



Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

WINTER 2008

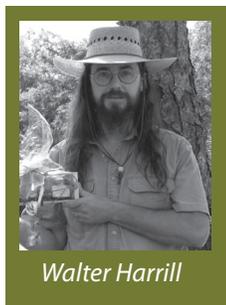
VOLUME 28, ISSUE 1

Farm Profile: Imladris Farm

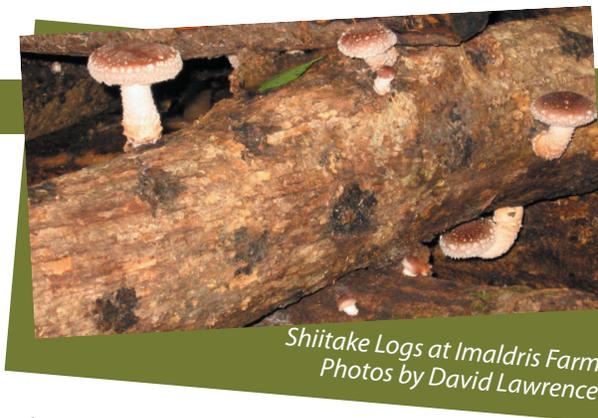
by Sally F. Lawrence

Walter Harrill grew up helping his grandfather, C.E. Harrill on his U-pick blueberry farm. As his grandfather aged, Walter agreed to handle more of the farm work and to take charge of marketing. Walter's first sales venture was a tail-gate market in Fairview, NC: "I took 20 pounds and sold out in an hour and a half, so I went back the next week and sold 40 pounds."

Pleased with his success, Walter realized that he needed something to lengthen the sales season. His wife, Wendy Harrill, suggested that they try making jam. "I was really skeptical. I grew up thinking that for jam to be really good, you had to make it at home—that you didn't buy it," explains Walter. The first batch of jam sold so well that Walter decided to start growing raspberries and blackberries to extend the season; naturally, that also extended the workload. Both Walter and Wendy balanced their farm chores with work as full-time medical technologists. Eventually, he realized that he was enjoying farming far more than medical technology:



Walter Harrill



Shiitake Logs at Imladris Farm
Photos by David Lawrence

"When I compared the two, farming was just more satisfying."

They've now been farming full time for 5 1/2 years. What was once his other grandfather's farm is now where Walter and Wendy grow Caroline raspberries and Chester blackberries. Imladris Farm encompasses 165 acres, seven of which they keep under production. "It's part of the mountain farming culture," Walter explains, "to farm intensively. My grandparents didn't use chemicals because 80 years ago those chemicals didn't exist—they weren't an option, so they grew things that fit the environment. You've got to adapt your farming strategy to the land you have; and this is a real challenge for farmers, especially organic farmers because everyone wants the latest, new thing—now, in North Carolina, it's wine grapes." Farming intensively increases efficiency, explains Walter.

One way that Walter makes his ever-bearing raspberry production more efficient is to sacrifice the earlier summer crop by mowing all the canes to the ground so that he gets a larger fall crop in a much shorter period.

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Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Awards Last Year's Most Influential

A highlight of the 2007 Sustainable Agriculture Conference was, as always, the Saturday night awards ceremony. CFSA had the chance to honor long-time champions of the sustainable agriculture movement in North and South Carolina. And we were privileged to debut two new award categories, the CFSA Volunteer of the Year and the SARE Program Extension Agent of the Year. This year's award have helped grow the sustainable food movement in North and South Carolina into one of the most significant trends in the region's economy and environment.

The award recipients included:



Farmers of the Year, Britt & Fleming Pfann of Celebrity Dairy.

The Pfanns have spent their farming careers leading the revolution to make celebrities out of farmers.

For 20 years they have been producing outstanding goat cheese at their 300-acre farm, Celebrity Dairy, in Silk Hope, NC. Through that time they have continually refined their cheese making artistry, and demonstrated how to produce and market

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CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION (CFSA)

CFSA is a membership-based organization of more than 1000 farmers, processors, gardeners, businesses and individuals in North and South Carolina who are committed to sustainable agriculture and the development of locally-based, organic food systems. CFSA's Mission is to promote local and organic agriculture in the Carolinas by inspiring, educating and organizing farmers and consumers.

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CFSA Listservs

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triangle@lists.carolinafarmstewards.org
cfsa_charlotte_region@lists.carolinafarmstewards.org
livestock@lists.carolinafarmstewards.org

Newsletter Information

Next issue deadline is February 15, 2008.

Stewardship News, CFSA's quarterly newsletter, would like to hear from you. Send letters, articles, announcements, queries, cartoons, recipes, etc., to Stewardship News, c/o the CFSA office. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily shared by the editor or the CFSA Board. We welcome the diverse views of our membership and invite your letters to the editor, articles, etc. CFSA does not endorse any product or service advertised.

Advertising Rates & Classified Listings

Contact Kari for current rates: 828-275-0017 or kari@carolinafarmstewards.org. To submit a classified ad in our Bulletin Board section, see page 15.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

From the Director: Building Bridges to a Sustainable Food Future

The CFSA board and staff extend our thanks to the roughly 650 people who participated in the 2007 Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference (SAC) and continued our rich 22-year tradition of sharing knowledge and camaraderie with new friends and old. Although I had attended the conference before, witnessing it from the "inside" for the first time was an experience I will always treasure. Please make sure to take a look at the list of work exchange volunteers in this issue of Stewardship News and extend your personal thanks to anyone on the list you know, SAC simply wouldn't happen without their efforts.

Special thanks go to Richard Quay for his tireless and cheerful work to manage the A/V needs of every single workshop and presentation, with help from board member Dianne Palmer-Quay and their daughter Elizabeth. Dianne also coordinated the Silent Auction. We received a wealth of Silent Auction donations at the conference, and we've also included in this newsletter a list of people and businesses that made auction donations that arrived too late for us to include in the donor listing in the conference program. Thanks also goes to board member Natalie Sadler who put in significant time to coordinate food procurement for the delicious meals, and former board officer Alex Hitt for his engaging and personal Friday night keynote address.

Educational programs coordinator Elizabeth Gibbs did an outstanding job assembling a roster of courses and speakers this year, and we are especially proud of the fact that so many of the conference sessions advanced specific goals in our Strategic Plan. Providing information on organic grain production, organic certification, farm incubation, seed saving, farmers market development, CSAs, grassroots advocacy, and community gardening helps us lay the

foundation for a sustainable agriculture that, 25 years from now, will be the rule instead of the exception. And Elizabeth's work to secure the participation of our Saturday night keynote speaker, Michael Ableman, paid off: his poignant, stirring words and images communicated the human component of organic agriculture in a way no other SAC speaker in recent memory has matched. Special thanks to our Keynote Sponsor, Earth Fare, for making Michael's appearance possible.

The response to our agricultural education track sponsored by our conference steward, the North Carolina SARE Program, was exceptional and expanded the network of cooperative extension agents with knowledge and confidence in sustainable production methods. CFSA extends deep appreciation to NC SARE directors Paul Mueller of NC State and John O'Sullivan of NC A&T for this support from the SARE program, and to SARE professional development program assistant Carol Moore for her work to organize workshop sessions and support CFSA staff in producing the conference.

