Eric Tonesmeier and Dr. Ignacio Chapela to Keynote NOFA Summer Conference

by Mindy Harris

The 37th NOFA Summer Conference will take place August 12th-14th, 2011, at UMass Amherst. The theme is the impact of agricultural systems on the environment. Two wonderful keynote speakers have been selected, both of whom have demonstrated throughout their careers a great reverence and concern for the impact of farming systems on the communities around us – both local and global.

The first keynote speaker, Eric Toensmeier, from Holyoke, Mass, is a well-respected author, urban gardener, and consultant, who is known in permaculture circles for his work on Edible Perennial Gardening. He is the author of Perennial Vegetables and co-author of Edible Forest Gardens with Dave Jacke. Tonesmeier’s keynote address is entitled: “Regenerative and Perennial Agriculture for Climate Stabilization” and will focus on the ways in which the agricultural industry should rethink its various growing mechanisms, in an effort to sequester carbon. Eric will also offer three workshops “Commercial Food Forestry,” “Breeding Perennial Crops,” and “Perennial Crops with Commercial Potential.”

If you thought that environmentalists attaching themselves to trees is the most effective (or only) way to prevent the development of greenhouse gases, you are mistaken. There are lots of ways the agricultural and gardening community in the Northeast can sequester carbon – that is, take carbon out of the atmosphere – by the way we plant, grow and sell our food right here at home. That’s one of the messages Eric wants us to understand. He advocates a perennial edible forest-gardening system, which allows perennial food-bearing plants to stay in place over many years and take carbon out of our atmosphere. Tonesmeier says that we need to design gardens and grow food in ways that mimic a natural forest ecosystem. Forest ecosystems are models because they can provide food and resources, while taking care of their own fertility and pest control, while minimizing human work. Forests are also great models because they mitigate flooding and drought damage, and build fertile soil full of beneficial microorganisms and microorganisms. The second keynote speaker teaches at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Ignacio (continued on page A-21)

Northeast Animal Power Field Days Finds New Home at NOFA Summer Conference, August 12-14, 2011

Northeast Animal Power Field Days

Field Days

www.animalpowerfielddays.org

by David Fisher

The Northeast Animal Power Field Days is an event focused on education and networking around working horses, mules, and oxen. It has been held in Tunbridge, VT every autumn since 2007. This winter, members of the Draft Animal Power Network, which currently organizes the event, have been reflecting on the Field Days and what the event has meant to thousands of people over the past four years. We have been weighing the challenges of holding the event in its established form, time of year, and location. And we have been envisioning how this event can continue to inspire, teach, connect, and supply the working animal community in the Northeast and beyond. In our search for the next steps we have found an incredible opportunity to work with the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA). NOFA has invited us to hold the Field Days in conjunction with their annual Summer Conference, which has been running successfully for 36 years. This opportunity will help us meet many of our goals. Though the Animal Power Field Days has been a thriving success on many levels, it has been financially challenging and has required an unsustainable investment of time and energy. NOFA will help us by providing the administrative and financial support necessary for the event, as well as connecting us to a still broader community.

This year we will hold the Field Days as a part of the NOFA Summer Conference at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass. Those wishing to attend will register for the Summer Conference and will have access to all of the benefits that event offers (see the Summer Conference website www.nofasum... (continued on page A-20)
Organic Tree Fruit

There is perhaps nothing in nature so bountiful as a tree full of ripening fruit. That such plenty could come from a tiny pit or seed blessed with the proper conditions of soil, air, water and sun should strike even the most rational observer as nothing short of a miracle.

Alas. Those who have labored to create even a small orchard have learned that it is not as easy as it looks. Vagaries of site, weather, and neighboring vegetation can play havoc with blossoms. Opportunistic fungi, bacteria, viruses, insects and even four-footed pests are all attracted to fruit trees, often so quickly and in such numbers that the orchardist feels overwhelmed. In the Northeast nothing is so difficult to raise organically as tree fruit, particularly apples.

We have articles on how to deal with insects, that question old wisdom about rootstocks, and that explain how to listen to your trees. Some of the best orchardists in the Northeast speak their wisdom here.

If you have been disappointed in your efforts to raise fruit trees successfully, we believe the information presented here will give you hope. Because of their abundance, orchards attract many other organisms to the Feast. But knowledge of how to build the tree’s resistance, how to prevent infection, how to deter insects and how to exclude nibblers and gnawers can give you a chance to enjoy that wonderful harvest – bushels of fully tree-ripened fruit.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Jack,

Are We Watching The Ending of Organic Agriculture (Food) As We Know It?

The recent deregulation of genetically engineered (GE) alfalfa and GE sugar beets, through cross-pollination, will eventually genetically contaminate organic alfalfa and sugar beets (also chard and beets) rendering them no longer organic. The loss of organic alfalfa and sugar beets will severely impact organic agriculture and consequently consumer choice. Even though, organic Ag now has one foot in the grave, it’s not dead yet.

One lesson I’ve learned from recent events is that electronic petitions sent via the internet (have little influence on federal policy in agriculture. We should probably continue to sign them but don’t expect meaningful results. What else should we do? Now is the time to organize, educate ourselves and others and most importantly STOP BUYING PRODUCTS CONTAINING GE INGREDIENTS. Food corporations and manufactures understand

Organic Tree Fruit

This issue is focused on information that can help organic growers promote more of these miracles without using toxins. We have features on successful orchards in New York, Vermont and Massachusetts, on taking over old orchards and planting new ones. We have articles on how to deal with insects, that question old wisdom about rootstocks, and that explain how to listen to your trees. Some of the best orchardists in the Northeast speak their wisdom here.

If you have been disappointed in your efforts to raise fruit trees successfully, we believe the information presented here will give you hope. Because of their abundance, orchards attract many other organisms to the feast. But knowledge of how to build the tree’s resistance, how to prevent infection, how to deter insects and how to exclude nibblers and gnawers can give you a chance to enjoy that wonderful harvest – bushels of fully tree-ripened fruit.

Advertise in or Sponsor The Natural Farmer

Advertisements not only bring in TNF revenue, which means less must come from membership dues, they also make a paper interesting and helpful to those looking for specific goods or services. We carry 2 kinds of ads:

- The NOFA Exchange - this is a free bulletin board service (for subscribers or NOFA members who get the TNF) for occasional needs or offerings. Send in up to 100 words and we’ll print it free in the next issue. Include a price (if selling) and an address, E-Mail or phone number so readers can contact you directly. If you don’t get the paper yourself you can still send in an ad – just send $5 along too! Send NOFA Exchange ads directly to The Natural Farmer, 411 Sheldon Rd., Barre, MA 01005 or (preferably) E-mail to TNF@nofa.org.

- Display Ads - is for those offering products or services on a regular basis. You can get real attention with display ads. Send camera ready copy to Bob Minnocci, 662 Massachusetts Rd., Barre, MA 01005 or (preferably) E-mail to TNF@nofa.org.

Display Ad DEADLINES:

- Summer issue: January 31 for the Spring issue (mails Mar. 1)
- Fall issue: April 30 for the Summer issue (mails Jun. 1)
- Winter issue: July 31 for the Fall issue (mails Sept. 1)
- Spring issue: October 31 for the Winter issue (mails Dec. 1)

Display Ad RATES:

- Full page (15” tall by 10” wide) $360 $500
- Half page (7 1/2” tall by 10” wide) $300 $450
- One-third page (7 1/2” tall by 6 1/2” wide) $250 $375
- One-sixth page (7 1/2” tall by 4 7/8” wide) $200 $300
- One-quarter page (7 1/2” tall by 4 7/8” wide) $250 $375
- One-eighth page (7 1/2” tall by 3 5/8” wide) $250 $375
- One-sixteenth page (7 1/2” tall by 2 1/2” wide) $200 $250
- One-twenty-fourth page (7 1/2” tall by 1 3/8” wide) $250 $375

Note: These prices are for camera ready copy on clean paper, or electronically in jpeg or pdf format. If you want any changes we will be glad to make them - or to type set a display ad for you - for $35 (which includes one revision - additional revisions are $10 each). Just send us the text, any graphics, and a sketch of how you want it to look. Include a check for the space charge plus $45.

