

Letter

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Center awards grants for new work

By Laura Miller
Newsletter editor

As a result of its first call for proposals in nearly two years, the Leopold Center has approved grants for 17 new projects and renewed grants for 14 projects that were already in progress.

These new and renewed projects are part of a competitive grants program that has been reconfigured to support the Center's three research initiatives in policy, marketing and food systems, and ecology. The newest projects are the result of a call for proposals issued in May 2003 by the Leopold Center's Food and Marketing Systems Initiative and the Policy Initiative. Additionally, eight new special projects that relate directly to initiative work also are underway.

Nine of the new competitive grants are for projects in the Marketing and Food Systems Initiative led by Rich Pirog. Projects will feature research needed to market locally raised and

processed meat, specialty forest products and the emerging market for wine and grape juice. The initiative also is funding four special projects and using other funds to leverage grants from the USDA and W.K. Kellogg Foundation for additional work.

Competitive grants also will help launch some of the Leopold Center's first work in the policy arena. Eight projects under discussion will be coordinated by Leopold Center Policy Initiative leader Mike Duffy. Proposed work includes research on producer groups and farmer collective bargaining units, the impacts of the new federal organic standards, the impact of funding decisions on midsize farming operations, and the impact of alternative farm definitions on government programs. Project details will be announced at a later date.

The Leopold Center has conducted a competitive grants program since 1988

WORK

(continued on page 12)

Book focuses on Iowa's rural renewal

Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack is helping the Leopold Center and other sponsors launch a book about Iowa's "rural renewal." After more than a year in the works, *Renewing the Countryside - Iowa* is ready for readers.

The 160-page volume includes a collection of photos, stories and essays about Iowans who are revitalizing rural areas of the state. The book honors those who have found a way to make a living while supporting their communities and protecting the environment (read *Christie Vilsack's book review on page 5*).

A program and exhibit were planned at the Downtown Farmers Market in Des Moines to introduce the book and many of the Iowans featured in it.

In May 2002, the Leopold Center joined other sponsors to cover up-front

publishing costs and help develop ideas for the book. The book's other major sponsors are the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Iowa Rural Development Council and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Additional support comes from Practical Farmers of Iowa, Northwest Area Foundation, Northern Great Plains, Inc., Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, Humane Society of the United States, Center for Respect of Life and Environment, and the USDA Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service.

Eight chapters cover people-based stories ranging from conservation, farming, tourism and culture, marketing,

RENEWING

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Longtime ISU secretary joins Center staff

The newest member of the Leopold Center staff brings many years of university experience and strong organizational skills to her work as new office manager and secretary.

Sherry Johnson joined the Center in August to fill a vacancy that arose when longtime staffer April Franksain left in May to take another job at ISU.

Her duties include answering the telephone, fielding inquiries and requests for publications, providing secretarial support for the director,



Sherry Johnson

making arrangements for meetings and conferences, and helping staff with various mailings and other projects. She also will manage the Center's extensive database.

Johnson has worked at ISU for 29 years, most of that time as administrative assistant to the director of the Iowa State University Press. When ISU sold the operation in 2000 to Blackwell, a British publishing company, Johnson transferred to the administrative offices for ISU Extension. She also worked in the trademark division of the ISU Research Foundation.

"I really like the idea of Iowans helping Iowans," Johnson said. "It's central to the mission of a land grant university and the reason that the Leopold Center was created. I want to be where my work makes a difference."

A lifelong resident of Boone, she also likes to keep busy away from the office. She is an active gardener, a member of a local quilting group and an elder in her church.

She lives with her husband Terry, who is retired from the *Des Moines Register* production department. They have two grown children.

NEWS & NOTES

Futuring Leopold Center director Fred Kirschenmann will present a plenary session, "Planting the Future: Transformation in Agriculture," during the 14th Annual International Bioneers conference October 17-19 in San Rafael, California. The sessions will be broadcast to 11 locations throughout the United States, including Fairfield, Iowa. The Fairfield event is sponsored by the city of Fairfield, Sierra Club, Organic Consumers Association and Iowa Renewable Energy Association. For information about local workshops, contact (641) 472-7033, or on the web at: www.heartlandsustainablesolutions.net/

Grapes A report that explores potential markets among consumer buying clubs and churches for Iowa grown and processed grape juice is available from the Leopold Center. A competitive grant, sponsored by the Center, conducted surveys of 500 buying clubs in

Iowa and surrounding states, and 120 randomly selected United Methodist, Church of Christ and Presbyterian churches in Iowa. The project, "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful: A Study of the Potential Market for Iowa Grape Juice," was conducted by Craig Chase, an Iowa State University extension specialist in Black Hawk County.

Organic crops A report detailing the economic returns for organic crops has been published in a recent edition of the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*. The Leopold Center provided funds in 1998 to establish research plots at the ISU Neely-Kinyon Research Farm in southwest Iowa. The project compares identical hybrid varieties of corn and soybeans in conventional and organic methods. With additional funding from the USDA Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems Organic Agriculture Consortium, research is scheduled to continue for at least six more years. The report is on the web at: extension.agron.iastate.edu/organicag/researchreports/orgeconomics.pdf.



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The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture seeks to identify and reduce adverse socioeconomic and environmental impacts of farming practices, develop profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources, and create educational programs with the ISU Extension Service. It was founded by the 1987 Iowa Groundwater Protection Act.

The *Leopold Letter* is available free from the Leopold Center at 209 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-1050; (515) 294-3711.

Newsletter Editor: Laura Miller

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Getting beyond ‘scratch and sniff’

The *Des Moines Register* recently carried an interesting article by Mike Martendale of the Detroit News headlined “City dwellers get chance to scratch and sniff farm life” (Sept. 4, pg. 4). The story was about a Michigan county official who had designed a brochure to inform city dwellers about the realities of rural living. The brochure was intended to “open the eyes—and nostrils—of folks looking to move to the country.”

Perhaps such brochures serve a useful function but they miss a larger issue: the need for rural and urban citizens to decide what kind of food and farming system they want for our current and future needs.

Whether or not city dwellers can live comfortably in rural areas is only a small part of the issue. Informing city dwellers that life in the country may not be as idyllic as they imagined is simply a “buyer beware” warning. To get past rural/urban tensions, we must negotiate a more fundamental social contract that the majority of citizens can support. This requires a deeper rural/urban conversation that is more than a “need to educate” urban dwellers about farming. In a democracy, citizens decide together how to constitute their social life through “free argumentation and debate,” as Thomas Jefferson wrote. Such debates must include discussions about food and farming systems.