Engaging the agriculture "establishment" was a major theme throughout the conference, beginning with the Friday evening plenary discussion among a cross-section of CFSA board members from the past 25 years. There was consistent agreement among the participants that treating the land grants, extension and conventional family farmers as "the enemy" is counterproductive to the goal of building a sustainable food system. The organic dairy track, sponsored by Organic Valley, featured the stories of conventional dairymen in the Carolinas who have saved their farms by transitioning to organic. The mid-scale farming track engaged conventional farmers as well, and helped to break down perceived barriers to the participation of this segment of the farm economy in the local organic movement.

And the farm-to-institution track, sponsored by the Compass Group, highlighted a powerful trend of local food purchases by colleges and cafeterias; establishing sustainability in this huge segment of our food economy will have a dramatic impact on the health of consumers and the wealth of farmers.

And no thank you letter would be complete without acknowledging the beyond-the-call-of-duty efforts of the rest of the CFSA staff in making the conference a success. SAC represents one quarter of CFSA's annual budget, and requires six months of intensive staff effort to pull off. This year, we produced five other events—four farm tours and one on-farm benefit dinner—and published two newsletters simultaneously with our SAC preparations. I can tell you now from experience that putting on such a full roster of programming, for a staff of 3.95 full time equivalents, is a simply incredible accomplishment.

Member services manager Cheryl Ripperton Rettie did anything and everything to keep registration running smoothly, practically chaining herself to the welcome desk. Cricket Rakita, as usual, lead our seed saving track and energized dozens of people to take on this crucial act of self-sufficiency. Marketing production coordinator Kari Brayman made all our conference materials professional and attractive, and she was "Johnny-on-the-Spot" throughout the conference itself, stepping in to handle any last-minute tasks. Finally, events coordinator Peggy Cook worked incredibly hard to manage the preparations for SAC.

The outcome was worth it. We are proud to be a part of this powerful tradition, and we look forward to

Sincerely,



CFSA Welcomes New Board Members

At our annual membership meeting, which took place in Durham, NC on November 10, CFSA members reelected Jamie Ager, Spence Dickinson, Tom Krebs, Judy Lessler, Walker Miller and Gail Rahn to the Board of Directors. There were two open seats, as board members William Hamilton and Hope Sutton were not seeking reelection, and the members voted Ben Haines and Alice Wald on the board to fill the vacancies.

Ben is a second generation organic farmer. He runs Looking Back Farms in Tyner, NC, with his father Kenny, a former board member and 1997 CFSA Farmer of the Year. Looking Back Farms grows organic vegetables and grains, as well as dealing organic grain, seeds and soil amendments.

Alice Wald is a farmer's daughter who grew up on a small farm in West Union, SC with a milk cow, beef cattle, pigs, chickens, and a vegetable garden. As an adult, that has transformed into a deep and abiding concern for the well being of Earth and humans as her dependents. Alice believes that if we are to survive the coming times we must grow our food in our local communities. She's now a semi-retired professional social worker, living simply so that others may simply live.

CFSA thanks these people for their dedication to sustainable agriculture and their willingness to share their wisdom, work and wealth with CFSA. Thanks also to William Hamilton and Hope Sutton for their past service.

Each of the current board members will serve out three year terms as a result of an amendment to the CFSA bylaws that passed at the meeting. The previous term length was just two years, and the longer terms will allow for better continuity of board governance and ensure that in any given year no more than one third of the seats on the board will be at risk of vacancy. 

CFSA Wins Grant to Train Next Generation of Ag Leaders

For sustainable agriculture to win a more prominent place at the table with state policy makers, moral pressure will have to come from two directions: from above, through direct education of state leaders, and from below, through grassroots demands. Thanks to a grant from the Triangle Community Foundation of Durham, NC (TCF), CFSA is launching a new program to organize that grassroots pressure.

One of the key policy objectives in CFSA's 2007-2010 Strategic Plan is getting CFSA members on county-level agricultural policy boards in at least half the counties of North and South Carolina. These boards, which include Cooperative Extension Advisory Boards and Soil & Water Conservation Boards, have the authority to advise local governments on the priorities for disbursement of state and federal funding. Elected county leaders look to these boards for direction and advice, and board members are conduits for farmers to bring their concerns to the attention of government officials.

The TCF grant allows CFSA to develop a program for training sustainable farmers and food security advocates to act as agitators in local government, and is funded through four Foundation funds, the Hanley-McCall Fund, the Floyd Fletcher Fund, the Elizabeth Wade Grant Endowment Fund and the Mason's Apron Fund. Participants in this program will learn how to connect with local government leaders, how to get appointed to local ag advisory boards, and how to be effective once appointed.

Under the grant, we will create a training program curriculum that covers state and federal ag conservation programs, local government regulations, and effective advocacy techniques, along with a resource guide. And we'll pilot the program in several NC triangle-area counties before taking it across the Carolinas.

-Continued on next page-

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

More SAC Thank You

CFSA wishes to thank all of our work-exchange folks and other volunteers for helping make this the best conference ever! Here are some special thanks due to some folks who went over and beyond the call of duty: Meredith McKissick organized and managed the Exhibition Hall; Natalie Sadler leaped in to assist with food donations and procurement, while Marc Williams & Jody Gunderson worked as liaisons with the hotel staff as CFSA's Food Assistants. A very special thank-you to Paula Berardinelli, whose cheerful energy and organizational skills enabled so much of the conference to run so smoothly.

Work Exchangers

Hana Crouch
Alyssa Rudolph
Allison Murphy
Luke & Hope McMullan
Elizabeth Studstill
Lindsay Tharp
Tes Thraves
Laura Beach
DD Gamble
Tanya Jisa & Rhonda Goolsby
Jody Gunderson
Marc Williams
Christy Shi
Elaeanor Cresenzi
Chris Sermons
Suzanne & Michael Jones
Jill & Mark Watkins
Donald Byrne III
Robert Jones

Francesca Hyatt
Ann Rose
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Waxhaw, NC 28173
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Bldg. G
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Dallas Hurley
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Home Supply
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Karen Pilson
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Rhonda Goolsby
Green Sky Sustainable Design
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919-969-6656

Tanya Jisa
Benevolence Farm
173 Viburnum Way
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-969-6656

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Your Local Co-op Grocery
480 Hillsboro Street,
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Pittsboro, NC 27312
919-542-3613

Lancaster Ag Products
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Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505

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Cottle Strawberry
Nursery, Inc.
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Michael Ableman
1200 Mt. Maxwell Road
Salt Spring Island, BC
Canada V8K2H7

CFSA Wins Grant...(continued from previous page)

We're excited about this program because it's modeled on a homegrown example of effective grassroots action for sustainable agriculture. In the mid-1990s a group of CFSA members in Chatham County, NC got themselves appointed to the local Cooperative Extension Advisory Board. They successfully pushed from the inside for creation of the first county Sustainable and Organic Agriculture agent in the Carolinas, and were so vocal in their efforts that the County funded the position 100 percent when the state refused to contribute.