The Natural Farmer

The Natural Farmer is a quarterly membership journal of the Northeast Organic Farming Association. We plan a year in advance so those who want to write on a topic can have a lot of lead time. The next 3 issues will be:

- Summer 2011: Legumes as Cover Crops
- Fall 2011: What About the Farm Bill?
- Spring 2012: Organic Seeds

If you can help us on any of these topics, or have ideas for new ones, please get in touch. We need your help! Deadlines are same as for ads. 

Moving or missed an issue? The Natural Farmer will not be forwarded by the post office, so you need to make sure your address is up-to-date if you move. Those who regularly send us a subscription fee should send address changes to NOFA chapter (listed at the end of each issue). Archived issues from Summer 1999 through Fall 2005 are available at http://www.library.umass.edu/scpol/digital/tnf/. More recent issues are downloadable at www.nofa.org as pdf files.

Jack Kittredge and Julie Rawson
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sales and their bottom line. We don’t need every American to stop buying GE products just enough to create a tipping point to cut into corporate profits. Money gets their attention.

How do we know a product contains GE ingredients if they are not labeled?Essentially, they are labeled. If a product contains non-organic corn or soy or products derived from corn or soy then that product more than likely contains GE ingredients. DON’T BUY THEM. How do we know what’s derived from GE corn or soy? To find out print a copy of the free Non-GMO Shopping Guide at NonGmoShoppingGuide.com. Be tenacious. Every organic, natural, health food store sells products with GE ingredients. Read the labels, tell store managers why you are not buying a product, email manufacturers and ask questions about their use of GE ingredients, reduce the demand for GE crops and tip the scales toward growing non-GE crops. It’s not too late but we must act now to save organics.

Sincerely,
Ed Stockman
Organic farmer/Agrobiologist
edstockman@verizon.net

Dear Ed,
I agree with you that we have to take this situation in our own hands. Both political parties have bought a bill of goods from the biotech companies and are deaf to the honest concerns of most Americans about this technology. The path you suggest is a good one. I am not convinced it alone is going to bring down Monsanto and the others, but we must act now to save organics.

To Whom It May Concern,
Jack

Thank you for your thoughts on the article by Stephen Sherman in the Winter 2010-11 The Natural Farmer. There is no question that the boom in interest in local food has attracted into the market many people who are not traditionally customers of local farms. It has also promoted a number of different models of marketing and delivery by small farms and businesses. I ran the article because it focused on a striking example of a very successful marketing and delivery operation which in part produces its own food, in part buys from nearby small farmers, and in part buys from distant farms, especially seasonally. It is controversial among small farms neighboring its delivery area precisely because it is successful and is taking business from some of them.

I appreciate your statement that delivery services serve a vital function and have many benefits which attract people who would not normally patronize farmers markets or CSAs. The article was not meant to attack delivery services but to feature some of the differences between them and CSAs, and give space to both models to discuss them. I am glad that you have taken this opportunity to mention some of the positive points of delivery services. We have indeed featured several delivery services in our pages in the past. In particular the Fall 2004 and Summer 2008 issues dealt with several Northeastern organic produce delivery services in our pages in the past. In particular the Fall 2004 and Summer 2008 issues dealt with several Northeastern organic produce delivery services in our pages in the past.

Hi Aleisha,

Thanks for your thoughts on the article by

Best Regards,
Alegia Gibbons
Owner
Berkshire Organics, LLC

Hi Aleisha,

We are focused organic produce delivery service serving the Berkshires in Western, MA (also parts of Southern VT and Eastern NY), and here are some of the benefits your article neglects to mention:

Farmers access a portion of the market they wouldn’t normally through CSAs and farmers markets. Our clients typically work full time and don’t have time or resources to commit to either of these programs.

We offer a year-round service, therefore farmers have a year-round outlet for produce, and we have noted that some farmers have already started extending their growing season.

We are constantly educating our clients about eating seasonally, and what fresh, local foods are available.

We offer weekly sales (25%-40% off produce) to clear storage space for new produce, and we find this often enables families of limited financial means to also eat local & organic produce.

We support infrastructure for a local school system in their farm to school program, assisting with logistics, storage and delivery.

Farmers markets in our area have grown in number and increased in number in the last two years.

Some farmers cannot staff a stall at a farmer’s market, and we offer another outlet other than a farm stand on their property.

We see ourselves as a community service, part of the solution and offer farmers another distribution platform in addition to their CSA programs and farmers markets.

We notify our clients each week which farm their produce has been sourced from to remain transparent and promote our farmers, who are also listed on our website.

We have partnered with South Shore Organics to extend this service in Plymouth County, MA.

We are proof that a service like ours can increase consumer demand for local produce, and be a large benefit to local farms.

PS – If you would be interested in publishing an article covering the other side of the coin, we would be happy to host you for an on-site visit and interview with our team and some of the local farms we work with.

Best Regards,
Aleisha Gibbons
Owner
Berkshire Organics, LLC

Please help us thank these Friends of Organic Farming for their generous support!

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Hi

I’m the produce buyer at the Putney Coop, Putney, VT. I heard you used a picture of our department for their generous support!
Apprenticeship openings at Simple Gifts Farm. Simple Gifts Farm is a diversified market farm in Amherst, MA. We grow about 15 acres of vegetables for 300 CSA shares, farmer’s market, and some wholesale. We also have an expanding menagerie of laying hens, pigs, beef cattle, and sheep who we use to build soil fertility and manage the remaining 20 acres of land. We are seeking 4 apprentices for the 2011 season. One of the main requirements includes a position along with application instructions, are at http://www.simplegiftsfermcsa.com/index.php?page=9.

Experienced farmers seek 24-40 tillable acres for a vegetable operation in the Northeast US. We will consider long term lease or standard sale. We have been managing a 14 acre vegetable operation for a nonprofit organization for the past eight years. We envision a vibrant farm which produces healthy food for our local community using sustainable growing methods, while providing opportunities for people to connect with the land and their community. Please pass any leads on to us at 485-485-6243 or wendyandasher@hotmail.com.

Mountain Dell Farm seeks three apprentices for 2011 season, May 1 through Thanksgiving. We have been making our living as organic vegetable farmers since 1990, and have taught many people how to farm. We farm five acres intensively. Must know how to work hard, although farm experience is not necessary. Lovers include planting, weeding, picking and packing. Apprenticeship includes private cabin, board, plus good stipend for 50-hour weeks. We live in a beautiful land in the foothills of the Catskills. Mark Dunau or Lisa Wujnowich, Mountain Dell Farm, 2386 Roods Creek Rd., Hancock, NY 13783. 607-436-4034. e-mail at mdunau@tds.net.

NOFA Exchange
Established, all organic farm needs several people to help with greenhouse planting, weeding, cultivating, picking and selling organic vegetables at farm stand, farmers markets and through a CSA. Experienced and inexperienced all wanted. Weekly pay, plenty of food and very good housing. April through December. 860-297-0297 or 860-280-4476. GeorgeHallFarm@att.net, 180 Old Farm Rd., Simsbury, CT 06070.

Looking for full time farm-based educators during the summer of 2011 at the FARM INSTITUTE, a 160 acre teaching farm on the island of Martha’s Vineyard in Massachusetts. All applicants must have experience with teaching children and leading groups, as well as an interest in sustainable agriculture. Applicants with skills in gardening, cooking, livestock handling, environmental education or carpentry are preferred, but not required. Our educational programs focus on farming, sustainability, nutrition, and earth stewardship. Summer farmhands are responsible for farm-based educational programming during 11 weeks of summer programs. Send resume and cover letter to Sidney Morris, Education Director, education@farminst.org.