Rural/urban conversations are desperately needed. We have not had a national dialogue on this topic for at least half a century. Furthermore, as

To get past rural/urban tensions, we must negotiate a more fundamental social contract [for agriculture] that the majority of citizens can support.

our society has become increasingly urbanized, most citizens lack even the most elemental understanding of agriculture. They are largely ignorant about where food comes from, what is involved in producing it, or what hardships farm families face as they try to survive in today’s agriculture marketplace.

Stuart Higgins, an Australian farmer and radio show host, has attempted to address this information vacuum by designing a web site that invited the public to help him make decisions on his farm. He set aside six acres of cotton and asked web visitors to help make management decisions on that acreage—when to plant, what inputs to use, how to control pests, etc. He received an enthusiastic response, and was pleasantly surprised at how much people learned about farming in the process. His approach may not direct us to a genuine conversation about the social contract for agriculture, but it begins to move us beyond “scratch and sniff.”

A dialog that leads us to agreements about the kind of food and agriculture system we want will require a media that is more engaged with food and farming issues. In July, the Leopold Center in cooperation with the Glynwood Center in New York, hosted a meeting with several nationally recognized journalists who write about food and agriculture. The purpose was to develop ways in which we might begin to foster meaningful rural/urban conversations around food and farming issues.

A report, “Telling Our Story: Partnering with the Media,” grew out of the meeting. We learned that establishing better communications between rural and urban communities around farm and food issues requires us to think carefully about a number of issues and strategies, and that there are enormous opportunities for fostering such conversations through the media.

Focusing primarily on sustainable agriculture, the report outlines how food and agriculture groups can successfully involve the media to encourage rural/urban conversations. The report reminds us that “plight of the farmer” stories don’t play well in the urban press (especially with news of large farm subsidies), chefs are perceived as leaders of social change, “farm-to-restaurant” stories are particularly appealing, ongoing relationships with journalists are important, and much more.

We hope that this report can be the beginning of a rural/urban dialog that eventually will lead to a common understanding and commitment to make agriculture a vital and supported part of our national life – and move us well beyond “scratch and sniff.”




The Australian Broadcast Corporation’s “Grow Your Own” web site project with farmer Stuart Higgins is at: www.abc.net.au/rural/grow/.

The report, **Telling Our Story: Partnering with the Media** is on the Leopold Center web site: www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/media0703.pdf.



Successful chicken collective may offer hope to U.S. growers

By Mary Adams, Editor

The famous Moulin Rouge was the first 1890s French cabaret with something entertaining for everyone. Label Rouge, founded in the 1960s, was the first showcase for French farmers who continued to raise traditional, flavorful poultry. American poultry producers now want to know if the tactics used by the highly successful Label Rouge brand can perform as well on their farms.

Anne Fanatico and Holly Born, two Arkansas-based specialists at the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), recently concluded a study of how Label Rouge has made its system work for farmers and consumers. The innovative program has captured 30 percent of public poultry sales in France, while charging prices twice those of conventionally raised poultry.

Fanatico and Born visited Ames in late July to share their insights at a campus seminar and at several smaller meetings. Their visit was arranged by the Leopold Center's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative and the value chain project at ISU funded by the Kellogg Foundation. Initiative leader Rich Pirog says, "We brought Holly and Anne here because we thought the Label Rouge value chain was a model worth studying. Why? Because it allows farmers to have influence across the chain, not just at the production level."

They explained that Label Rouge concentrates on high-quality products, with poultry as its flagship offering. The program emphasizes attributes such as taste and food safety, and free-range production practices. The main reason touted for the superior taste of Label Rouge products is the use of slow-growing birds instead of the fast-growing birds used in the conventional industry.



Label Rouge is a farmer-initiated branding system that markets unique heirloom breeds raised on diversified farms in France according to very specific production requirements.



Anne Fanatico (left) and Holly Born shared what they learned in France about Label Rouge with the ISU community.

Fanatico points out that because Label Rouge has been so profitable in its use of heirloom breeds, producers here might find it equally lucrative to look at genuine American breeds with distinctive meat qualities. She sees opportunities for smaller farmers to experiment with some of the unique breeds, in contrast with the one variety of chicken currently raised in the United States. The land and labor requirements for specialty breeds also may be better suited to small farm operations.

Born noted that Label Rouge was farmer-initiated and remains farmer-controlled. The company limits how many birds can be raised, types and sizes of buildings used, and range and feed that must be available to the birds. Label Rouge birds are usually produced on diversified farms with other livestock and grain production. Some branded products are tied to regions and possess their own distinct images. (For instance, Landes poultry is raised under specific conditions in the pine forests along the Atlantic coast.)

Fanatico has been poultry program specialist at NCAT for ten years. While in France, she looked at whether the best Label Rouge features could be adapted to U.S. agriculture, especially the use of specialty broilers for outdoor production. Born is an economics and marketing specialist at NCAT. Her research on pasture-based poultry production focused on the unique organizational and marketing features of the Label Rouge system. Both women have provided information to farmers, educators and other agricultural professionals through NCAT's Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) program, a national information service on sustainable farming.

Label Rouge: Pasture-Based Poultry Production in France, a 12-page, illustrated report by Fanatico and Born, is available at <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/labelrouge.html>.

'A human parade of rural success stories'

Renewing the Countryside – Iowa
Shellie Orngard and Jan Joannides, eds.
Renewing the Countryside Inc. 2003
 160 pp., \$39.95, \$24.95 paperback

I love a good story, written, read aloud or told orally. As First Lady of Iowa, I engage Iowans in conversations about what they're reading and encourage them to share family stories. I see this as one way to knit a sense of community that has unraveled since I returned to Iowa 25 years ago.

To answer my own question, I've been reading *Renewing the Countryside-Iowa*, published in partnership with the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Rural Development Council and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

It's a slow read, the kind you want to enjoy over a piece of homemade pie and a cup of coffee served in one of those wide-rimmed mugs common to Main Street cafes, or with a glass of cider in a front porch swing while a combine works a nearby field. Instead, I read as I travel county roads on my way to visit small Iowa libraries.

I pause from reading about sustainable agriculture to watch the soybeans turn gold and the corn shrivel from lack of rain. I pass through towns with boarded windows and stop in places that proclaim their survival by improving their public venues. I put down the book to meet the kinds of people profiled there—people who cherish their rural heritage and choose to live in or near small communities.

This book is a must-read for those who conclude that small towns are dying as well as those who cherish small town life. It's for those who want to know who grows their food, for those who

promote entrepreneurship and for those who promote land stewardship. This book is for policymakers and the shapers of public perception. It's for the young adults we want to come home.