Of course state authorities still control bigger pots of money, and pressure at the local level alone will not get sustainable farming the resources it needs to grow. CFSA will continue to be active in pushing the land grant institutions and state governments to promote farming that's good for farmers, good for consumers and good for the environment. Having government "customers" at the local level demanding the same thing will make it much harder for policy makers to ignore the need for agriculture that nurtures soils and people.

If you'd like to learn more about the project or would be interested in enrolling in a training program, please contact our office at (919) 542-2402 or email me at roland@carolinafarmstewards.org.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

Legislative Update

CFSA Demands Equity for Small Farmers

At this year's Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association officially announced a position against the implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). NAIS would apply to every person who owns even one livestock animal or poultry, including horses, chickens, cows, goats, sheep, swine, llamas, alpacas, bison, elk, and deer. Animal owners would be required to:

- register their property with the state and federal government;
- identify each animal with an intentionally-unique 15 digit number when they leave their birthplace, unless they meet the exception for group identification; and
- track "events" and report them to a government-accessible database within 24 hours.

While the United States Department of Agriculture states that the program is currently voluntary at the federal level, it is funding the states to implement the program. With the encouragement of this federal funding, several states have implemented, or proposed implementing, mandatory programs. Moreover, several states have registered individuals in the program without their consent, or by using coercive or misleading measures, undermining the concept of a voluntary program.

After long consideration by the Legislative Committee of the CFSA Board of Directors, we are opposing this program because it will not improve animal health, but will put small farmers and self-sufficient consumers out of business. NAIS creates a competitive disadvantage for family farms due to the expense of the infrastructure that will be needed to comply with system. Moreover, NAIS is biased towards massive confinement farms by virtue of its provisions for group identification of animals on feedlots, ultimately increasing the risk of disease, and continuing a 30-year trend of consolidation in agriculture at a time when consumers are more and more opposed to industrial farms.

Rather than imposing these biases through regulations, CFSA believes that issues of food safety and traceability can, and should, be addressed through

private, voluntary programs that are suited to the scale and nature of the operations covered. We will be launching a campaign in 2008 to alert Carolina consumers to the dangers of NAIS and encourage state regulators to modify their approach to implementing the federal mandate in a way that protects small farms.

The same intellectual framework guided CFSA in making comments on proposed USDA rules for handling practices for leafy greens. Any federal and/or regional regulatory regime for the handling of leafy greens therefore would have a significant economic impact on a large number of small farmers in the Carolinas, and must be crafted in such a way as to preserve the economic viability of these small scale farms.

We proposed that any such rules should be voluntary, and tailored to the scale and nature of the farms at issue, instead of a national cookie-cutter scheme.

Further, we demanded that any such regulatory system be coupled with resources for small-scale producers that provide those growers with the latest research on the causes of pathogenic contamination and practical preventative protocols, and grant opportunities for community-based, state-of-the-art processing facilities.

Any regulatory regime will be most effective if it takes advantage of the small grower's direct contacts with his markets. Because of those contacts, these growers already demonstrate they are willing and effective providers of safe leafy greens to their customers.

We are grateful for the efforts of past CFSA board members Patryk Battle, Bill Dow and Stefan Hartmann for helping draft our comments on the leafy greens handling rules. For the complete text of CFSA's comments on the proposed rule, or our NAIS position, visit our website, www.carolinafarmstewards.org.

CFSA Charlotte-Metro Area Chapter

Meeting & Election of Officers

Join other regional CFSA members to discuss the goals of the Charlotte-Metro area chapter and how CFSA can help our efforts in supporting local farmers and spread awareness of the importance of food choices in the Charlotte area.

February 7, 2008 at 6:30 pm
Cabarrus County Extension Office
715 Cabarrus Ave, Concord, NC 28026

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are open for the positions of Chapter President, Vice-President and Secretary. Elections for Chapter Officers will be held at the February 7, 2008 meeting. Submit nominations by 2/6/08 via:

Email: cfsacharlotte@gmail.com or
Postal Mail: 7300 Tirzah Church Road, Waxhaw, NC 28173 or
Website: www.cfsacharlotte.org

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Questions about the Charlotte-Metro Chapter or the Feb 7th Meeting?
Phone: Geneva Case 704.843.0498 On the web: www.cfsacharlotte.org

Join the CFSA Charlotte-Metro Region Listserve

Learn about local educational opportunities, keep up-to-date on the latest CFSA news, find local resources, and join in on discussions about local food issues through your email!

Contact Cheryl Ripperton Rettie 919.542.2404 or
cheryl@carolinafarmstewards.org

Drought Resistant Soil Management

Adapted from ATTRA's Agronomy Technical Note, "Drought Resistant Soil" by Preston Sullivan, NCAT Agriculture Specialist, November 2002

With severe drought an all-too-common occurrence, some farmers turn to irrigation for a solution. Irrigation may not be feasible or even desirable. Fortunately, there are management options that can increase the soil's ability to store water for plant use. Soil can be managed in ways that reduce the need for supplemental watering and increase the sustainability of the farm. Any worthwhile strategy for drought management optimizes the following factors:

- . Capture of a high percentage of rainfall (infiltration)
- . Maximum storage of water in the soil for later use (water holding capacity)
- . Efficient recovery of stored water (plant rooting)

Several important soil factors affect water management including soil texture, aggregation, organic matter content, and surface ground cover.

Texture

Texture refers to the proportions of sand, silt, and clay present in a given soil. A sandy loam, for example, has much more sand and much less clay than does a clay loam. A loam soil is a more balanced blend of sand, silt, and clay. Most soils are some type of loam. Texture is an innate characteristic of the soil type. Unlike the other factors discussed here, aggregation, organic matter, and ground cover texture cannot be changed through agronomic practice. By knowing the innate texture of the soil, however, the farmer can select and adjust practices that optimize moisture management.

Although the plant-available water is highest in loam to clay-loam textures, the total water goes up with increasing clay content. This is because clay has more total pore space to hold water, but some of these pores are so small that the water is held too tightly for plants to extract. Sand has less total pore space to hold water, but most of the water it can hold is available to plants. Finally, water evaporation from sandy soils is faster than from

clay soils. As any farmer knows, sandy soils dry out more quickly after a rain and plants growing on them show drought signs sooner compared to finer-textured soils. Consequently, it is wise to put drought tolerant crops on the most drought-prone soils, and drought-sensitive crops on finer-textured soils.

Aggregation

Soil aggregation refers to how the sand, silt, and clay come together to form larger granules. Good aggregation is apparent in a crumbly soil with water-stable granules that do not disintegrate easily. Well-aggregated soil has greater water entry at the surface, better aeration, and more water-holding capacity than poorly aggregated soil. Plant roots occupy a larger volume of well-aggregated soil; better rooting increases the depth and area plants can reach for water. These are all positive attributes for drought resistance.