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Livestock in U.S. Gobble Up Antibiotics

U.S.-raised food animals consumed about 29 million pounds of antibiotics in the last year alone, according to a Food and Drug Administration accounting of antimicrobial drug use by the American livestock industry. The release of the figures -- in a little-noticed posting on the FDA’s website -- came in response to a 2008 law requiring the federal government to collect and disseminate information on antibiotic use in livestock as part of the Animal Drug User Fee Act.

Farmers feed these medications to the animals they raise for market in an effort to prevent disease from spreading among flocks of poultry and herds of livestock living in crowded and often unsanitary conditions. The medications also promote faster growth in many animals. The ubiquitous use of these medications is controversial because they are used to counter the effects of raising livestock in conditions that are unhealthy and widely considered cruel. But they represent a major public health concern too: the widespread administration of antibiotics to prevent infections in animals has made those same antibiotics less effective in fighting off disease in animals and in humans.


Many GM Crop Patents Near End

Patents will expire over the next ten years on two dozen genetically modified seed varieties. The first, in 2014, will be the herbicide-tolerant Roundup Ready soybeans developed by Monsanto Co and used by most of the U.S. soybean farmers. When a patent expires, growers can save some of their crop as seed for next year’s crop, rather than having to pay Monsanto for the right to plant it.

source: http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN1237430120110113

Reviving Non-GMO Corn Seed Breeding

Over 80% of corn grown in the US is now from GMO seed, and some seed companies are phasing out non-GMO seed. But a new initiative called the US Testing Network plans to develop and market improved non-GMO hybrid corn seed. The Network is composed of independent seed companies as well as public and private corn breeders, including the Alberta Lea Seed House, American Organic Seed, Blue River Hybrids, Browseed Genetics, Doeblers Hybrids, and Organic Valley. University members include Cornell, Ohio State and Texas A&M.

For more information on the program, contact Sarah Carlson, US Testing coordinator, at sarah@practi-calfarmers.org.

source: The Organic and Non-GMO Report, December/January 2011

New GM Apple Doesn’t Turn Brown When Cut

A Canadian biotech firm is seeking approval for its genetically engineered “Arctic” apple. Its primary novelty: the apple won’t turn brown after slicing. Okanagan Specialty Fruits of Summerland, BC has turned off the gene which creates an enzyme responsible for browning. Andrew Kimbrell of the Center for Food Safety, however, says: “…that switch is connected to another switch and another switch. You can’t just do one thing to nature.”

source: The Organic and Non-GMO Report, December/January 2011

Oregano Decreases Cow Methane Emissions

A Penn State dairy scientist has developed a oregano-based supplement that both decreases methane emissions in dairy cows by 40% and also improves milk production by nearly 3 lbs per cow. Alexander Hristov, Associate Professor of Dairy Nutrition, developed the product.

source: Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association News, Winter, 2011

US Court Rejects USDA Raw Almond Appeal

A panel of federal Appeals Court judges has denied the USDA’s appeal of a federal court ruling recognizing that almonds grown in California have the legal right to challenge the USDA’s controversial mandate that they pasteurize their “raw” almonds. One of the judges, in the December ruling, noted: “The market for these almonds directly benefits the producers’ ability to sell their [raw] almonds and significantly affects their livelihoods.” The USDA still has the option to appeal this to the Supreme Court, a decision they must make by early March.

source: Cornucopia’s The Cultivator, January, 2011

Real Pickles Wins a Good Food Award

Dan Rosenberg and Addie Holland of Greenfield, Massachusetts-based Real Pickles joined top artisan food producers from around the country in January for the Good Food Awards ceremony at the Ferry Building in San Francisco. At the event, restaurateur and food activist Alice Waters announced the winners and, much to the couple’s delight, Real Pickles’ Organic Garlic Dills was on the list.

“We’re so pleased,” said Rosenberg after the winners had been announced. “When we started the business in 2001, there was little awareness of the flavor and health benefits of fermented foods. We think we make great pickles but to be recognized in this national setting is very exciting.” Real Pickles uses traditional methods to make its line of fermented vegetables. Their Organic Garlic Dill Pickles, as with all of their products, are made with certified organic vegetables from local family farms, including Chamatuka Farm in Whately and Atlas Farm in Deerfield. The garlic is sourced from Old Friends Farm in Amherst, and the dill from Riverland Farm in Sunderland. The pickles are available from area retailers including Green Fields Co-op Market in Greenfield, River Valley Market in Northampton, and many Whole Foods Market locations.

source: Real Pickles press release, January 17, 2011

GM Mosquitoes Secretly Released to Fight Dengue Fever

In 2009 3.3 million genetically modified, sterile mosquito larvae were released in the Cayman Islands to unsuccessfully mate with female mosquitoes and thus reduce the population of the insects, which spread dengue fever. The release was only disclosed more than a year after it occurred. Dr. Helen Wallace of GeneWatch UK said: “The British scientific establishment is...using an Overseas Territory as a private lab. There is no excuse for funding trials without public consultation or ethical oversight...”

source: The Organic and Non-GMO Report, December/January 2011

NOSB Recommends Banning Nanotechnology

The National Organic Standards Board has directed the National Organic Program to prohibit engineered nanomaterials from organic products and organic food packaging.

source: The Organic and Non-GMO Report, December/January 2011

OraGOLD Claims EU Approval for New Apple

A new apple variety, created by the OraGOLD company in Europe, which is resistant to the apple maggot pest, has been granted market approval by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The company, which created the variety, believes the approval will have a sustainable benefit for apple growers worldwide.


USDA Proposes New Pesticide Testing Regulations

The USDA has proposed new regulations for the registration of pesticides for sale and the registration of applicators who apply pesticides to food crops. The proposed regulations were released in December of 2010 and public comments were due in February of 2011. The USDA has also proposed to increase the level of testing for pesticides in the environment.


FBI: USDA’s Commercially-Sensitive Information Illegally Disclosed

The FBI is investigating the disclosure of 47,000 pages of USDA documents that were illegally released over the past year. The documents were illegally released through the Freedom of Information Act. The FBI is investigating who released the documents and why.

News from the NOFA Interstate Council

by Bill Duesing, Council president (info@nofa.org)

The Northeast Organic Farming Association has over 5,000 members in seven independent state chapters that work together through the NOFA Interstate Council (NOFA IC), the governing body of NOFA as a whole. The Council is the way the seven state chapters work together on projects of mutual interest. The Council includes two representatives from each of the state chapters who meet quarterly and at an annual retreat (see photo above).


A brief description of the Council’s other current projects follows. Let me know if you want more information or have questions, suggestions or donations.

**Policy.** NOFA’s policy chair Elizabeth Henderson and policy coordinator Steve Gilman work both with our national and international partners and with NOFA chapters to address important issues and build capacity. Our major partners include IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, NSAC, (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition), NOC, (National Organic Coalition), DFTA (Domestic Fair Trade Association), and AJP (Agricultural Justice Project). These coalitions have seen success in the recent Food Safety Legislation and in access to pasture and other advances in the National Organic Standards. The upcoming Farm Bill will require all the resources and skills we can muster to bring a strong sustainable and organic perspective to its shaping.

**Beginning Farmers.** Led by Kate Mendenhall and NOFA-NY, the NOFA chapters are collaborating with MOFGA (Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association) to make the Northeast a great place to learn to farm and settle down.

**Publishing.** We’ve contracted with Chelsea Green publishers to reprint the NOFA Organic Principles and Practices Handbook Series. Several of the authors have updated their books to reflect changes since the books were first published in 2004. This arrangement will allow better distribution of the series and provide NOFA IC with royalties.

Our webmaster David Pontius has created an updated version of the www.nofa.org site—which will be released this spring. This provides a portal to the state chapters and a place for policy information, web commerce and exchanges.