Renewing the Countryside-Iowa is a human parade of rural success stories: people who are adaptable, resourceful and determined to find a way to live in harmony with the land and profit from it. John Kennedy said, "Every man can make a difference. Every man must try." This book is a testament to this philosophy. It highlights the struggles of those who believe that people willing to change and willing to work hard can reclaim and revitalize the countryside.

In my travels I have met some of the people from the 38 farms, businesses and projects profiled in the book. Diane and Kent Whealy of Seed Savers Exchange near Decorah preserve heirloom plant varieties. We put their dill seeds in our Terrace Hill Cookbook. I see Larry and Beth Cleverley at the Downtown Farmers Market explaining to customers why their greens are worth the price. I've watched leaders in the villages of Van Buren County work together to promote their region.

But in the pages of this book I also meet new people and places that make me want to know more and inspire me to help them spread the word about this renaissance in rural Iowa. For instance, Carl Kurtz of Marshall County is an expert in prairie reconstruction. He has succeeded economically, and his approach to growing and selling seed has influenced how other seed dealers plant, harvest and sell prairie seed. In Woodward, three women started a business to produce goat cheese and are now marketing it to farmers markets and restaurants. Because community leaders in

Waverly took a risk, their town is the first west of the Mississippi to add wind to its energy portfolio. In Lenox, Ag Connect helped start "Diversity

Gardens," which made garden plots available to all community members, many of them Latino immigrants.

Headlines and some titled experts predict a dire future for rural Iowa. The people in *Renewing the Countryside* present a counter argument. Their action is evidence of a resilience that headline writers often miss. They literally can't see the forest for the trees.

Iowans should read the book and share it with friends. Librarians should display it in their public and school libraries. Small town newspapers should review it. These stories should be talked about around the dinner table and become the subject of e-mails. Parents should buy it for their young adult children.

Leopold Center director Fred Kirschenmann says in his introduction that the book has three purposes. First, to acknowledge the people who are renewing the countryside. Second, to motivate rural and urban citizens to recognize the rich resources that exist in rural Iowa so that they will buy and invest locally. Third, to encourage policymakers to support rural economic development efforts. This book achieves this and much more.—*Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack*



Christie Vilsack

"This book is a must-read for those who conclude that small towns are dying as well as those who cherish small town life."

RENEWING THE COUNTRYSIDE

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innovative production, energy, community and learning. At the end of each chapter are essays by some of Iowa's most insightful writers including poet Michael Carey, conservationist Paul Johnson, and author Mary Swander, among others.

The book includes a foreword written by Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack and an introduction by Leopold Center director Fred Kirschenmann. ISU professor and photographer Jerry

DeWitt provided most of the book's 120 color photographs.

Renewing the Countryside – Iowa is \$39.95 (hard cover) and \$24.95 (paperback) and is available at major book sellers. It also can be purchased from the publisher, *Renewing the Countryside, Inc.*, at 2105 First Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404, (866) 378-0587, on the web: <<http://store.rtcmarket.org>> and by e-mail, rtc@iatp.org. The Iowa version is the second in a series of books on rural revitalization, following on the 2002 Minnesota version.

Lessons from ... *Victoria, Australia*



Mike Duffy

By Mike Duffy, Associate director

I recently had the opportunity to spend a month in Victoria, Australia, in the south-east part of the country. My visit came at the request of the Australian government to help evaluate its family farms program. The government is concerned about the loss of family farms and began the program to get a

better understanding of the subject and to determine what could or should be done about it.

Throughout my career I have had the opportunity to visit farms and meet agriculturalists from many countries. This was my first opportunity to spend an extended time in such an outwardly different agricultural situation.

Victoria has a more moderate climate than Iowa, but its soils by comparison are very poor. They face serious problems of water availability and excess salinity. As a result most agriculture involves grass-based animal production, especially beef cattle, dairy and sheep. The northwest section of Victoria has much larger fields for small grain crops, similar to production in the western United States. In spite of the differences in climate and soils, some of the same problems confront family farms in Australia as in Iowa. The problems may rank differently, but the main ones appear on both lists.

Similar issues in agriculture

A major problem is trying to define what is meant by a family farm. The family part is fairly easy, however, it is more difficult to describe a farm.

Like Iowa, Victoria has a number of rural residences that really do not meet the criteria of what is generally thought of as a farm. Such rural residences are critical when considering land use and other social and policy aspects, but they really are not important in the overall consideration of agricultural production. Most people do not realize that based on census data, Iowa has more people living in the countryside but not on a farm than those living on a farm. As in Victoria, this creates very interesting dynamics when considering the type of agricultural production that is practiced and acceptable to the populace.

Victoria and Iowa both face the same concerns with the so-called disappearing middle. In the context of family farms, the disappearing middle simply refers to the loss of the midsize farms. What we see in both locations is an increasing number of small and large farms.

The farmers I spoke to commented on other issues and concerns often voiced by Iowa farmers. The cost/price squeeze, how to make a profit in production agriculture, the impact of high land values, the loss of farmers in the neighborhood, the lack of succession or estate planning, concerns over international trade regulations, environmental concerns, and so forth were all the topics of discussion.

My conversations with county, government, and university officials centered on the same issues that Iowans face.

During most of the meetings I could have closed my eyes and, except for the accents, I could have been at a meeting in Iowa.

So, what does this tell me? First of all, it says that the core problems we are facing in Iowa are not isolated ones. They are problems associated with all agriculture, at least in developed countries. We need to think in a global context when considering these problems, not just for exports or to see what our competitors are doing, but in search of different solutions to the issues we face.

More than once I heard complaints about direct government support to Iowa (and U.S.) farmers. Similarly, I also heard comments regarding unfair trade positions that the United States is taking. This was interesting to me because I have often heard similar complaints from Iowa farmers; perhaps not directed towards the Australians, but toward other countries. We need to realize that people view any situation from their own perspective. We want to think that our policies do not distort trade, but others do not hold the same point of view.

One significant difference between Victoria and Iowa was the level of direct government support. In Australia, there is no direct commodity support while in Iowa there is. In spite of this type of support in Iowa, our problems are much the same. This suggests that we need to rethink the type of support we give agriculture. If an agriculture that receives large amounts of direct, commodity support experiences the same kind of problems as an agriculture that receives no support at all, we need to reconsider our position. We should be searching for alternatives if we want government commodity support to address these problems.

Lessons we can learn

So, how can Iowa farmers use the knowledge that they are not alone in facing the problems of modern industrialized agriculture? At a base level, I suppose there is some virtue in the saying "misery loves company." But, more to the point, I think Iowa farmers can use this information as they consider their own situations and how they make decisions. They also can use this knowledge as they process information they receive from various sources on agricultural issues.