Well aggregated soil also resists surface crusting. The impact of raindrops causes crusting on poorly aggregated soil by discharging clay particles on the soil surface, clogging the pores immediately beneath, sealing them as the soil dries. Subsequent rainfall is much more likely to run off than to flow into the soil. In contrast, a well-aggregated soil resists crusting because the water-stable aggregates are less likely to break apart when a raindrop hits them. Take note, however, that any management practice that protects the soil from raindrop impact will decrease crusting and increase water flow into the soil. Mulches and cover crops serve this purpose well, as do no-till practices which allow the accumulation of surface residue.

A soil's texture and aggregation determine air and water circulation, erosion resistance, looseness, ease of tillage, and root penetration. However, while texture is an innate property of the native soil and does not change with agricultural activities, aggregation can be improved or destroyed readily through our choice and timing of farm practices.

Some practices that destroy or degrade soil aggregates are:

- . Excessive tillage
- . Tilling when the soil is too wet or too dry

- . Using anhydrous ammonia, which speeds the decomposition of organic matter
- . Excessive nitrogen fertilization
- . Excessive sodium buildup from salty irrigation water or sodium-containing fertilizers

The best aggregated soils are those that have been in long-term grass production. A grass sod extends a mass of fine roots throughout the topsoil, contributing to the physical processes that help form aggregates. Roots continually remove water from soil microsites, providing local wetting and drying effects that promote aggregation. Roots also produce food for soil microorganisms and earthworms, thus generating the compounds that bind the aggregates into water-stable units. Additionally, a perennial grass sod provides protection from raindrops and erosion while these processes are occurring.

This combination of factors creates optimal conditions for establishing a well-aggregated soil under a perennial cover. Conversely, cropping sequences that involve annual plants in extensive cultivation provide less vegetative cover and organic matter, and usually result in a rapid decline in soil aggregation and organic matter. No-till cropping requires less manipulation of the soil and retains a surface mulch; it is quite successful at promoting good aggregation on annually cropped soils.

Organic Matter and Water-holding Capacity

Soil holds water according to its texture. However, the level of organic matter also determines how much water a soil can hold. Arkansas soil scientists report that for every 1 percent of organic matter content, the soil can hold 16,500 gallons of plant-available water per acre of soil down to one foot deep. That is roughly 1.5 quarts of water per cubic-foot of soil for each percent of organic matter.

In addition to holding water, organic matter also improves aggregation. As soil organic matter breaks down, large amounts of glues and slimes, the cementing agents of aggregation, are produced by microbes in the decomposition process.

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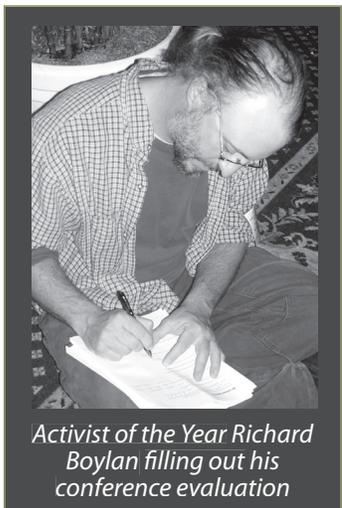
SAC Awards...(continued from cover)

a quality product with integrity. They have been leaders of the Triangle's sustainable food movement, and as they look toward retirement they are planning to help the next generation of sustainable farmers by transforming their property into a learning center for beginning growers to gain farm management experience. The Pfanns' commitment to working with CFSA's farm incubator program is yet another example of their vision and passion for sustainable food, and we thank them for creating such a rich legacy.

Non-Profit of the Year, the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP).

For a decade ASAP has been running one of the most successful local food campaigns in the Southeast, and has been a leader in the farm-to-school movement.

This year ASAP published a ground-breaking study of the value of local food to the economy of Western North Carolina, showing the market in that region alone could be worth almost half a billion dollars. This study provides clear and convincing evidence of why federal, state, and local governments should be doing more to promote local food, and CFSA is pleased to honor ASAP for this vital research and its history of success promoting family farms and healthy food.



Activist of the Year Richard Boylan filling out his conference evaluation

Business of the Year, the Organic Valley Family of Farms. Thanks to the efforts of Organic Valley and its North Carolina dairywomen and men, we can now say for certain that it is possible—and profitable—for farmers to produce organic milk in the Carolinas. The company helped a number of formerly conventional dairy farmers establish

the first organic certified dairies in the state, including Rick Parker and Chris Hoffner of Rowan County, George Teague of Guilford County, and Neil Lindley of Chatham County. Organic milk is good for the consumer, good for the environment, and a lifeline for the Carolinas' family dairy farms, and Organic Valley's move into our region will help restore our once thriving dairy industry.

Activist of the Year, Richard Boylan. Richard has served as the Cooperative Extension Agent for Alternative

Agriculture in the North Carolina High Country since 2001. He has worked tirelessly to help farmers adapt organic farming practices to the unique climate and soil conditions of the region, and market their products to consumers in the High Country and across the state. By working within the state's Cooperative Extension program, Richard has expanded understanding among ag professionals of the practical benefits of organic agriculture.

Richard does his work quietly, methodically, and consistently, and the results have been outstanding for the High Country's farmers.

North Carolina SARE Extension Agent of the Year, Debbie Roos. How could the first ever Extension Agent of the Year award go to anybody but the indefatigable Debbie Roos? Debbie is a nationally recognized expert on promoting small farms and healthy farm ecosystems. The Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Agent for the Cooperative Extension office is in Chatham County, NC, but she has built the office's Growing Small Farms



Gred Gross in the Exhibit Hall

Program into a resource for farmers across the Southeast. A passionate advocate for local organic agriculture, and an accomplished nature photographer, Debbie is a treasure of the Carolinas' sustainable agriculture movement.

Volunteer of the Year, Regina McCoy.

Unless you've done something similar yourself, you simply can't fathom the time and creativity it takes to design and produce the print version of CFSA's Carolinas Guide to Local and Organic Food, which this year clocked in at 96 pages. A freelance graphic designer would easily charge \$5,000 or more to perform this service, and would take two months to do it. Regina McCoy, a graphic design artist in Chapel Hill, NC, did it all for free, in her spare time, in just one month. And designed our 25th Anniversary logo, to boot. For these outstanding and personal contributions, we are thrilled to honor Regina as our first ever Volunteer of the Year. 🙏

Seed Patenting: Alternatives for Plant Breeders

by Cricket Rakita

In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that living things can be patented. That ruling opened a floodgate of individuals and corporations interested in legally protecting their seed varieties. Many people thought that this would be a good thing for individual plant breeders; if a breeder develops a useful new variety and patents it, they would finally be able to be paid for it and recoup their personal investment in the development of the seed. On the contrary, swift corporate domination of the plant patenting process has made it difficult for small-scale seed breeders to benefit from the legislation.

For example, a company in Colorado holds a patent on the Enola bean, an heirloom variety which they did not actually contribute to. In fact, the patent includes all beans of a certain shade of yellow as the company's legal property. The same company went to the area of Mexico where it got the original pocketful of beans and shut down the local growers that were raising the variety, although the company actually pirated it from them in the first place!

