food and she isn't afraid to draw her customers into conversations about sustainable agriculture and the mission of Rural Roots.

"They are very receptive to the information," she said. "They just wanted to know that there was someone out there doing work with sustainable agriculture."

As vice president of the board, Rasgorshek wants to get proactive on behalf of Rural Roots. Last spring she appeared in a farmer profile on the Seeds of Change web site located at http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_61/farmer_interview_one.asp. She spoke about being an organic seed farmer in an industry that is organized to support large-scale conventional operations.

Rasgorshek also runs a 6-week stand and greenhouse with gourmet vegetable starts. She used this stand at her Canyon County Farm in Nampa to hold a small fundraising benefit earlier this spring. She put out a roadside reader board and indoor chalk boards over Mother's Day weekend to let people know she would be donating a portion of her weekend sales to Rural Roots.

"Ninety-nine percent of them had never heard of it," she said. "It was really fun to pass along the information."

The project took minimal planning, Rasgorshek said she only had to pick a high traffic weekend and arrange for the materials to arrive in time.

"I had wonderful support from the Rural Roots staff," she said. "They sent down the pamphlets and information I requested."

Rasgorshek passed those materials along to her visitors.

"I tried to give people at least the newsletter and if they were more interested I would give them a membership form," she said.

RR Executive Director Colette DePhelps was amazed when she found out about Rasgorshek's initiative.

"It'd be great if other members would do some more fundraisers," she said. "It would really allow us to do more impromptu programming and to respond to issues faster".

DePhelps explained that the donated money from this event fills a special niche in the budget because it can be used in more ways than typical grants funds, which are encumbered to specific projects.

"It's fantastic," she said.

This sort of positive response has led Rasgorshek to concoct another fundraising event with the help of member Janie Burns. They plan to hold a garden-themed yard sale this coming spring. They will sell donated farm equipment like hand tools and seed that they no longer use. Rasgorshek believes this type of fundraiser links more people together and offers an easier way for members to get involved.

"Not everyone is comfortable with giving over a percentage of their sales. That's just hard, which I understand," she said. "But if we do (hold a fundraiser) with items we no longer use, I thought that would be great."

Rasgorshek said non-profit organizations like Rural Roots are dependent on having healthy, active memberships. Since different members have different strengths, she said each individual can decide the best way to get involved.

"The notion is that this is what some other growers could do if they wanted to," she said.

RURALroots
healthy food healthy communities

PO Box 8925, Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 883-3462

www.ruralroots.org

Regional Networking Meetings

Celebrate the harvest with Rural Roots! Save the date to spend an afternoon with your fellow farmers, ranchers and neighbors in our new version of the Rural Roots annual meeting.

At your request, we have altered the format to make this meeting more convenient and accessible. Instead of holding one annual meeting, members are invited to attend a regional networking meeting in:

Moscow - Sept. 9

Reardan - Sept. 16

Boise - Sept. 30

Idaho Falls - Winter '08, date TBA

Each location will host a potluck where you can meet and network with other Rural Roots members and supporters of local food and sustainable

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Rasgorshek promotes Rural Roots among her customers at Canyon Bounty Farm in Nampa.

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The Scientist Shepherd

By Kate Baldwin

Board member Craig Madsen is ready to test his goats' ability to wipe out leafy spurge - one of the West's most pervasive noxious weeds - and Western SARE has devoted \$10,000 to back the experiment.



Leafy spurge is a dangerous invader. All parts of the plant contain a milky latex that can produce blisters and irritate the skin of humans, horses and cattle. The weed can cause death if it is consumed in quantity or permanent blindness if rubbed in the eyes. Since it arrived in the early 1800s, the invasive weed has been crowding out and choking off the grasses and shrubs of pastures and rangeland throughout the west. While the plant only stands a few feet tall, its roots stretch up to 20 feet

into the ground and easily regenerate. If the weed takes over a region, it can reduce cattle carrying capacity by 50 to 75 percent and bring a 100 percent loss to producers for these areas, according to Colorado State University Extension.

"The leafy spurge issue in Lincoln County (Washington) has been going on for a while," Madsen said. "They were trying some biological and chemical controls and hadn't had much luck and the leafy spurge was gaining on them." Madsen decided it was time to put his animals to work on the problem. He applied for a grant from SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and received notice of the funding award in mid-spring.