**Credit Card.** The Council has arranged with Capitol One for a NOFA branded credit card (see ad on page A-19) to create an ongoing funding source for developing our capacity for policy work. We hope you will participate in the painless way to donate to NOFA. We get $50 even if you sign up for a card, use it once and cut it up. If you continue to use it to buy gas and groceries NOFA gets 2 percent of the sale. NOFA gets 1 percent for any other purchases. It takes a little of the sting out of spending, and if you pay in full each month, there is no extra cost to you. You’ll get a letter each quarter acknowledging your donation for tax purposes.

**Planting Seeds CD.** Musician Maria Sangiolo has agreed to donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale of her recording, *Maria and Friends - Planting Seeds* to NOFA. It contains wonderfully upbeat songs about the garden and a local food system. Look for it in late March, 2011.

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Dear Ann,

I just wanted to tell you that last winter was the 1st year I fed fish fertilized with your Fish, feed at 20 lbs per acre, and crab meal at 25 lbs per acre, and we noticed that the crops were much better. The corn was healthy, and the soybeans had a great stand. We will continue to use your products.

Sincerely,

Wayne Paine

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To locate a dealer go to: www.blueriverorgseed.com or call the BRH office at: 800-370-7979
Garden Notes: Volunteers Galore

by Larry Siegel

With apologies to Buffalo Springfield (am I the only one out there who remembers Buffalo Springfield?), “Something’s happening here, what it is ain’t exactly clear.” We garden in north-central Massachusetts at an elevation of 1200 feet. When we first began, in 1977, and for a good number of years thereafter, we were at the cusp of zone four. Now we are firmly entrenched in zone five. Readings below zero degrees were commonplace; in recent years they have been rare. With meaningful snow cover, frost has barely penetrated the soil. (Prevailing wisdom hereabouts is to bury water pipes four feet to prevent freezing.)

The first beneficiary has been the potato. It has not always been the case, but for many years now any potato (or piece thereof) missed during harvest has sprouted the following year. Despite my efforts to extract every last potato, I can be assured of a multitude of potatoes in the prior year’s patch. Alliums of all sorts (garlic, shallots, onions, leeks) survive as well, the latter two sending up seed heads, the former providing anxiously-awaited spring greens. I am not keen on gladiolas, but one of our sons is. Glads, of course, need to be dug each year. Except, in recent years, there has been less need. Glads, like the potatoes, are emerging the following spring from any corms left in the ground (and the number of baby corms formed is uncountable). Since glads are planted in a different spot every year, surviving plants have become pesky weeds. (It is no easy task to pull up a young glad plant.) This past spring provided the biggest surprise of all. In the coldest, wettest part of my garden, lacking any mulch, my two dozen celery plants began re-growth. Celery usually gives up the ghost before winter even begins. Over the next few weeks, most rotted at the base and died off (similar to my experience with wintered over parsley), but several survived, flowered, and set fruit (continued on page A-9)
The Natural Farmer

Spring, 2011

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Registration is FREE for qualified retail buyers, brokers and distributors until August 19, 2011. Use promo code NATURAL and you will be entered into a drawing to win a $50 VISA gift card.*

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*Winners will need to pick up their gift card onsite September 23, 2011 at Natural Products Expo East

We Invite You to Join Us

The 5th Annual Organic Summit will take place September 21, 2011 Baltimore Hilton Hotel in Baltimore, MD.

Space is Limited. Register on or before June 3, 2011 using promo code NOFA to take advantage of the early bird rate – Save $200

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Admission to Natural Products Expo East/Organic Products Expo - BioFach America and All Things Organic is included with registration to the 2011 Organic Summit.

Produced by New Hope Natural Media, a division of Penton Media, Inc.
U.S. Department of (Roundup Ready™) Agriculture Throws Organic Under the Bus

by Steve Gilman, NOFA-IC Policy Coordinator

Ending a month-long charade begun over the Christmas holidays, USDA completely caved to the demands of the biotech industry, first deregulating Genetically Engineered (GE) Roundup Ready™ alfalfa and then sugar beets – turning them loose for widespread planting this spring. The White House apparently played a role in the acquiescence after Secretary Vilsack was called to a Congressional Hearing and taken to the woodshed by the new Republican-led, biotech-dominated House Ag Committee for not deregulating the “perfectly safe” GE alfalfa. The cloud of litigation – from the manufacturer – for damages; comprehensive biotech labeling and regular monitoring of the crop “coexistence” strategy to cement their corporate hegemony is a stated long term goal of Monsanto and hegemony is a stated long term goal of Monsanto and the depth of corporate corruption in government.

The rulings assure that there will be certain and am- plified contamination of the organic food supply, adversely affecting organic farmers and consum- ers alike. The GE crop varieties are proven highly promiscuous, spreading by wind-blown pollen and cross-fertilized by bees over long distances. Alfalfa is a mainstay of the organic and GE-free dairy and beef industries – and sugar beets readily cross-pollinate with table beets and chard. Apropos of the field, labeling mix-ups and conning contamination are rife in the seed handling system.

Contamination policy

So it comes as no surprise that using a protracted GE crop “coexistence” strategy to cement their corporate hegemony is a stated long term goal of Monsanto and the depth of corporate corruption in government. And an initiative called “Millions Against Monsanto” is targeting big supermarket retailers, demanding that they label the GE foods on their shelves.

State legislative proposals are also in the offing. A New Mexico bill would protect farmers inadvertently contaminated by GE crops from being sued by the manufacturer and set up local jurisdiction for lawsuits rather than in Monsanto’s home court. There have also been nationwide calls for farmers and gardeners to boycott Monsanto seed. Monsanto has acquired oligopoly ownership in the seed business and is asking their seed retailers to provide listings of Monsanto seeds, too, have found the “balmy” conditions to

Finding Justice

Straight away, the USDA ruling is headed back to the Courts. Although they’re stretched thin, the Center for Food Safety which brought one of the original suits all the way to the Supreme Court, has filed for an injunction with the Judge who issued the desist orders, but whether this action will be successful in time to stop spring planting is in question.

GE deregulation can also be stopped by the House. At this point the strategy is to continue with the camping the organic community to come together and to barrage the White House with calls demanding the reversal of the GE deregulation decisions.

Other counter-attacks are gearing up on a number of fronts. A group from the Columbia University law school called the Patent Foundation, is enlisting organiza- tions along with individuals nationwide to challenge shady Monsanto’s originating patents in the Courts. The challenges could be both civil and criminal.

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Looking through the programs of the NOFA winter conferences, it is exciting to see how many workshops there are these days that strengthen farmers’ capacity to calculate their production expenses without which fair pricing is not possible, and to improve the balance and resilience of their operations. To list only a few: “What Are You Worth? Cost of Production Training,” “Farm and Family: Achieving Balance on Your Farm,” “Getting Started with Farm Planning and Management,” “Employment and Labor Law for Farmers,” and “Internships, Apprentices and Employees: An Exercise in Clarity.”

At the annual retreat of the Interstate Council, the chapters report to one another on their accomplishments for the year and share successes, failures, frustrations and hopes. The chapters that have staff are also making progress as employers, improving the stability of the jobs of their employees and gradually making more benefits available. The New Jersey chapter has gone from deep in the red to solid finances under the leadership of Steve Gilman. Steve will have the time to support members from all the states in their work on national and international issues such as climate change, food safety, organic integrity and the Farm Bill. I am hoping to recruit members from each chapter who would like to get more involved in shaping and participating in Domestic Fair Trade. Please contact me if you are interested!

This is what the chapters reported on their progress in increasing diversity and social justice initiatives:

1. Family Scale Farming.
2. Capacity Building for Producers and Workers.
3. Democratic, Participatory Ownership & Control.
4. Rights of Labor.
6. Direct Trade.
7. Fair & Stable Pricing.
8. Shared Risk & Affordable Credit.
9. Long-Term Trade Relationships.
10. Sustainable Agriculture.
11. Appropriate Technology.