Iowa farmers and Victoria farmers can evaluate their situations using the same basic principles. They need to have clear goals and objectives, be able to realistically assess available resources, and determine the best way to use these resources to achieve the desired goals.

Several years ago ISU Extension sponsored a conference called "Four Roads to the Future of Agriculture." This



AUSTRALIA

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In spite of the differences between Australian agriculture and Iowa agriculture, farmers face many of the same problems.

AUSTRALIA

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conference spelled out different approaches farmers could take in adjusting to the current situation in agriculture. I have slightly modified the roads that were identified at the conference. In a general sense, the four roads are commodity production where you try to make a living using volume to overcome the tight profit margin; specialty production where you try to widen the margins to make a living; getting off-farm income to supplement farm income; or simply leaving agriculture.

Within each of these categories there are many options, but the general idea is that farmers have a range of alternatives and they need to decide the best course of action based on their own circumstances.

A simple comparison between Victoria and Iowa offers stark contrasts to the role of government in production agriculture. Iowa has substantial government commodity programs while Victoria does not. In spite of these programs, Iowa farmers are facing many of the same problems that Victoria's farmers are facing and the four roads are exactly the same paths. Like us, they have choices. They may not like the choices, but they have choices.

Leopold Center programs

So what does this say for the Leopold Center and its programming?

The Center has started to focus on three broad initiatives. The ecology and marketing initiatives are designed to identify new choices for farmers. The policy initiative is designed to examine alternative policies and their potential impact on sustainable agriculture. It is time to reassess programs in Iowa and the United States and determine whether or not they are achieving their intended goals. The Leopold Center is trying to take a lead in sponsoring an analysis of programs and their effects.

FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

Dordt professor joins board

By Mary Adams, Editor



Wes Jamison

Adding to a long-standing, productive relationship with Dordt College in Sioux Center, the Leopold Center welcomes one of the college's faculty members to the Leopold Center Advisory Board. Wes Jamison, new director of Dordt's Agricultural Stewardship Center, joined the board in August and attended his first meeting in September. Jamison represents the Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities on the board.

Jamison has taken an interesting path to Iowa. He is a native of Gulfport, Florida, across Tampa Bay from Saint Petersburg, and remains a staunch supporter of the Florida Gators football team. His educational experience includes a B.S. in agricultural science, with a major in poultry science, from the Auburn University in Alabama. From there he headed west to Corvallis, Oregon, where he received his Ph.D. from Oregon State University with a dual emphasis in poultry science and agricultural politics.

In addition to his academic tasks, Jamison operates his own consulting firm, Agricultural Issues Assessment. He has worked with European and Indian agricultural companies and non-governmental organizations on community relations, as well as understanding and evaluating risk, especially the politics of biotechnology risk.

"I'm very interested in how corporate agribusiness intersects and interacts with sustainable agriculture," Jamison said. "I also am very interested in the role agricultural biotechnology will play in sustainable agriculture."

As director of the Sustainable Agriculture Center, Jamison will maintain the college's vision of a Christian agricultural worldview while guiding the program's evaluation of biotechnology, sustainable agriculture and normative agriculture. The Center anticipates that Jamison's presence on the board will help foster additional joint ventures between the two organizations.

Jamison also is active in various professional organizations. He served as chair of the Extension Workshop Committee for the Poultry Science Association and is a member of the American Political Science Association.

As befits someone who has lived in Florida and Oregon, Jamison is an avid outdoorsman. Among his favorite sports are canoeing, hiking, bicycling and camping. With him on these adventures are his wife Angela and their four children.

New officers

Marvin Shirley, who represents the Iowa Farmers Union on the board, was elected chair at the board's September 18 meeting. Tom Fogarty, University of Northern Iowa, becomes vice-chair, and Neil Hamilton, Drake University Law School, will serve as member-at-large.

A look at Life in Iowa:

Ryan Holthaus

Ryan Holthaus, a senior in agricultural education from Decorah, worked with the University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project's "Buy Fresh Buy Local" campaign that connects farmers with institutional markets in the Cedar Falls area.



Ryan Holthaus

I learned a lot from my experience in Cedar Falls, but what opened my eyes were the many different types of farmers who participated in the campaign. As I traveled to farms I was really struck by the many kinds of agriculture, not the typical corn-and-soy-bean operations. It made me realize that there is more to agriculture than just commercial and industrial agriculture. People still love and care for the land that they farm, doing things by hand rather than large-scale plowing or spraying.

As a future agricultural education teacher, I hope to work a unit into my curriculum about sustainable agriculture and smaller farm operations to explain how we can benefit in other ways than large-scale commercial agriculture.

Competitive grant helps students learn about sustainability first-hand

The Leopold Center enjoyed a unique opportunity to support an innovative new Iowa State University Extension program that not only helps students understand one of the concepts of sustainability, but also helps Iowa communities put it into practice.

During the past two summers and again in 2004, the Leopold Center is sponsoring internships for several students enrolled in the Life in Iowa program. Students complete a 10-week paid internship and 100 hours of volunteer work in the community where they work. Community partners include nonprofit organizations, social service agencies, extension offices, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and other small, locally owned businesses.

The goals are to develop student leadership and help participating communities create a sustainable quality of life. A Leopold Center competitive grant supported five of the 63 Life in Iowa students enrolled in the 2003 program; these internships focused on sustainable agriculture, food systems and environmental projects.

Although students earn three credits during the summer, program director Nancy Bevin hopes students take away much more. "Life in Iowa combines classroom theory and practice in a community," she said. "It has as its thematic center what it means for an individual to live a meaningful life and what it means to build a healthy and sustainable community."

Aldo Leopold called it being a "good citizen of the land," and others call it "living well in place." Understanding a local community also figures prominently in the definition of sustainable agriculture, which includes the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability.

Here's what the most recent Leopold Center-funded interns said about their Life in Iowa experiences.



Ann Holste (far right) prepares produce for the One Step at a Time CSA with owners Jan Libbey (far left) and Tim Landgraf. Holste's faculty mentor was Betty Wells (second from left).

Ann Holste

Ann Holste, a senior in agricultural business who grew up on a traditional crop farm near Massena, Iowa, worked at One Step at a Time CSA Gardens near Belmond in Wright County.

I learned so much this summer, from gardening techniques to how baby chicks should be handled. Every day was a new experience because even if it was the same task, it would be a different type of vegetable or at a different stage in its life that would need a different type of care. I have gained a greater appreciation for the food I eat and the work that goes into raising crops and livestock.

Working on a CSA farm, I am more aware of the hard work and the importance of knowing where my food comes from. This internship strengthened my goals and the fact that I want a career that supports sustainable agriculture and the people involved in it.