Also, a patent exists on any broccoli seed that produces "commercially acceptable heads under heat stress conditions", a vague and seemingly unethical patent.

Moreover, it's typical for a large agribusiness to isolate a gene in a lab and patent it if they believe they will likely profit from it one day. All of these patents may be renewed indefinitely.

A plant breeder may breed a variety today only later to find out too late that she/he has violated a patent over some gene that just happened to be contained within that variety. If this happens, the breeder stands to lose everything they own!

Hybridizing Seed

In the 1940s, breeders discovered the art of hybridizing seeds. The way this is generally done is to breed two deeply inbred parents and sell the resulting "crossed" seed. The advantage to the breeder is that the hybrids will not breed true. In other words, while the seed that is sold (known as the "F1" generation) will produce a very uniform crop, the next generation (known as "F2") will not. This means that one cannot reproduce the hybrid seed unless they obtain the parent lines. If the breeder holds these parents close to the vest, that breeder will be the only one that can physically produce that seed.

There are disadvantages to hybridized seeds. For instance, hybridized seeds are generally expensive to produce. This is because care must be taken that every seed is in fact a cross between the two intended parents, and not a result of a cross of two parents of the same variety. In addition, many important commercial crops (such as beans and lettuce) have never been successfully commercially hybridized because they resist being cross pollinated. Furthermore, for every hybrid variety, the producer must maintain three separate strains each year (parent 1, parent 2, and the commercial F1 hybrid). Most importantly, hybrid varieties cannot be subsequently improved upon or selected for various ecosystems because they will not "breed true". They are what they were bred to be, never more, never less.

Plant Variety Protection Act

The Plant Variety Protection act (PVP) was enacted in 1970, ten years before plant patenting evolved. Obtaining a PVP on a variety allows the breeder many of the same protections that patenting does with a few notable exceptions. As the name implies, PVP only refers to a variety. Also, there are no restrictions against breeding with PVP varieties to create additional varieties and there are no restrictions

against saving seed from a PVP variety for personal use. The only restriction on PVP varieties is that only the PVP holder is allowed to produce (or license) seed of the protected variety for sale or trade. Unlike the infinite patent, PVPs expire at 25 years and cannot be renewed. Lastly, once a variety has been placed on the PVP list, it can also be patented, as can the genes within it.

Copyleft, All Rights Reversed



Possibly the most promising patenting alternative for the modern seed breeder is a new variant on the copyright known as the "copyleft". The concept of copyleft was initiated by the open source software movement. Copyleft is a number of stipulations added to a copyright, with one of them being that if you alter or reproduce the product in any way, you must put the identical copyleft copyright stipulations on your product. For example, if I were to introduce a new seed variety and copyright it with a copyleft clause, I could add a condition that anyone that reproduces the seed for sale must pay me 10 percent of their gross sales until a specified date, and furthermore, that anybody that receives these seeds may not patent them in any way, shape, or form--ever. Finally, and most importantly, the copyleft copyright would state that if you reproduce this product or use it in the production of other products, you must put the exact same copyleft agreement on your product.

Copyleft may seem kind of confusing, but many people in the seed community believe that it may be the people's alternative to seed patenting. Currently, the Organic Seed Alliance is researching how to properly write the first copyleft copyright for seeds, and once the first one is issued, a whole new floodgate may be opened. 🌱

Support The One Seed at a Time Project

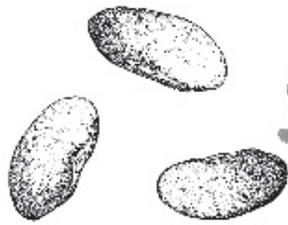
The One Seed at a Time project needs your help in order to continue to bank seeds for the Southeast. This project is urgently important to our region's agricultural heritage.

As climate change progresses on Earth, the Midwest, Northeast, and Southwest are experiencing weather that is more and more like the traditional weather of the Southeast, namely, extended periods of hot dry weather interrupted by heavy rains throughout the growing season (in our case, often coming from hurricanes). With this in mind, it is clear that the bank will not only benefit folks in the Southeast into the future, it will also benefit global ecosystems.

Our Food System is at Risk!

The Carolinas have a rich vegetable heritage. Traditionally, there were several local varieties of every vegetable saved for seed in every individual microclimate and microculture. This genetic diversity is essential for our food security! Maintaining these varieties in the public domain is as essential to our food supply as maintaining a library is to our literary culture. The varieties banked are like the books in that library, and a detailed documented list of all of the characteristics is like the dictionary. With both the books and the dictionary in hand, the seeds in the bank will give folks the option not only to grow a wonderful heirloom variety, but also to breed with varieties in the bank to create new varieties to meet our changing climatic and commercial needs.

Without a concerted effort, our vegetable heritage will wilt and die. Currently, many of our wonderful old vegetable varieties are maintained by a very small number of growers, many of whom are elderly. They need to pass these seeds on. Meanwhile, many major agribusinesses are working to patent every gene that they believe may have potential



SAVE OUR SEED

to be profitable in the future, taking them out of the public sphere. If the One Seed at a Time project can find and bank these seeds before the date of patent application, the patent will be invalid.

Throughout history, the vast majority of important vegetable varieties have been bred by amateur breeders who were also professional growers. This is because it is the professional grower that best understands her/his own needs from a holistic system view. Corporate breeders, and even public breeders, that are not professional growers will always be at a disadvantage in this respect. For these amateur breeders to continue to succeed, it is crucial that the One Seed at a Time Project be supported.

We are having great success banking seeds. One example of this success was with the Violet's Multi Colored Bush Lima Bean. The variety, originally from Banks County, GA, was bred by Violate Brady Westbrook. After being passed down by her family for 4 generations, some seeds found their way to Ned Johnson of Kingsport, TN. He sent me a small sample (about 30 seeds) and I in turn sent 20 seeds to CFSA Member (and former board member) Fran Davis of Inman, SC. Fran then grew them out for the bank and sent back about 1 1/2 cups of beautiful seeds, varying from cream to swirled to speckled brown-red to deep purple-violate. She grew them in the hard drought year of 2007 and was amazed that when the drought hit, all of her other beans suffered while her Violet's Multi Colored seemed to thrive. The variety is also purported to also be able to withstand deluge conditions associated with the heavy summer storms that can often be associated with hurricane season. 🌱

Save Our Seed has successfully banked

Over 50 Varieties in 2007!

To continue this work, we need your support. Please consider donating to support this important endowment. You can do this by going to www.carolina-farmstewards.org, by visiting our store, and make a donation to the One Seed at a Time project.

Also, you can mail a check to CFSA at: CFSA, OSAT Project, P.O. Box 448, Pittsboro, NC 27312, with "OSAT" written on the memo line.



Violet's Multi Colored Lima Bean

Farm Profile: Imladris Farm...(continued from cover)

"We can pick 95 percent as many berries in two months instead of spreading the picking over four months." That way, he saves in labor costs and helps control perennial weeds. He also controls weeds by planting Dutch White Clover between the raspberry canes. "The clover provides nitrogen and out-competes the weeds; it's thick and heavy, so it controls erosion, and it comes back each year." The farm animals—four goats, two lambs, 11 rabbits and their offspring—provide the fertilizer. And, once the berries are all harvested, "the goats get first dibs," smiles Walter. "They eat the tender part of the stems, most of the leaves; and when they are done, I mow the canes, gather them into piles, and burn them to control viruses—raspberries are prone to viruses."