The research project launched in May on the ranch of Dennis Bly. It was the first of two treatments that are scheduled to run for three to four weeks over two years. During each treatment, Madsen's herd of 250 goats and kids graze the area while spurge-attacking insects get released to feed on the stems and roots of the weed.

"It's been shown in other areas how it's effective but it's nice to see it locally," he said.

As the project continues, Madsen will work with the partners to host tours and discussions to educate people about the challenges of leafy spurge and to reveal the different tools available for integrated management.

Madsen developed his herd for use in the holistic management of weeds and troublesome plants like blackberry bushes. His company, called Healing Hooves, LLC, is based in Edwall, Wash.

Before starting the company, Madsen worked as a range management specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. That background came in handy when Madsen decided to apply for the SARE grant. He called up old contacts and formed partnerships that lent support and helped him to focus his concept.

"The more people you bounce it off of, the more you can refine it ... take an idea and add information to it," he said. Madsen offered advice for other farmers and ranchers who would like to develop their ideas into research projects: seek support from your extension agent, create key partnerships, and allot enough time for revisions.

"It's one of those things you don't put it off to the last minute," he said with a laugh.

Food Safety Workshops

Coming this Winter! Rural Roots will hold food safety workshops for farmers and ranchers throughout Idaho, NE Oregon and E. Washington. Take a day this February or March to invest in your business by learning how to navigate legal liabilities, financial risks, and regional regulations as you produce and process for direct markets. Discover what resources are there to answer your questions and help you be successful!

The program is possible thanks to a grant from the Western Center for Risk Management Education. Look to the web site www.ruralroots.org for more details to be posted.

New Staff Joins Moscow Office

Rural Roots has welcomed two new staff members this fall as its program managers Sara Foster and Ariel Agenbroad prepare to leave for new careers.



KATE BALDWIN - Our new program manager joined Rural Roots this July and replaces Sara Foster in overseeing membership, marketing and educational programming. The Michigan native brings her experience as a reporter at the Moscow-Pullman Daily News, a media relations assistant with a community college, and a neighborhood resource coordinator with a non-profit coalition.

"I believe that people want to support healthy systems but they don't know where to start," she said.

Baldwin believes that sharing the dynamic stories of our members will resonate within the hearts and minds of the public and prompt unexpected, and possibly exponential, results.

"The actions, choices, and lifestyles of our farmers and ranchers are a testament to better systems," Baldwin said. "I can't wait to get started."



KRISTEN KOENIG - Our new program manager started with Rural Roots this August and will replace Ariel Agenbroad in coordinating the Cultivating Success Program and other regional educational programming. Koenig moved west from New Jersey to attend WSU for her master's degree. While in school, she decided to focus her efforts on sustainable agriculture after taking the Organic Farming and

Gardening Practicum taught by RR member Brad Jaeckel. Koenig graduated this summer and organized a resource fair in conjunction with the WSU Organic Farm Field Day. It allowed sustainable agriculture groups to connect with the public and provide education about growing food, food politics, food democracy and the alternatives to industrial agriculture. Koenig plans to complete her Cultivating Success certificate while working with Rural Roots.

"I am excited to be a part of Rural Roots and utilize food systems as a means to build community," she said. "I am also eager to meet the producers, visit their farms and ranches, and learn about how they are implementing sustainable practices in their operations."

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SARA'S GOOD-BYE - "To everything there is a season! So it is with my work at Rural Roots. As you all well know, there are only so many hours in a day, and this summer I realized that my passion for supporting others through massage and yoga needed to take my whole working focus! I will miss interacting with everyone on a daily basis, but will continue to help out as needed. I'll see many of you as a fellow member at our fall meetings! It's been a pleasure learning, playing and creating with you all... As I have worked in this job, I have absorbed your love for learning, ideas and creativity in marketing, and ceaseless passion for making a difference. I'll carry your energy and inspiration with me as I give to others in my community. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the work we did together! Wish me luck!" - SF

Cultivating Success: Courses in Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching Education

Embrace success on your small farm or ranch with the help of the Cultivating Success program! Whether you are just starting out or even if you've already been operating, each course in the CS certificate program is designed to increase your understanding of sustainable small farm production and marketing.