Fostering the sense of place

Shawn Corey

Shawn Corey, a junior in construction engineering from Sioux City,



Shawn Corey

worked with the Sioux River Recreation Corridor, a coalition of conservation and recreation organizations in the Big Sioux River recreational district. He created a guide map and web site for a Big Sioux River canoe trail from Sioux Falls, S.D., to Sioux City and planned canoe trips in Hawarden and Akron.

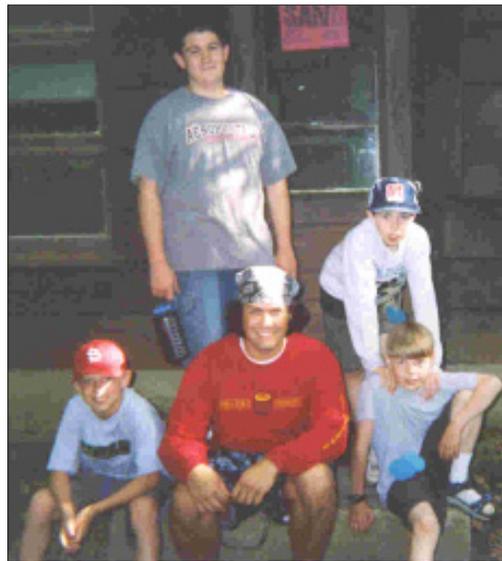
I pretty much know every county road in northwest Iowa along the river. I hit every back road and small town. It has been interesting to get to know each town by its own personality.

David Rosmann

David Rosmann, a senior in public service and administration in agriculture grew up on a farm near Harlan and worked with Practical Farmers of Iowa in Ames.

Coming into this program I already had strong convictions about sustainable ag and community stewardship, but my summer experiences only made them stronger. Between working with PFI's youth camp, looking over the [Ames downtown] farmers' market, and helping out with field days, I've gained a better understanding of the importance of sustainable ag and community stewardship.

It also gave me a chance to work for an organization with like-minded people who believe in keeping the family farm. Practical Farmers of Iowa was a perfect fit and I have a great deal of respect for the organization.



As part of his internship, David Rosmann (bottom row, center) was a counselor during the Practical Farmer of Iowa's summer youth camp.



Susannah Eddy (center) completed an internship at the Wallace Country Life Center near Greenfield. She is shown with her supervisor Diane Weiland, director of the center, and her faculty mentor David Williams.

Susannah Eddy

Susannah Eddy, a senior in agricultural education from Osceola, worked at the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center near Greenfield in Adair County. When she wasn't leading youth camp sessions about soil quality, she worked in the Prairie Harvest CSA garden. She also wrote a weekly newspaper column about different vegetables grown at the center, produced newsletters that went into the weekly produce boxes and helped at the Greenfield Farmers Market.

I had not heard of many of the vegetables in the garden when I started my internship. Now I can rattle off the names of many different vegetables, describe what they will look like when ripe, and share about how each tastes and how to prepare them. Everyone working at the center encouraged me to try all of the vegetables at least once and I grew fond of many of them. I'm hoping they will send me a care package of vegetables!

Knowledge about organic products and sustainable agriculture has definitely broadened my ideas about the future of agriculture and my interest in this different market for products. I learned a lot about organic farming and I am definitely more cautious about my actions when it comes to my environment. Gaining knowledge about Henry A. Wallace's beliefs as they applied to the environment, soil and prairie have helped me understand many of the activities the County Life Center takes part in. As an agriculture education major, I have been thinking about the lessons I want to teach – about Henry A. Wallace's role in agriculture and organic agriculture production. This internship also opened my eyes to more possibilities for occupations within agriculture and has been very rewarding.

Governor Vilsack honors family, presents 2003 Spencer Award

By Laura Miller, Newsletter editor

Sustainable agriculture got top billing when Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack presented the 2003 Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture to Iowa beef producer Dave Petty at the Iowa State Fair.

The Pioneer Livestock Pavilion was full of fairgoers who came to watch the Governor's Charity Steer Show, a fundraiser organized by the Iowa Cattlemen's Association and Iowa Beef Industry Council. Vilsack made the presentation to Dave, Diane and Dresden Petty before taking the reins of a champion steer that he was showing.

"I can't think of a better family to receive this award," Vilsack said. "They have a true compassion and passion for the land. They understand the challenges of farm families today; they have been creative and innovative in looking for ways to continue to be profitable and at the same time protecting the environment and being great stewards of the land."

Leopold Center advisory board chair Jim Penney said it also was important for them to succeed economically as well as in their conservation efforts.

"The Leopold Center's success depends on people who are willing to take our research one step further – and adopt sustainable agricultural practices on their own farms and in their own communities," Penney said. "Dave and his family have invested in conservation for the long term."

Also on hand were Elaine Spencer of Seattle, Wash., and her brother Robert, of La Crosse, Wisc. The award is named for their parents, Norman and Margaretha Spencer, who farmed near Sioux City for 40 years.

"Our parents believed that as one of the oldest land grant universities in the nation, ISU's mission was not only to educate young people, but also through its research, education and extension to make a major difference in the lives of Iowans," Elaine Spencer said. "The Leopold Center, by focusing its efforts on the preservation of sustainable agriculture and the family farm, carries out the fullest realization of that mission."

She said her parents also believed "that it was each farmer's obligation to leave his land more productive than he found it," adding that Dave, Diane and Dresden Petty follow similar ideals. "They stand as an example that family farms can



Front row: Elaine Spencer, Diane, Dresden and Dave Petty; Back row: Bob Spencer, Jim Penney and Fred Kirschenmann.



Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack congratulates Dave Petty during the award ceremony, conducted in the center show ring of the livestock pavilion.

remain financially successful, while at the same time exercising enlightened stewardship."

A story featuring the Petty family appeared in the Summer 2003 issue of the *Leopold Letter*. Nomination materials for the 2004 award will be available in January.

NEWS & NOTES

Food ecolabels The Leopold Center's work on developing food ecolabels, which tell consumers how far food has traveled and how much energy the transport required, was featured in the August 2 issue of *Science News Online*. Senior editor Janet Raloff explained work being done by the Center's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative leader Rich Pirog in her "Food for Thought" column (see <www.sciencenews.org/20030802/food.asp>). The Center's "food miles" research has been covered by national media including the *Christian Science*

Monitor, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *ABC News Online* and the *Sierra* and *Audubon* magazines. The research reports are on the Leopold Center's web site [see Publications, Papers and Speeches].