Although Walter picked up some farming practices from helping his grandfathers, he's learned most of what he knows on his own. "I screwed it up and screwed it up," he laughs. Both Walter and Wendy have zoology degrees, so he's adept at using the scientific method when trying to improve his farming practices. "I keep good records, so I know what works. I throw out the bad ideas and keep the one idea that floats to the top." One of the float-to-the-top ideas came about from Walter's desire to find a crop for



Raspberries at Imladris Farm

some of his dark, damp hollows.

Those hollows, hardly suitable for berries, turned out to be ideal for raising shiitake mushrooms. He has maximized his efficiency by using logs from the land he's cleared for berries as the growing media and spring water to "stress" the logs into production. "We can produce anywhere from seven to 25 pounds a week. About 30 percent of our shiitakes go to Early Girl Eatery (an Asheville restaurant specializing in local, southern fare), and the rest into a dehydrated mushroom dip that we sell at farmers markets. This is an ideal product to market through samples; once people taste the dip, they usually buy it. We're working on a shiitake salad dressing as a way to market our shiitakes in grocery stores."

Grocery stores have been a good outlet for their jams as have farmers'

markets, Early Girl Eatery, *Our State* magazine's website, the Imladris Farm website, and their on-farm springhouse store. His marketing strategy has been so successful that he's now got other local growers producing berries for Imladris. "I make sure that their growing methods are sustainable and that their practices are in line with my methods." Imladris rents space from Blue Ridge Food Ventures and can produce 500 jars in an afternoon. Because they can get top dollar for their jams, Walter and Wendy take their fresh berries to the Charlotte Farmers' Market only at the end of season, where they sell them for \$14 to \$25 a pound. "Explaining the price makes for a good conversation with the customers. People will grumble a bit, then reach in their wallets for a \$20 bill, and by the end of the day, we've

sold out."

Engaging customers in the economics of farming is part of Walter's marketing strategy since many customers don't often stop and think about what it costs to grow their food. He's taught a marketing strategy course at Organic Growers School (OGS): "It's essential to think of ways to value-add." Also at OGS and CFSA conferences, Walter often teaches bramble classes. When Walter isn't teaching or cooking jam or leading farm tours, he's thinking about new farming practices. His current experiment—making biochar. Made from the canes, the biochar absorbs and holds the manure's nutrients and takes CO2 out of the atmosphere. "Manure is labor-expensive, and our animals can only produce so much of it." Using the spent canes to help nourish the next crop is the kind of efficient cycle that characterizes Walter's whole approach to farming. "We're still working on the technique," smiles Walter. "I'm always looking for ways to farm more efficiently." 

Sally Lawrence teaches English at East Carolina University and writes about organic farming and food-policy issues whenever possible.

*"It's part of
the mountain
farming culture,
to farm intensively."*

**Walter Harrill,
Imladris Farm**

Seed Varieties for Drought

Compiled by Cricket Rakita

For the most part, many heirloom techniques, crops, and varieties from our region are well suited to drought. **Southern peas, okra, lima/butter beans, collard greens, peanuts, and hot peppers** are all very drought tolerant crops. **Champion and Georgia Green collards** are both varieties that have done well for me on drought years. I don't believe that I have ever grown southern peas that were not drought resistant, but I have been particularly impressed with **The Big Red Rippers, White Acre, Peking Black, Washday, and Whip-Poor-Will Southern peas**. Good limas include **Fordhook 242, Dixie White Butterpea, and Red Calico Butterbeans**. Most varieties of small hot peppers are very drought tolerant. Especially high on this list are **Fish, Serrano, Chinese Five Color, and Pretty Hot Purple**. I have had good luck with **Carolina Black Peanut and Carwile's Virginia Peanut** in drought years as well. **Choppee, Star of David, and Cajun Jewel** are all great drought tolerant okras.

But how many hot peppers can one person eat (not counting me, because I can eat them like nobody I know). What most folks want a lot of are sweet peppers. My first recommendation is for drought resistance **Carolina Wonder** (not to be confused with California Wonder). **Bull Nose** also is a good one. For a great pepper with the very slightest bit of spice that will astound you in a drought year, I am very impressed with **Aji Dulce**. In tomatoes, I have been impressed with the performance of **Eva Purple Ball, Tropic, Neptune, Riesentraube, Mortgage Lifter VFN, and Homestead 24** on dry years. **Early Black Egg and Ping Tung Long** eggplant also have shown me good drought performance.

With respect to winter squashes, again, I go to the old southern varieties for drought tolerance. I've had good drought year yields from **Seminole Pumpkin, Tan Cheese Pumpkin, North Georgia Candy Roaster, and Burgess Buttercup**. I have found the scalloped squashes to be the most drought resistant summer squashes, especially **Golden Bush Scalloped**. I have also had good dry year yields from **Yellow Crookneck, Raven F1 Hybrid Zucchini, and Grey Zucchini**. **Quetzali and Rattlesnake** watermelons are also good ones. No muskmelon I have ever grown has done as well in drought as **Ice cram (AKA Green Machine)** muskmelon. **Kansas** is also a great drought muskmelon for clay soils.

There are a few root crops that I have had good success with during droughts. I always got a good crop from **Red Cored Chantenay**. **Purple Top White Globe and Hakurei F1 Hybrid Turnips** have also preformed well for me.

Drought Soil Management...(continued from page 7)

An often ignored factor in soil water infiltration is the contribution made by earthworm channels. In soils with high earthworm populations, 30 to 50 nearly pencil-sized vertical tunnels per square yard are common. Gently sloping land under a mid-summer corn canopy can absorb a 4-inch rainfall in two hours with virtually no runoff when abundant earthworm populations are present.

Ground Cover

The most apparent benefit of maintaining ground cover on soil is erosion resistance. However, ground cover is also associated with droughtproofing. This has been well demonstrated by a research team at Indiana using variable application of straw. Higher application resulted in higher water infiltration rates, up to 2.5 tons of straw per acre.

Surface cover also reduces water evaporation from soil. In a Kentucky study, surface evaporation was five times less under no-till (which leaves a surface mulch) than with conventional tillage over the May to September season. Because less water was lost to evaporation, more water was available for plants.

Tillage systems and equipment have enormous impacts on water infiltration, storage, and plant efficiency. These include mechanical stress on soil aggregates, effects on soil microorganisms, and the tendency to create hardpans. Of most importance to drought-proofing, however, is the extent to which a surface cover is maintained.

Increased ground cover enhances water storage as well as infiltration. The surface mulch typical of no-till fields acts as a protective skin to the soil, reducing the impact of raindrops, buffering the soil from temperature extremes, and reducing water evaporation.