CT-NOFA:
• City Farm and Garden Tour in New Haven highlighting community gardens and urban schools with gardens and farms.
• Educational collaboration with Common Ground High School on a farm in New Haven
• Participated in the Environmental Justice Conference.
• Support for Connecticut Community Gardening Association
• Collaborations with Manchester Community College on Taste! and Winter Conference.

NOFA-Mass:
• GtC has moved away (loss of diversity).
• Hiring a Boston-area organizer in 2011: will be working with low-income and suburban constituencies.
• Will be involved in four beginning farmer grants in 2011, land access to low-income people to be a major focus.
• Localized extension events at some level to reach appropriate populations.
• Ongoing collaboration with Nuestras Raíces and Luteran Social Services.
• In 2010, continued focused outreach for low-income people to participate in free and reduced meal program.

CT-NY:
• 2011 Farm Share Program (subsidized CSA shares) to offer fall and winter shares, along with summer CSA shares to over 1,300 low-income individuals, with 60 farms participating, representing more than $100,000 in CSA shares.
• Farm to School program (VT FEED) working with 100 schools to provide local and (mostly) organic food. A majority of the schools involved serve kids that participate in free and reduced meal program.

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Hands in the Earth - Lessons from My Father
by Patricia Chase Allen
published in 2010 by Book in Hand Publishers, Burlington, VT $22.50
review by H. Paul Berlejung

"Hands in the Earth" is a reminiscence of growing up on a farm near Randolph Center, Vermont. It's a month by month/season by season chronology that covers most of 1954 and the first few months of 1955. With chapter names such as "Wrestling with Weeds," "Ornery Animals," "Monster Machinery," "Sacks and Sacks of Oats" and "Treachersome Tools" you know the story is going to be about a not so soft life and a sometimes hazardous one too. It's also the chronicle of the joy of growing up with your 'hands in the earth.'

After her parents' sale of their last two horses and having mechanized most of the farm, Allen says that "much of the tedious, hard labor had been eliminated." After saying that Allen goes on to describe a tractor fire running over one of her feet, her sister being butted and then stomped by a cow and a pitchfork impaling a foot of one of her brothers. Based upon those events it doesn't appear that all of the hard labor had been completely 'eliminated.'

Once Allen’s father stated "We have everything we need from our garden except salt for the salt shaker." While not quite as self-reliant as her father’s statement, Allen’s family was a lot more self-reliant than most of today's. As an example, her older brother Clarence modified their potato planter to ease the arduous task of planting acres of corn by hand. At harvest the corn was sold to a cannery and the profits spent on commodities they couldn’t grow: watermelon on the 4th of July, cranberries at Thanksgiving and oranges at Christmas.

I didn’t alphabetize the vegetables Allen’s family grew but it looked as if they grew a vegetable that began with every letter from A to Z. In some cases twice: carrots and cabbage.

On the subject of vegetables -- what do you do with seven acres of potatoes? Well, first Allen tells us you worked two weeks from dawn till dark harvesting them, grading them and then storing them in the root cellar. Allen tells all the ways they ate potatoes over the course of the year. It reminded me of Benjamín Buford "Bubba" Blue going on forever in Forrest Gump telling all the ways you can eat shrimp. In Allen’s book the potatoes they ate were mashed, baked, topping shepherd’s pie, boiled, parsley potatoes, scalloped, fried, French fried, home fries with onions, potato pancakes, added to soups and chowders and combined with peas (which of course they grew on the farm) and carrots.

All was not rosy in rural 1954 Vermont though. There was poverty too. Allen tells of a family “down the road” whose “teeth were black and their eyes were way deep in their faces,” with no socks and their lace-less shoes full of holes. Sadness too: Allen’s Aunt Almira spent many a day in Waterbury State Hospital for patients with emotional problems.

Allen’s book is an especially easy read for any young person, so I would suggest you buy two copies: one copy for a young person’s upcoming birthday or similar event, and one to read for yourself. A retired Vermont public school system teacher, Allen has also written an instructional guide for teachers and parents to accompany the book.

Berlejung and his wife Mary, both ‘big city’ kids, keep bees and a 50’ by 100’ garden in Greton, VT where they have lived off-grid for the past four years.

"You Unplugged" by Scott W. Webb
published self-published; 2009 175 pages, $10.00
order direct from author at www.YouUnplugged.net
review by Lynn Klein

From the title, some might think this book is about getting away from technology, or playing acoustic music. Not so. This is the second book about the connections between our environment and our health by the author of “Inside Poop”. Anyone who hasn’t read the first book has some catching up to do.

No one in this country can get through a single day without being “informed” of some ominous new threat to health, or some amazing use for a prescription drug, or dietary supplement. Readers of the TNF probably don’t get much of a rise from such “news”, but rather think that they know better because they are aware of what it takes to be healthy. This is true…to a point. By showing us that even an organic diet is not enough, Scott Webb makes exactly that point. On the “Welcome” page, Webb states that he “believes that learning more about how the human body functions amidst an increasingly civilized world is a fascinating and worthwhile topic to explore” (my emphasis.) In other words, we have bodies designed to live outdoors, hunting and gathering, yet we live in cities with dirty air, water and less then fresh food. So how can we be truly optimally healthy?

"You Unplugged" is a chronicle of food, the food industry, health and health care in the US. Yet it is more, because Webb gives us a way to approach optimal health. Webb tells us his story in the introduction. It is almost funny to read about his memories of being awestruck by frosted Pop Tarts. I could clearly follow the history of food in America from his story based on his own family history. He describes how his grandfather was in the grocery business, at a time when everything began changing. Pre-packaged, prepared food products began appearing on the store shelves after World War II. It was the beginning of the rush to create “food products” meant to be convenient and modern. However, our inside workings are not modern. We are the same inside as our ancestors were as far back as the earliest fossil human.

This book is more like a discussion with you, the reader, delivered in a friendly, yet no nonsense way, that makes you respond aloud as you read the printed page. Scott questions things that are promoted as truth. He is a skeptic, yet open minded in his analysis of such information. He clearly states his personal position in

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regard to his own health and the “medicos”. “Thank you, no”, sums it up for him.

“If a person lives within the system, then they will be required to live by its rules. And interventions. We cannot unplug from medicine unless we do something differently. Right?” (emphasis mine)

Scott uses delightful analogies to explain things. (I promise that you will never view the story of the “Wizard of Oz” the same again.) He is clear on what he views as “broken”, and what he sees that “works” to bring us closer to real health. His sense of the magical aspects of life and health is true. His respect is reserved for invisible forces that work together within us and the Earth that result in harmonious function of our bodies.

If you want to understand where you have been in regards to your health and improve your plan for future health, read this book. If you are sick of being sick, and are ready to take charge of your own health, read this book. I charge you to not only “read” it, but get fired up and use this book to make even 1 change in your life. One step at a time is all any of us can take, and Scott has written an intriguing road map for all of us who walk outside the accepted medical establishments’ proclamations and directives.

Personally, I thank Scott for helping me feel less alone, and more empowered as I continue on my journey towards optimal health. The first 7 readers who want a copy of this book may get one at cost ($10) plus shipping ($3), by contacting me at lynnke70@gmail.com.

Growing, Older: A Chronicle of Death, Life and Vegetables
by Joan Dye Gussow.
2010, Chelsea Green Publishing
256 pages, $17.95 trade paperback, ISBN # 9781603582926
review by Sue Smith-Heavenrich

For more than 40 years Joan Dye Gussow has grown her own food along the banks of the Hudson River. She also created and teaches the Nutritional Ecology program at Columbia University and, at 81, continues to lecture nationwide. Through her first two books, This Organic Life and The Feeding Web: Issues in Nutritional Ecology Gussow helped pioneer the local-food movement. In her newest book, Growing, Older, Gussow writes about the growing of her life-sustaining garden and the

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growing maturation of the gardener – herself – who nur-
tures it. She begins in the most unlikely place: the discov-
er of how society views aging and how an elderly, widowed woman “ought” to behave. She urges readers to accept the realities of growing older on a changing planet – we’ll have to learn self reliance, self restraint, how to yield graciously to necessity and, most importantly, how to come to terms with the inconsistenci-
cies of the increasingly unnatural world our choices have left us with.