Mallarino honored An Iowa State University researcher who has worked on numerous Leopold Center projects has been recognized for his work by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Antonio Mallarino was named a 2003 Secretary's Honor Award recipient for his collabora-

tive work on environmental issues. His research has focused on cost-effective and environmentally sound management practices for phosphorus, animal manure and potassium. He contributed to the development and implementation of phosphorus indexing procedures that protect water quality by identifying corrective measures for nutrient management. He was among 14 scientists from universities and other agencies spanning 10 states who received the award.

Study examines social aspects of watershed planning

By Laura Miller
Newsletter editor

Research shows that improving water quality is most successful when changes occur at a landscape or watershed level, but making such improvements can be a mammoth task.

Why? Some of it comes down to varying perceptions of water quality, says Iowa State University researcher Mimi Wagner. Water quality means different things to different people, and likewise, they hold different expectations of what quality is appropriate or necessary.

Wagner, an assistant professor in the ISU Department of Landscape Architecture, has been studying the social aspects of the Squaw Creek watershed as part of a \$9,700 planning grant from the Leopold Center. Her research results will be used by the Squaw Creek Watershed Council as they look for ways to improve water quality in the 150,000-acre area that encompasses Boone, Story and Hamilton counties.

Wagner and one undergraduate student interviewed 59 people who live and work in the watershed, selected to represent six stakeholder groups. They included 16 farmers, 10 urban residents, 10 rural nonfarm residents, 20 business owners, developers and governmental officials and three people from Iowa State University. Each person was asked a series of open-ended questions and discussed topics after viewing photos taken within the watershed.

More than half of the people in the study used definitions of water quality (and impairments) that were inconsistent with those used by water quality specialists on the ISU campus.

“When many people see a newspaper headline about water quality, they

For a copy of the final report, “Squaw Creek Watershed: Assessment of Water Quality and Natural Resource Knowledge and Beliefs,” contact the Leopold Center at (515) 294-3711 or by email, leocenter@iastate.edu.

assume the issue concerns their drinking water and not a lake or stream’s ability to sustain a fish population or plants,” Wagner said. “On the other hand, technical specialists include physical, chemical and biological characteristics in their definition of water quality and typically extend consideration to include non-human species.”

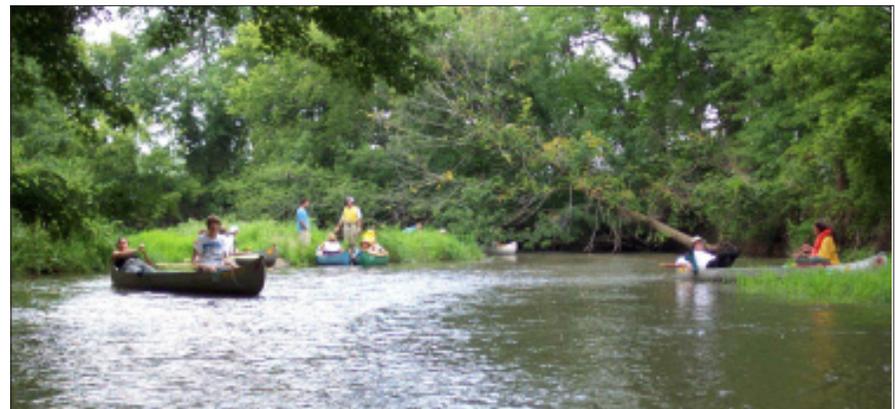
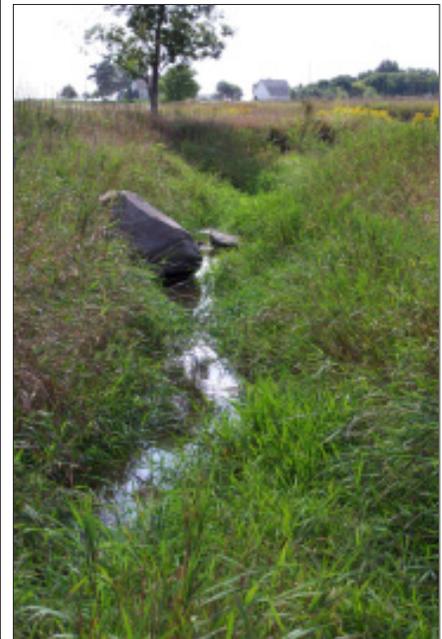
She noted that some of the same perceptions even led to different conclusions regarding water quality.

“Three residents perceived that the water quality in Squaw Creek was adequate for wildlife but was not okay for human consumption,” she said. “Two of those people cited this as evidence that the water quality was impaired, and the third person cited this as proof that the water quality was okay in Squaw Creek.”

Wagner said watershed planning that includes social considerations is more likely to succeed in the long run. Different views can be included early in the process, and become part of the public education efforts. “Clearly, watershed planners need to speak differently and be more aware of different expectations,” she said.

The Squaw Creek watershed is a glacial moraine that once had numerous wetlands and marshes. The area now has a high percentage of agricultural land with tile drainage, increased housing development, and rapidly expanding development along the urban-rural edge. The area drains into the South Skunk River.

Wagner has used this “rapid assessment” technique, which takes about two months to complete, for water quality projects in other areas. She worked with residents in Madison County, whose drinking water is supplied by Cedar Lake and has several known contaminants, and in the Briggs Woods watershed in Hamilton County, both of which are on the state “impaired waters” list. More recently, she has worked with the City of Ames as development begins on the new Ada Hayden Heritage Park and lake.



The assessment also showed that people tend to focus on the portion of the creek or stream closest to their home, rather than looking at the entire system when thinking about watershed quality. They rely heavily on local and regional newspapers for environmental information. The top photo was taken at the headwaters of the Squaw Creek channel on the Darwin and Phyllis Pevestorf farm in Hamilton County. The bottom photo was taken on the Skunk River outside Ames.

A look at ... Marketing Initiative 2004 Grants

The Marketing and Food Systems Initiative is funding nine new projects totaling \$147,405 in the coming year. All projects will be conducted during the 2004 fiscal year that ends June 30, 2004, unless otherwise noted. Several other projects generated by the May 2003 request for preproposals are still under review.

Assessing the market potential of specialty forest products in local food systems, \$10,035, C. Teator, Trees Forever, Marion (M08-2004) Project investigators will interview 25 producers of specialty forest products (fruit, nuts, woody decorative florals and mushrooms) in southeastern and north central Iowa and current and potential buyers in the same areas, including wholesale produce auctions and local food marketers. They also will work with landowners who have already set aside land for the establishment of riparian buffers.

Company environmental and social positioning as sources of competitive advantage: Implications for sustainable agricultural producers, \$25,820, T. DeCarlo, ISU College of Business (M05-2004) Researchers will use a web-based survey of Midwestern consumers to measure whether local ownership and perception of public image has any impact on food products marketed for their positive environmental and social aspects.