See what you can learn this fall by enrolling in "Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching." Enjoy this first class in the series as you visit local farms and learn from experienced farmers.

Increase your interaction with the local farming community while your instructor helps you learn the basics that are needed to develop a whole-farm plan, to evaluate goals and resources, and to focus on developing a small acreage enterprise.

We hope to see you at one of these course locations! The details for these courses will be announced very soon. Please see our web site at www.cultivatinguccess.org to learn more.

If you want to take a course in Washington, contact Mary Kempfert at (253) 445-4565 or mkempfert@wsu.edu. If you want to take a course in Idaho, or contact Amanda Snyder at (208) 885-2049 or amsnyder@uidaho.edu.

Idaho Courses

Boise/Ada County: Starting October 24. Classes will be held twice a month on Wednesday evenings. Contact Mary Rohlfing at (208) 387-0131. morningowl@cableone.net.

Kamiah/Lewis County Extension: Offered Wednesday evenings November 7 - January 16. Contact Ken Hart at (208) 937-2311. kheart@uidaho.edu.

Pocatello/Bannock County Extension: Offered Wednesday evenings September 5 - December 5. Contact Jessica McAleese at (208) 221-8390. mcaleese39@hotmail.com.

Sandpoint/Bonner County: Starts January 2008. Contact Diane Green at (208) 263-8957. greentree@coldreams.com.

Eastern Washington Courses

Pullman/Moscow, Washington State University/University of Idaho: This year, the

Sustainable Agriculture Resources

We've updated the resources section of our web site - www.ruralroots.org - to put more information like publications, presentations within your reach. Please visit and see our changes!

In other news:

Whole Foods Market is offering up to \$10 million annually to support local producers in communities where Whole Foods Market does business. Producer loans are awarded from \$1,000 to \$100,000 for expansion or capital expenditure projects. Producers must meet Whole Foods Market's Quality Standards and Animal Compassion Standards. <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/locallygrown/lp/index.html>



Inland Northwest Food and Farming Calendar

See what's happening near you!

Spokane Bioneers Conference
Oct. 19 - 21, Spokane, WA
www.sustainspokane.org/details.php

Washington Tilth Producers Conference
Nov. 9-11, Yakima, WA
www.tilthproducers.org/conference.htm

Cultivating Success Instructor and Farmer Mentor Orientation, Nov. 1 - 2, Boise, ID
amsnyder@uidaho.edu

Idaho Environmental Summit
Dec. 10 - 14, Boise, ID
www.idahosummit.org

National Conference for USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
March 25 - 27, Kansas City, MO
www.sare.org/2008Conference/index.htm

BRINGING HOME THE HARVEST

Editors:
Colette DePheps colette@ruralroots.org

Kate Baldwin kate@ruralroots.org

Kristen Koenig kristen@ruralroots.org

For more to go here... www.ruralroots.org

A message from the Executive Director

It is unbelievable that we have tipped the summer scale towards fall, but the evidence is clear -- the sun sets earlier and my CSA box has sweet corn and heirloom tomatoes.

Celebrating the agricultural bounty of our region with friends and neighbors is integral to supporting and enhancing the availability of sustainable local food in the Inland Northwest.

In August, Rural Roots participated in a very successful Sustainable Table tour/dinner at Eaton Season Ranch above the beautiful Snake River which hosted over 100 guests (<http://www.ruralroots.org/Programs/Tours.asp>).

And now, we offer you, our members, an opportunity to enjoy the harvest and good company at one of our September networking meetings. We hope you can take a Sunday drive to the farm or ranch nearest you (with a potluck dish, place setting and chair and even children in tow) and join us in celebrating the harvest.

Make sure you RSVP to the RR office at kate@ruralroots.org or (208) 883-3462 and we'll see you there!

Congratulations Ariel!

We send our best wishes with Ariel Agenbroad as she joins the University of Idaho's Canyon County Extension Office as its newest Extension Educator.

Despite leaving the office, Agenbroad plans to continue with RR as both a member and a supporter. She can be reached at ariel@uidaho.edu.