Throughout the book Gussow combines gardening wis-
dom with reflections on how society views aging and how an elderly, widowed woman “ought” to behave. She urges readers to accept the realities of growing older on a changing planet – we’ll have to learn self reliance, self restraint, how to yield graciously to necessity and, most importantly, how to come to terms with the inconsistenci-
cies of the increasingly unnatural world our choices have left us with.

But, she insists, this is a book about hope.

Gussow compares an old refrigerator that continues to work with a new stove that doesn’t. She worries about the future of a world that is increasingly obsessed with novelty and a culture that leads people to believe that they have to escape to find happiness. In this age of peak oil and global warning, Gussow writes, we need to “stop driving around on weekends looking for a place to be happy. We can’t save the planet if we don’t try harder do make the places we live into places we want to be. The best thing we can do, says Gussow, is stay put and dig potatoes.

Moving things, Gussow learned, is harder when you’re alone. When she lost her husband she lost more than a life partner; she lost the person who helped her lift things, move things around. Even the most independent gardener will find there are some tasks you cannot accomplish alone. This leads to a reflection on draft animals, energy, food production and the need for more localized agricul-
ture.

“We need to be willing to pay more for food grown by local farmers,” Gussow writes, “even if it’s not what we planned on eating.”

We also have to, as gardeners, increase the diversity of crops we grow for our own tables, Gussow points out. Her own garden isn’t large: 22 raised beds in the back yard, each measuring a yard across and 14 feet long. There’s a five-foot wide path of clover that runs down the center, and between each bed a 2-foot wide paved path. Along with the fruit trees, she manages to provide most of what she eats through the year.

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Food Justice Label Launches Nationwide: Bringing Fairness to the Food System

by Liz Henderson

Fair prices to farmers that cover their costs of production, the protection of children from hazardous farm work, and living wages plus respectful treatment for all food system workers are the core guarantees of the new Food Justice Certified label. After a dozen years in development, the Agricultural Justice Project is launching this program across North America.

The Farmer Direct Coop, a marketing cooperative of 70 grain farms in Saskatchewan, is the first group of farmers to earn the Food Justice label. Hoch Orchards, Featherstone Farm, the Bluff Country Coop, and the Midwest Organic Services Association in the Upper Mid-West have also met the high bar for AJP certification as part of its pilot project over the past three years.

In announcing the official launch of this domestic fair trade program, Michael Sligh, of the Agricultural Justice Project Management Committee, declared, “Just as the certified organic label took years and input from thousands of individuals to become the gold standard for how to grow and produce our food, the creation of Food Justice Certified has involved a broad base of committed individuals and groups from all sectors of the food system. The process has been transparent and rigorous and aims to set a high bar for integrity and fair relations among the people who grow, process and sell our food. A truly digestible food product is one in which farmers, farm workers and those who sell the fruits of this labor all work collaboratively.”

The Food Justice label is available both to farms and to other food businesses from seed to table. It can be used as an additional claim along with certified organic or as a stand-alone label for advanced integrated pest management farms. In New York State over the next year, farms will be piloting a pledge version for small-scale direct market farms with limited hired labor.

Currently, Qualify Certification Services (qsinfo.org) and Midwest Organic Services Association (mosa.org) offer Food Justice Certification. This label is distinguished by a verification process that includes the participation of farm worker organizations. CATA/Farmworker Support Committee (catafarmworkers.org), Centro Campesino (centrocampesino.net), and the Agriculture Workers Alliance in Canada (awa-ata.ca) have been through trainings to provide the worker inspection component of this certification. The Farmworkers Association of Florida (floridafarmworkers.org) is scheduled for a training early in 2011. The Agricultural Justice Project will be training additional certifiers and farm worker organizations to ensure that the verification process is available all over North America.

For information and questions about the standards, trainings and technical assistance contact Sally Lee at the Rural Advancement Foundation International. Email: agjusticeproject@gmail.com 919-623-9516. The Food Justice Certified label rewards honest and open relationships throughout the food chain. Its third party verified seal certifies that the highest standards of equity and fairness have been met on farms, in food manufacturing and in stores. The standards cover:

- Farmers and all food system workers’ rights to freedom of association
- Fair wages and benefits for workers
- Fair and equitable contracts for farmers and buyers
- Fair pricing for farmers
- Clear conflict resolution policies for farmers, workers and buyers
- The rights of indigenous peoples
- Workplace health and safety and decent farmworker housing
- High quality training for farm interns and apprentices
- The rights and protection of children on farms
- High quality training for farm interns and apprentices
- The rights and protection of children on farms
- The elimination of the use of toxic materials

To read the full standards, go to www.agriculturejusticeproject.org.

The founders of the Agricultural Justice Project who also serve on the AJP Management Committee include Elizabeth Henderson from Peacework Farm and the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Marty Mesh from Florida Organic Growers and Quality Certification Services, Richard Mandelbaum from CATA/Farmworker Support Committee, and Michael Sligh from the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA. The AJP Advisory Council guides the Management Committee; it includes farmers and farmer advocates, farmworkers and farmworker advocates, food co-op managers, organic certifiers, and other food system business representatives.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Henderson, 585-764-8471, elizabetht henderson15@gmail.com or Sally Lee, 919-623-9516, agjusticeproject@gmail.com

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It’s about all of you.
The Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA) had its 4th annual meeting on December 7th and 8th, this time in sunny and warm Santa Cruz, CA. The meeting was held at The University of California Santa Cruz, a beautiful campus built into the redwood forest with an organic arboretum.

It was the first year that we had a keynote speaker. Winona LaDuke is a Native American activist, environmentalist, economist, and writer. She is the executive director of both Honor the Earth and the White Earth Land Recovery Project. Honor the Earth is a non-profit organization working to raise awareness about and provide financial support for indigenous environmental justice. The White Earth Land Recovery Project is a non-profit organization aimed at recovering natural resources for the Anishinabe people of the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota. She is Ojibwa and talked about her and her people’s struggle to protect wild rice from GMO contamination. Her story was a testimony that battles against profit driven corporations can be won and that fair trade is an important part of food sovereignty for all people.

What is the DFTA?
The DFTA is a non-profit organization, as of this year with official 501c3 status, which is working to expand fair trade to include North America. It is doing this by:
1) creating documents that clearly outline principles and criteria.
2) including members that are engaged in a process that is transparent and represents the full chain in production of goods (farmers, farm workers, intermediary trading organizations, retailers and NGOs),
3) educating the public about agriculture injustices that occur domestically.
The DFTA is not a certifying agency, although it includes members that are, including the Agriculture Justice Project (AJP) and Institute for Market Ecology (IMO). It allows for the organization that is trying to ensure that the term “fair trade” is not co-opted and made meaningless by those who would do so for economic benefit. The DFTA wants fair trade to stay verifiable.

What is the DFTA’s definition of fair trade?
This may seem like something that would have been one of the first things to be settled, however we assumed we could point to our principles and criteria. It is clear now, with all of the fair trade organizations that exist, and fairwashing (unverifiable claims) that is taking place, that we need a concise definition in addition to the long list of specifics we have provided. At the annual meeting we brainstormed words that we would like to see appear in this definition. The list included food sovereignty, solidarity, transparency, environmental protection, democracy, justice, accountability, consensus, respect, and equity. Kerstin Lindgren and Allison Meyer agreed to draft such a definition in early 2011.