Documenting the costs and benefits of whole animal local meat purchases by three northeast Iowa institutions, \$12,500, K. Enshayan, Center for Energy and Environmental Education, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls (M06-2004) The UNI Local Food Project will look at economic advantages and other benefits and costs associated with whole animal purchases of locally raised and processed meat by UNI, Allen Hospital and Bartels Lutheran Home in Waverly.

Leveraging student expertise to solve food production marketing problems, \$15,292, K.M. Palan, ISU College of Business (M03-2004) Iowa State University students would work in teams with Iowa food and fiber producers to develop marketing plans and strategies and analysis of their food products. The effort combines marketing students from the College of Business and agricultural business students from the College of Agriculture.

Local food capacity in north central Iowa: Nutritional need, economic strategy, \$9,390, J. Libbey, Kanawha (M21-2004) Investigators will document the economic and community impacts of a one-year-old local food effort in Wright County.

Market analysis of alternative crop production in Iowa, \$25,000, S. Andrie, ISU Center for Transportation Research and Education (M09-2004) Investigators will develop county-level retail estimates for selected fruit and vegetables, then trace how the current infrastructure (for transportation, storage, etc.) has contributed to "end product" cost. The information will be used to evaluate competitive advantages to market locally or regionally grown produce in Iowa and the Upper Midwest.

Supply chain options for bio-based businesses, \$6,997, R. Lummus, ISU College of Business (M13-2004) Investigators will look at existing business structures in bio-based and other businesses that provide opportunities for producer ownership, involvement or equity positions across the value chain.

Supporting direct meat marketing in Iowa, \$22,371, R. Karp, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Ames (M17-2004) Investigators will conduct a feasibility study of marketing sustainable meat products through cooperative buying clubs, CSAs and a local produce distribution company. Workshops for farmers and processors are planned in northeast and southwest Iowa. They also will produce marketing materials for grass-based food products.

Web-based interactive decision model for determining economic feasibility of growing grapes and establishing a small winery for wine and grape juice, \$20,000 each year for two years; M. Holz-Clause, ISU Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, and G. Nonnecke, ISU horticulture (M16-2004) This project will set up an interactive web site to help entrepreneurs who have an interest in growing organic and nonorganic grapes and producing grape juice or wine to have a realistic understanding of what's needed for a successful business. They will produce four videos with basic information about agri-tourism, operating a winery, and marketing decisions.

Other competitive grants are renewed

WORK

(continued from page 1)

in accordance with legislation that established the center. The process has included an annual invitation to researchers and educators, asking them to submit project proposals that are evaluated by staff, a 17-member advisory board and outside reviewers.

In September 2001, a targeted call for proposals was issued for projects that related to the Center's new directions in marketing, policy and

ecology. The 13 projects that resulted from the 2001 call for proposals were limited in size and scope due to budget cuts at the Center, and no call for proposals was issued in 2002.

Six of the projects from the 2001 call for proposals – three in marketing and three in ecology — were renewed for the coming year. Eight projects in the Center's former competitive grants program were renewed and will complete work in the coming year.

A look at ... *New Initiative Work, Special Projects*

In addition to projects funded as part of the RFP process, several special projects also began during the past year. These projects relate directly to one of the Leopold Center's three initiatives or are time-sensitive in nature. Some grants are used to obtain additional funding or to complete work within a larger project with numerous partners.

Marketing & Food Systems Initiative

Case studies of the development and efficacy of pasture-raised meat marketing messages: Iowa lamb case study, 1 year (began June 2003), \$7,150 (MSP2-2004) This project funds a case study of an Iowa lamb producer to develop strategic marketing messages for pasture-raised lamb. The larger project includes six case studies of beef, dairy and poultry producers in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Other partners are the ISU Extension Value-Added and Sustainable Ag programs, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, and Wisconsin's Center for Integrated Ag Systems.

Cost data collection and analysis for alternative pork systems, 1 year (extended to December 2003), \$7,500; D. Stender, ISU Extension, Cherokee (PNMWG-5) The Pork Niche Market Working Group is working with northwest Iowa pork producers to gather production costs that can be used for business planning and with lenders for entry and expansion into niche pork markets.



ISU researcher Paul Domoto (right) demonstrates a guideline for growing grapes during a workshop at Iowa State's Northeast Iowa Research Farm near Nashua. Domoto has been studying various grape cultivars that are suitable for Iowa growing conditions.

Ecolabel Value Assessment Project, 3 months (began May 2003), \$11,800; T. DeCarlo and M. Upah, ISU College of Business and Papajohn Entrepreneurial Institute (MSP3-2004) ISU business and marketing students worked with Center staff and a faculty researchers to conduct market research on ecolabels with consumers in the Upper Midwest and the Seattle and Boston metro areas.

Evaluating on-farm food handling practices and microbiological quality of locally grown produce and eggs, 1 year (began May 2003), \$25,385; C. Strohhahn and D. Henroid, ISU hotel, restaurant and institution management (MSP1-2004) Investigators will visit farms and interview up to 14 producers participating in this pilot project designed to increase their ability to assess and implement best practices on the farm to ensure food safety for the hotel, restaurant and institutional markets. Producer-identified concerns will be used to plan a Nov. 19 workshop.

Ecology Initiative

Effects of biomass harvest on soil erosion and carbon sequestration, 6 months (began January 2003), \$10,000; T. Richard, ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering (E7-2003) The project investigator used the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) simulation models to study the effects of biomass harvest on erosion and soil carbon under typical Iowa conditions. Several cropping systems were considered, including corn stover and other crop residues harvested as raw material for bio-based manufacturing and energy production. Erosion at different crop residue removal rates was compared on different soils and on different slopes, and showed that soil type had a smaller effect on erosion than did slope or biomass removal rate.

Special Projects

Combine clean-out for identity-preserved grains, 1 of 2 years (began September 2003), \$30,000; M. Hanna, ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering (SP Combine CO-2004) Producer ability to take advantage of emerging, value-added markets will often depend on improved field production techniques. The project investigator will conduct replicated clean-outs of a single combine used in both corn and soybean harvests to measure the amount of crop remaining in several different areas of the combine, and the purity level achieved in the next grain harvested by the combine. Estimates of potential grain in various parts of the combine and estimates of the labor required for cleanout will allow farmers to better evaluate costs for various purity requirements.