Tillage also affects plant rooting, and thereby directly affects the efficiency of water withdrawal by crop plants. Because it prunes roots and dries the soil surface, row-crop cultivation discourages shallow rooting. No-till, in contrast, encourages an abundance

of roots near the soil surface. Since water infiltration and storage are higher under no-till, plant roots find the water and nutrients they need closer to the surface.

In some no-till situations, total root volume is less than in plowed soils. One study showed 34 percent fewer corn roots at the 2-foot depth under no-till. A well-structured Indiana soil showed similar total corn root weights under no-till but more of the roots were in the top three inches of soil.

Deep tillage encourages deep rooting; subsoiling can increase rooting depth and impart increased drought protection. Before subsoiling, determine whether it is necessary. Push a sharpened steel probe in the ground to test for compaction. If you are going to be planting on the same rows year after year (as with ridge-till), probe on top of the rows.

Additionally, you can dig a 2-foot-deep hole and run a knife blade through the sidewall of the hole to check for resistance. Where the knife blade stops is where the hardpan is. When adjusting the depth of the subsoiler shank, you will want to run it just under the compacted layer. For example, if the bottom of the layer is 9 inches deep, then run the shank at 10 or 11 inches, not 12 or 13. Running as shallow as necessary will reduce draft requirements and cost. Subsoiling shanks can also be run in-row, leaving the surface largely undisturbed. The in-row surface layer must be firmed up to prevent the seed from falling deep into the subsoil cracks, however. This is typically done with attachments on the planter.

No-till and reduced-tillage systems benefit soil. The advantages of a no-till system include superior soil conservation, moisture conservation, reduced water runoff, long-term buildup of organic matter, and increased water infiltration. A soil managed without tillage relies on soil organisms to take over the job of plant-residue incorporation formerly done by tillage. On the down side, no-till can foster a reliance on herbicides to control weeds and can lead to soil compaction in the eastern United States. 

FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

Toll of Climate Change on World Food Supply Could Be Worse Than Thought

Global agriculture, already predicted to be stressed by climate change in coming decades, could go into steep, unanticipated declines in some regions due to complications that scientists have so far inadequately considered, say three new scientific reports. The authors say that progressive changes predicted to stem from 1- to 5-degree C temperature rises in coming decades fail to account for seasonal extremes of heat, drought or rain, multiplier effects of spreading diseases or weeds, and other ecological upsets. All are believed more likely in the future. Coauthored by leading researchers from Europe, North America and Australia, they appear in a recent issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Visit www.earth.columbia.edu for more

Organic Cotton Acreage Increases

U.S. acreage planted to organic cotton in 2006 increased from that planted the previous year, according to a 2007 survey conducted by the Organic Trade Association and funded by a grant from Cotton Inc. Survey results indicated a 14% increase in the number of acres planted in organic cotton from 2005 to 2006. Surveyed farmers project continued growth in organic cotton acreage in 2008. USA-gNet reports the survey also revealed a price increase in organic upland cotton from 2005 to 2006, with the average price per pound ranging from \$.85 to \$1.25 in 2006.

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Study Reveals that Nitrogen Fertilizers Deplete Soil

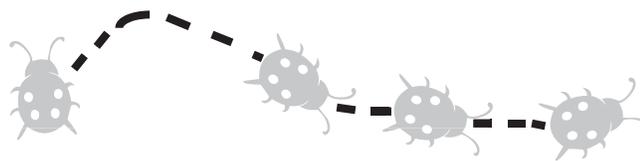
The common practice of adding nitrogen fertilizer is believed to benefit the soil by building organic carbon, but four University of Illinois soil scientists dispute this view based on analyses of soil samples from the Morrow Plots that date back to before the current practice began.

"It is truly fortunate that researchers over the past 100 years have been diligent in collecting and storing samples from the U of I Morrow Plots in order to check how management practices have affected soil properties," said Khan. The Morrow Plots are America's oldest experimental field. "We were intrigued that corn growth and yields had been about 20 percent lower during the past 50 years for the north (continuous corn) than for the south (corn-oats-hay) end of the Morrow Plots, despite considerably greater inputs of fertilizer nitrogen and residues."

To understand why yields were lower for plots that received the most nitrogen, Khan and his colleagues analyzed samples for organic carbon in the soil to identify changes that have occurred since the onset of synthetic nitrogen fertilization in 1955. "What we learned is that after five decades of massive inputs of residue carbon ranging from 90 to 124 tons per acre, all of the residue carbon had disappeared, and there had been a net decrease in soil organic carbon that averaged 4.9 tons per acre. Regardless of the crop rotation, the decline became much greater with the higher nitrogen rate," said Khan.

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USDA Proposes Naturally Raised Standard

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposed voluntary standard for a naturally raised marketing claim for livestock and meat. The standard will be published as a Notice and Request for Comments in the Federal Register and is titled the U.S. Standards for Livestock and Meat Marketing Claims, Naturally Raised Claim for Livestock and the Meat and Meat Products Derived from such Livestock.

Increasingly, livestock and meat producers are using production or processing claims to distinguish their products in the marketplace. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, through its voluntary certification and audit programs, verifies the accuracy of these claims. The proposed standard will establish the minimum requirements for those producers who choose to operate a USDA verified program involving a naturally raised claim. The naturally raised marketing claim will also be a voluntary program.

Visit www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/stand/natural-claim.htm for more

"Locavore" Named Word of the Year

Locavore, which means someone who endeavors to eat locally grown or produced food, beat out several other contenders to be named New Oxford American Dictionary's 2007 Word of the Year. When the word was introduced at World Environment Day 2005 it considered food local if it came from a radius of about 100 miles. The interest in local foods is growing, as is the number of locavores.

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Duke Energy To Invest in Carolina Biomass Power Plants

It might not be as sexy as harnessing the wind, sun and water. But electricity produced from animal waste and plant matter could become a major part of the state's renewable energy future. Duke Energy Corp. says technology has improved to the point it plans to invest in biomass power plants, where animal waste and other organic material is burned directly or processed to generate electricity. North Carolina - with multiple paper mills, scads of poultry farms and more hogs than people -- is well-suited to be a center for the nascent biomass power-generation industry, said David Mohler, Duke's chief technology officer.

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Pesticide Contact May Increase Asthma Risk for Farm Women

A study appearing in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine says that farm women who handle pesticides may be at increased risk of developing allergic asthma, says an Environment News Service story. The study assessed more than 25,000 farmwomen in North Carolina and Iowa, and found that those who applied or mixed pesticides had an increase of 50 percent in the prevalence of allergic asthma. Interestingly, the rate was lower among women who grew up on farms than among those who now work on farms but did not grow up there. Researchers say this protective effect is still poorly understood.

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Mmm, Grassy!

by Rachel Rose

At Padgett Station in Carrboro, NC, all of our food including coffee, tea, and desserts are organic, local if available, and fair trade where applicable. We are thrilled to get our beef from Hogan's Magnolia View Farm (www.hogansbeef.com) just minutes away from our café. We stop by the farm on a regular basis and usually pick up the meat from Rob Hogan personally. We get to see his wonderful sustainable farm and the cows grazing happily out in the pasture, it's inspiring.