The DFTA’s scope and vision
The DFTA aims to reward businesses that are practicing fair trade, give marginalized businesses that want to be fair trade an edge in the marketplace, and challenge false claims. At the annual meeting, we discussed the role of the DFTA in the broader fair trade movement, moving beyond food to other fair trade items and areas in which we are lacking. The following were prominent points.

-- Fairwashing is becoming increasingly prominent in the marketplace. We need to continue to fine-tune our documents so that we have a firm leg to stand on when we eventually target false claims and state that we cannot endorse them.
-- The DFTA has mostly concentrated on issues of food production, however fair trade should extend to other types of products. This is where solid, well thought out criteria are extremely important, so that we have the leadership and standards in place to supporting products other than food.
-- Workers are underrepresented within the DFTA. There have been discussions about why this is so and that DFTA needs to be more action-oriented. Often workers do not feel that they have the knowledge or background to contribute to this type of work. We need their voice in order to achieve a balanced vision.

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Gary Hirshberg
For all the folks at Stonyfield

[Image of people holding cups, with the Stonyfield logo and website address.]
Invisible Ships and Boiling Frogs: The End of Industrial Affluence

by Karl North

It is said that when the ships of the Old World first approached the New World, they were sometimes invisible to the indigenous people of the Americas because the latter could not imagine such a thing as a fleet of large sailing ships, and simply did not believe their eyes.

In the same way, when a large enough change looms in our future, we tend to dismiss calls to pay attention as the talk of eccentrics or screwballs. If the magnitude of the change is beyond our historical experience, we simply cannot imagine it.

The end of the industrial era as we know it is one such change. This essay is an attempt at persuasion – that the ships of change really are on the horizon.

The energy sources that underpin industrial civilization will become permanently scarcer over the next decades, and the material consumption we have become used to over the last two centuries will decline accordingly as a degree of deindustrialization occurs.

The impulse to dismiss such statements is understandable considering the implied magnitude of change in our lives. As a rule the mass media avoid the subject. Thus, the general public is woefully uninformed. Yet much of the information that makes the case for this claim is hard science published by scientists who are among the leaders in their fields, experts who have not had the necessary access to the public to make their case. So let me summarize some of their key findings.

The story starts with the well-documented fact that many of the raw materials that have been essential to construct and run industrial civilization – everything from dishwashers to space shuttles – are finite. When they are depleted, they are gone forever, unless we recycle them, which in the main we have not done.

The central raw material is the high quality energy in the fossil fuels: coal, gas, and especially oil. No energy substitute can come close to providing the energy density of fossil fuels and other strategic raw materials are becoming scarce, causing a permanent upward trend in the cost of keeping the modern economy going, much less growing. Powerful, technologically developed nations like the US have been somewhat shielded from the effects so far because we have little to sell in return. Until now most of these foreign dollar holders have been willing to use their dollars to buy treasury bonds, thus financing our ballooning government and trade debts, themselves due in large part to the cost of our trillion dollar a year military machine. As the long-term nonviability of the US economy became obvious to lenders, they are finding other ways of disposing of their dollar reserves rather than finance our debt, a trend that eventually will crash the value of the dollar. This alone will shrink our economy drastically.

The current residential and commercial real estate melt down is only part of a larger resulting debt bubble. As it gradually and inevitably deflates, it will end a two-decade-long artificial prop to economic growth. The current residential and commercial real estate melt down is only part of a larger resulting debt bubble. As it gradually and inevitably deflates it will end a two-decade-long artificial prop to economic growth.

This brings us to the second part of the story. Increasingly in recent decades, powerful interests in the US have been exporting our industrial and agricultural production to other parts of the world where it can exploit cheap labor. It's a sort of deindustrialization but we still get the goods, which keeps us quiet. And the US has used its power to go farther and farther afield to extract raw materials from other countries. To put it mildly, other peoples have never been happy with this arrangement, but US economic and military power has maintained the system until now.

This is about to change. The annual cost of our global military machine, adding in costs hidden from congressional budgets, is a trillion dollars. The US cannot afford this, so we get other countries to lend us the money by buying Treasury bonds. Countries like China and Saudi Arabia, from which we buy oil and cheap goods, own a lot of dollars because we have little to sell them in return. Until now most of these foreign dollar holders have been willing to use their dollars to buy treasury bonds, thus financing our ballooning government and trade debts, themselves due in large part to the cost of our trillion dollar a year military machine. As the long-term nonviability of the US economy became obvious to lenders, they are finding other ways of disposing of their dollar reserves rather than finance our debt, a trend that eventually will crash the value of the dollar. This alone will shrink our economy drastically. Combined with the inevitable decline in access to cheap energy and other strategic raw materials, the effect will be momentous.

This brings us to the third part of the story. In addition to sabotaging our economy by exporting production, our financial class has caused long-term damage to our economy another way. In the name of keeping it afloat, it has kept a faltering economy going by encouraging people and businesses to go increasingly into debt to purchase more stuff. Our investor class does this because in the domestic economy it can make more money from interest on debt than from profit on the production of real wealth. The current residential and commercial real estate melt down is only part of a larger resulting debt bubble. As it gradually and inevitably deflates it will end a two-decade-long artificial prop to economic growth.

There is a fourth part of the story, the damage to forest, fisheries, soils, aquifers and other parts of the natural resource base that underpin modern prosperity. Those chickens are now coming home to roost as well. As the subject is finally getting some media attention, I will not dwell on it here. To raise concern, hopefully it will be sufficient to quote scientist Lester Brown, who has devoted many years to informing the public of the erosion of earth’s carrying capacity:

“A team of scientists led by Mathis Wackernagel concluded in a 2002 study published by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences that humanity’s collective demands first surpassed the earth’s regenerative capacity around 1980. Today, global demands on natural systems exceed their sustainable yield capacity by an estimated 25 percent. This means we are meeting current demands by consuming the earth’s natural assets, setting the stage for decline and collapse.”
To summarize:

The global depletion of finite resources and the extent of damage done to renewable ones has progressed to a point where the cost of producing many of the goods that are essential to keep industrial civilization running will soon become prohibitive.

Plagued by debt that our financial class has created by off-shoring US productive capacity and replacing it with a fictional economy of credit, we can no longer afford the military cost of the imperial domination that sustains our plunder of other nation’s resources and cheap labor. These nations are taking back control over their wealth, which will end the prosperity we have enjoyed for so long at their expense.

Coincidentally or not, these trends have reached critical mass, a point where their negative consequences for our society and what is left of its industrial base begin to appear with increasing frequency. It should be clear from the nature and longevity of these trends that we are not talking about a simple dip in the business cycle, but something more permanent.

Why is the US public so unaware of this gathering crisis? There is the consistent pattern of disinformation from government and media, and there is the frog-boiled-alive effect.

It is said that if you heat a frog in water slowly enough, it doesn’t realize what’s happening until it’s been boiled alive. Though the trends described above are coming to a tipping point now, they have been accumulating for decades slowly enough to be under the radar of most of us. We are like the frog in the slowly heating water. The number of work hours to maintain a family income and the debt serfdom to pay for higher education have been rising slowly enough over recent decades to become routine. Few people see the implications of the decades-long rise in the price of raw materials, the growing imbalance in our international trade, or of an accelerating national debt that has made the US government technically bankrupt ever since debt accumulation began to exceed the Second World War. Few have noticed that countries we have exploited to prop up our economy, seeing the ultimate decline of a United States being bled dry in unwinnable wars, are not only declaring economic independence but also actually exerting economic sovereignty. This is another development that will contribute to our industrial decline.

So what is to be done? First, we must educate ourselves about this new state of affairs, which is not unprecedented in the last 200 years. Second, we must confront the situation with a positive effort to retrench our economy by relocalizing the production of its most essential goods and services. Primary among these is food production. Across the industrial world efforts are afoot to envision the kind of relocalized agriculture that could be sustainable through the coming decades of descent to a lower energy economy.