Pasture-raised beef not only feels better from an environmental and humanitarian standpoint, it's also more nutritious and better tasting than "conventional" beef. At Padgett Station we have a number of customers who come in several times a week for a bowl of our hearty homemade beef chili. It's cooked with organic tomatoes and onions and a secret blend of well over a dozen organic herbs and spices. We've also served meatballs and beef stew as specials. Some of our customers have told us we're the only restaurant in town where they'll eat beef, because we're the only place that serves sustainably-pastured meat.

Cooking with local meats is a great way to educate people about sustainable agriculture. When I created Rachel's Meatloaf it received a number of compliments from my extended family, a group who

tends to opt for chain restaurants over local eateries, and generally have little concern with food production as long as it's the brand name their used to. I took the opportunity to make a pitch for fresh local foods.

My grandfather grew up in Guilford county. He spent time in his youth working on farms and at the local meat market. He was shocked to learn that the meat he's been eating for the past half century is so far removed from the pastures of his childhood, which are now huge subdivisions. He almost didn't believe me when I told him about the unhealthy effects of raising feedlot beef, responding only, "Cows don't eat corn." Now I deliver a couple pounds when I visit (as well as good eggs and produce), and he's confided, "Don't tell Beth (my aunt), but I can taste the difference, and this is the way meat is supposed to taste."

About the chef

Rachel Rose founded Padgett Station in 2005 and developed all of the recipes currently on the menu. She has a long history in the food industry working at a number of restaurants up and down California. Restaurant ownership runs in the family, her mother owned two while she was growing up. She moved to Carrboro in 2004 because she saw a vibrant sustainably-minded community that could supply the type of food she wanted to feed her family and serve to the community. Padgett Station recently reopened under new ownership that looks forward to carrying on with the same philosophy.

Rachel Rose's Sustainable Meatloaf

This is a quick & easy, moist & hearty meatloaf that is chock-full of iron and protein. Yum!

2 lbs grassfed beef

¾ cup organic tomato (or tomato & vegetable) juice

1/3 cup warm water

2 cage-free eggs

1¼ cup bread crumbs (stale heels of your favorite organic bread, put through the food processor for a few seconds, work great!)

1 tsp each: organic basil & oregano

Salt & pepper to taste

Organic ketchup

Mix all ingredients thoroughly. Form into a loaf, and place in the center of a pan with a lip (to catch juices). Drizzle ketchup over top.

Bake at 350° for approximately 65 minutes.

Enjoy! Serves approximately eight happy people.

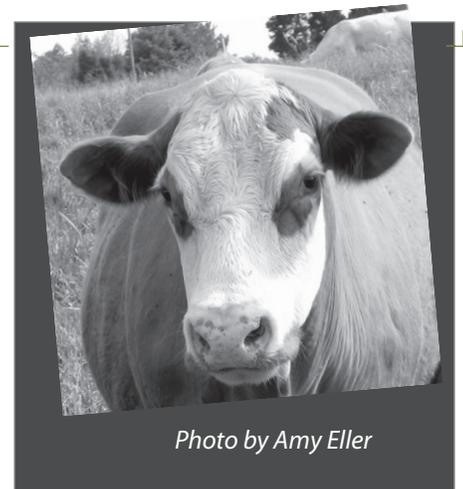


Photo by Amy Eller

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Whole Foods Market Provides \$1 Million in Loans to Small-Scale Local Food Producers to Aid Growth

Whole Foods Market, Inc., the world's leading natural and organic foods supermarket, announced today it has reached a milestone with its new Local Producer Loan Program by administering more than \$1 million in low-interest loans. Loan recipients include small-scale food producers and growers from 12 states. Among their products are agricultural crops, body care products, and artisan foods including nut butters, ice cream, granolas and cheeses.

The most recent loan recipient is Don Lunsford of 3L Farms in Durham, NC. Lunsford worked as a golf course superintendent before deciding to return to his family's farming roots. In operation since 2002, Don is most proud of growing good quality and consistent products; he has dreams of expanding the business to include shiitake mushrooms and tomatoes. Named for the "3 Lunsfords" in the family, 3L Farms will use the loan money to build a greenhouse for hothouse tomatoes.

Applications and additional information are available at <http://www.wholefoods-market.com/loans>.

Bulletin Board listings for non-profit events, workshops, resources etc. are free and will be run as space allows. Members may place one free listing a year selling farm products/services. All other listings are \$.20 word.

Calendar of Events

Winter 2008- Ongoing Frank Hyman's Garden Lecture : The Drought Buster Series! All of these lectures will help gardeners plant and maintain gardens that are able to thrive during a drought with minimal or no additional irrigation. Raleigh, Durham and Greensboro area. Visit www.frankhyman.com or call 919-824-2239 for details.

February 6th, 2008 Planning for Your Farm's Future Farm estate planning conference with latest on estate laws, etc. will be held on February 6th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., statewide conference, no cost to participants; Resource notebook and sponsored lunch provided. Annex meeting room, Agriculture Center in Louisburg, and you must pre-register by February 1st. Contact Martha L. Mobley, Agricultural Extension Agent, at 919-496-3344 or email martha_mobley@ncsu.edu

February 15-16, 2008 9th Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference at the Sheraton Richmond West Hotel in Richmond, VA. The featured speaker will be Dr. Elaine Ingham, President and Director of Research at Soil Foodweb Inc. For complete details, visit the conference website. For more information, contact Marilyn Buerkens at 540-291-4333.

February 20-21, 2008 Winter Vegetable Conference at the Crown Plaza Resort in Asheville, North Carolina. Sponsored by the NC Tomato Growers Association, the NC Cooperative Extension Service, and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, this is the conference to attend if you want to learn the latest about vegetable and specialty crop production in western North Carolina. More information will be added as the program is developed. For more information contact Ellen Sprague at ellen_moss@yahoo.com.

February 23, 2008 Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference Farmers who get to know the needs of local customers and buyers can thrive, given the right business and marketing skills. Join the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), local farmers, agriculture professionals, and marketing specialists for a day-long conference on marketing at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. Visit www.asapconnections.org or call 828-236-1282 for details.

February 23rd, 2008 Successful Small Farms Opportunities Conference For the small and/or part-time farmer in the region, a conference addressing various viable farm topics will be held in Louisburg at the Vance-Granville Community College campus. Details at <http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu> or call Martha L. Mobley, Ag. Extension Agent, at 919-496-3344.

February 28-March 1, 2008 Georgia Organics 11 th Annual Conference and Trade Show in Dalton, GA. Visit www.georgiaorganics.org or call 678-702-0400 for details.

March 8, 2008 Organic Growers School Spring Conference at Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, NC. Visit www.organicgrowersschool.org for details and registration or call 828- 450-7996.

March 25-27, 2008 SARE's 20th Anniversary New American Farm Conference in Kansas City, MO. The theme will be "Advancing the Frontier of Sustainable Agriculture". Tap into 20 years of ground-breaking SARE-funded research, experience and innovations. Visit www.sare.org or call 573-882-8320 for details.



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