As a concerned farmer/educator my contribution to this visioning process is involvement in TCLocal. As a concerned farmer/educator my contribution to TCLocal is a relocalized food system for Tompkins County. My effort is part of an ongoing TCLocal project to write articles, many already published at the same site, that address all aspects and areas of relocalization that our group expects are needed now and in the future. We encourage your interest and input in the hopes of building an ongoing productive exchange of ideas with similarly concerned citizens. We hope such cooperative efforts will accelerate the transition of our upstate communities to a healthier, more sustainable society.

Animal Power Field Days
(continued from page A-1)

merconference.org) as well as all of the features of the Animal Power Field Days, which will run simultaneously. The bulk of the Field Days will be held at the UMass Research Farm in South Deerfield, less than 15 minutes north from the University campus. The Research Farm sits on some of the most productive soils in the region with the steep slopes and red cliffs of Mt. Sugarloaf at its back and the mighty Connecticut River at its foot. The event at the research farm will look a lot like the Field Days have looked in past years at Tunbridge. We will offer a large array of working horse, mule, and oxen workshops and equipment demonstrations in the following areas:

- Tillage and crop production
- Haymaking
- Logging
- Equipment adjustment and repair
- Animal health care and maintenance
- Training working animals

We will also offer an array of classroom-based workshops, which will be held among other conference workshops at the UMass Amherst campus.

As a backdrop to this event, the synergy of the natural, the cultural and the agricultural richness of the surrounding Pioneer Valley is truly something to behold, especially at high summer. We look forward to this exciting collaboration.

To better plan for this new addition to the NOFA Summer Conference we are looking for feedback from anyone interested in the event. You can provide us with your input at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AnimalPowerFieldDaysSurvey

David Fisher is the newest member of the NOFA Summer Conference Committee, organizing the Animal Power Field Days as a component of the overall Summer Conference. He is a long-time member of the Draft Animal Power Network, and he farm in Conway at Natural Roots, a horse-powered CSA farm located in Conway, MA.
Chapela is an outspoken and tenured microbiologist in soil-biology and mycology, whose academic research has focused on developing technology to detect genetically modified organisms. He has been affiliated with the Department of Ecosystem Science, Policy, and Management (ESPM) since 1996. Dr. Chapela is known for an article published in *Nature*, in 2001, which claimed the presence of transgenes in wild maize populations in Mexico. The article and Chapela’s work was discredited by colleagues for supposed methodological errors, although it was later proven correct. Initially, Chapela was denied tenure at UC Berkeley. But his academic ostracizing, many felt, was the result of UC Berkeley's strong ties to the biotech industry. In 2005 Chapela did receive tenure and has continued to conduct research and political advocacy as an associate professor.

Online Registration for the NOFA Summer Conference will be also available soon. We are currently finalizing the schedule of workshops and presenters. Sponsorships and Exhibitor locations are also now available. Please contact Bob Minnecchi, NOFA/Mass Development Director at bob@nofamass.org, or call (617) 236-4893. Please check our website, www.nofasummerconference.org for more information about our keynote speakers, great workshops, and registration information. We hope you are all thawing out after a very cold winter, and we look forward to warm, fun days in August.

**BUY DIRECT**

In Southern New England

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The market is currently very volatile and pricing is subject to change without notice.

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- Chris Cardner (Mid Atlantic) 303-656-5138
- Richard Kosnower (Midwest) 303-319-6899
- Larry Hansen (West) 303-927-9143

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* Dan Lawton, 247 Evans Road, Chepachet, RI 02814, (401) 523-5263, danlawton33@cox.net, NOFA/RI

* NOFA VT Education Coordinator & VT FEED Director, Nicole Dehne, nicole@nofavt.org

Rhode Island

* President/Senior: 20, Individual $35, Family $55, Business $75, Organization $150, Supporting $250

* Contact: NOFA/RI, c/o Dan Lawton, 247 Evans Road, Chepachet, RI 02814, (401) 523-5263, danlawton33@cox.net, NOFA/RI

NOFA Institute Member

You may join NOFA by joining one of the seven state chapters. Contact the person listed below for your state. Dues, which pay for the important work of the organization, vary from chapter to chapter. Unless noted, membership includes a subscription to The Natural Farmer.


Contact: CT NOFA, Box 164, Stevenson, CT 06491, (203) 880-5146, or email, ctnofa@ctnofa.org or join the website at ctnofa.org

Massachusetts: Low-Income $25, Individual $35, Family/Farm/Organization $45, Business $75, Supporting $150

Contact: NOFA/Mass, 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005, (978) 355-2853, or Rebecia@nofamass.org or join the website at nofamass.org

New Hampshire: NH Basic $25*, Individual $35, Couple $35, Family/Farm, $75, Business/ Organization $150, Supporting $250, Sustaining: $1,000

Contact: NOFA-NH, 4 Park Street, Suite 208, Concord, NH 03301, Ph: (603) 224-0522, Fax: (603) 228-6492, email: info@nofanh.org, website: www.nofanh.org

New Jersey: Student/Intern $20*, Individual $40*, Family/Farm $70*, Business/Organization $150*, $10 additional per year for subscription to The Natural Farmer

Contact: 334 River Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844, (908) 5111-1111 or join at www.nofanj.org

New York: Limited Membership $20*, Gardener/Consumer $40, Family/Farm/Nonprofit Organization $50, Business $115, Lifetime $1,000

Contact: NOFA-NY, 249 Highland Ave., Rochester, NY 14620, Voice (585) 271-1979, Fax: (585) 271-7166, Email: info@nofany.org, www.nofany.org

Rhode Island: Student/Senior: 20, Individual $25, Family $35, Business $50

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New York: Individual $30, Farm/Family/Food $40, Business $50, Sponsor $100, Sustainer $250, Basic $15-25*

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- [ ] Do NOT share my address with other organizations. Thank you!

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Calendar

Saturday, March 12: Pruning for More and Better Fruit, Barre, MA, for more info: Many Hands Sustainability Center, www.mhfof.net or Jack at 978-355-2853

Saturday, March 19: NOFA-NH 9th Annual Winter Conference, Exeter, NH, for more info: http://www.nofanh.org/WinterConference/Registration

Sunday March 20: Planting Seeds CD Release Concert, Cambridge, MA, for more info: 617-492-7679

Saturday, March 26: Beginning a Vegetable Garden, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Friday, April 29 & Saturday, April 30: Organic Beekeeping: Principles and Practices, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Friday, May 13 – Sunday, May 15: Annual Pfeiffer Center plant sale, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Saturday, June 4: Strolling of the Heifers, Brattleboro VT, for more info: www.nofavt.org

Saturday, June 4: The Role of the Horse in the Farm Organism, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Saturday, June 25: Midsummer Garden Party, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Saturday, July 30: Food Preserving Workshop, Chestnut Ridge, NY, for more info: 845-352-5020 x20 / info@pfeiffercenter.org / www.pfeiffercenter.org

Friday, August 12 – Saturday, August 14: NOFA Summer Conference, Amherst, MA, for more info: www.nofaSmummerConference.org or 413-549-1508

NOFA/Mass Education Events:

- for more info about educating@nofamass.org, or 413-658-5374

7 Cheese-making Workshops

- Saturday, March 12: Gill, MA
- Saturday, April 9: Gill, MA
- Saturday, May 4: Gill, MA
- Saturday, April 23: Hardwick, MA
- Saturday, May 7: Sterling, MA
- Saturday, May 21: Petersham, MA
- Saturday, May 28: Foxboro, MA
- 6 Organic Poultry Workshops
- Saturday, April 23: Hatfield, MA
- Saturday, April 30: Hubbardston, MA
- Saturday, June 4: Shrewsbury, MA
- Saturday, June 25: Mendall, MA
- Saturday, July 16: Barre, MA
- Saturday, July 23: Concord, MA
- 2 Twilight Wild Edibles Walks
- Wednesday, May 18: Carlisle, MA
- Wednesday, August 3: Carlisle, MA
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