Implementing a leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula* L. or *E. x pseudovirgata*) biological control agent release and monitoring program in Iowa, 1 of 3 years (began summer 2003), \$9,200; R. Pope, B. Hartzler, J. DeWitt, ISU entomology (SP Spurge-2004) Leafy spurge is a perennial native to central Europe that has been a problem in western rangelands of the United States because of its stout rhizomes, unpalatability to grazing animals and quick regrowth. Students at Dordt College will be trained to identify leafy spurge and spurge flea beetles that feed on the plants to document significant infestations in Sioux, Ida and Dickinson counties in northwest Iowa. Investigators hope to establish beetles in selected leafy spurge infestations during the first year and monitor their effectiveness at controlling leafy spurge during subsequent years of the project.

Pesticide use on conventional and GM crops: A three-crop NASS analysis, 6 months (began August 2003), \$2,000 (SP NASS data-2004) The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reports pesticide use for major agricultural crops both by state and nationally. The Leopold Center and several partners are funding an analysis by Benbrook Consulting Services to develop tables and offer observations regarding pesticide and herbicide usage for conventional and GM crops. The analysis will focus on insecticide use patterns for corn and cotton, and herbicide use patterns for corn, cotton and soybean.

A look at ... Competitive Grant Renewals

Six grants from the Leopold Center's 2001 call for proposals have been renewed for another year. These projects, selected in terms of their relevance to the Center's three initiatives, began July 1, 2002.

Marketing and Food Systems Initiative

Grinnell area local food system initiative, year 1 of 2; \$17,500; J. Andelson, Center for Prairie Studies, Grinnell College (M1-2003) Working with the Grinnell Area Local Food Alliance (GALFA), this project includes a survey of local institutions to determine interest in using locally produced food to develop a system to supply those products. The project was delayed due to a change in principal investigators.

Investigating Iowa plants as natural dyes, year 2 of 2; \$11,516; S. Kadolph, ISU apparel, educational studies, and hospitality management (M6-2003) This project explores the use of Iowa plants (fruits, vegetables, flowers, trees, and vines) for their potential as natural dyestuffs to replace synthetic dyes.

Life in Iowa Homecoming Institute, year 2 of 3; \$15,000; N. Bevin, ISU Extension (M2-2003) Life in Iowa is an undergraduate program at Iowa State University in which students earn three credits after completing a 10-week summer internship and at least 100 hours of volunteer work in a participating Iowa community. The goal is to develop student leadership and help participating communities create a sustainable quality of life. This grant funded five students in 2003 and two students in 2002 in internships that focused on sustainable agriculture, food systems and environmental projects.

Ecology Initiative

Alternative farrowing systems during cold weather, year 2 of 2, \$25,829; M. Honeyman, ISU Research Farms; J. Harmon, ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering; and J. Kliebenstein, ISU economics (E3-2003) Many new pork niche markets require farrowing outdoors or indoors in bedded pens, which makes winter farrowing difficult and results in a scarcity of marketable fresh pork during the summer. This project is designed to document successful management practices, design appropriate technology and develop budgets and sensitivity tables for producers interested in winter farrowing. Investigators believe they have a significant production breakthrough with a combination of modified huts and a radiant heater.

Biological control of the soybean aphid in organic and sustainable soybean production systems, year 2 of 3, \$27,000; J. Zhu, ISU entomology; R. Exner, Practical Farmers of Iowa and ISU Extension (E2-2003) The primary treatment for soybean aphid infestation has been sprays. This project is exploring biological management options in field situations, and training farmers about different options for managing levels of aphid predators as well as aphid populations. Preliminary work has identified several predatory insects and parasitoids other than the originally targeted lacewings and lady beetles. Researchers also have identified several aphid and soybean plant associated volatiles that were attractive to the aphid predators. Early field work using the attractants reduced soybean aphid populations.

Developing prototypes of environmentally sustainable family-owned beef feedlots in the Elk River watershed, year 2 of 3; \$28,000; J. Zacharakis-Jutz, L. Hunt, ISU Extension, and B. Van Laere, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Clinton County (E5-2003) Project coordinators are working with cooperating farmers to develop and construct one to two prototypes of environmentally-friendly cattle feedlot treatments suitable for family farms. No- or low-cost third-party environmental assessments are being offered for interested feedlot operators in the watershed. Activities and education activities associated with the project will be coordinated through the Elk River Watershed Council.

PFI Field Days

The Leopold Center has a longtime partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa to fund a portion of its on-farm research program, which is highlighted during PFI's 2003 Farm Field Days held in the summer and fall. Events throughout Iowa have attracted good crowds. The photographs on these two pages were provided by PFI/ISU Extension Farming Systems coordinator Rick Exner.

Top: Farmer Don Adams discusses open-pollinated and field-cross corn during the August 19 field day at the Neely-Kinyon Research Farm near Greenfield.

Middle: Researcher Rob DeHann leads a group on a walk through Steele Prairie during the August 22 field day at the Agricultural Stewardship Center at Dordt College in Sioux Center.

Bottom: Laura Krouse hosted a field day July 23 at her farm near Mount Vernon. She markets an open-pollinated corn for seed, "Abbe Hills OP."



A look at ... Competitive Grant Renewals

In addition to renewed or special projects that are part of the ecology, marketing and policy initiatives, eight research projects funded under the Leopold Center's former competitive grants program will complete work during the coming year. These projects are in a third or fourth year of funding and were started before the Center revamped its competitive grants program in 2001.

Developing a local food system in association with business and industry, year 3 of 3, \$9,780; W. Johnson, Limestone Bluffs RC&D, Maquoketa (2002-67) A group of agricultural producers, in conjunction with local businesses and a sheltered workshop, created a subscription sales demonstration project for local food. The second year of the project was harmed by the loss of several early crops due to severe weather and flooding. Weekly subscription lists have been altered to emphasize frozen meats and value-added goods, but the project still lacks sufficient subscriber demand. In the third year, Quad City markets are being explored for subscription potential.

Economically sustainable riparian buffer to promote bank stability and reduce gully erosion and phosphorus runoff in the Loess Hills, year 3 of 3, \$29,500; M. Kelly, ISU natural resource ecology and management (2002-30) Investigators propose to evaluate the effectiveness of a tree-based riparian buffer in the Deep Loess Hills for suitability in managing landscape issues such as erosion and phosphorus movement. The buffer has been successfully installed and has exhibited good growth for the cottonwoods. The direct-seeded walnut planting showed very high germination and survival rates. Data are being collected to determine buffer effectiveness in reducing phosphorus movement in detached soil, and overland and subsurface flow.

Effects of grazing management on sediment and phosphorus losses from pastures, year 3 of 3, \$35,00; Leopold Center agroecology and animal management issue teams and the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, Ames (2002-U19) This effort has focused on quantifying the effects of grazing management practices on losses of phosphorus and nitrogen in surface runoff, and to develop best management practices. Early results indicate that sediment and phosphorus losses in pasture runoff can be managed through rotational stocking to maintain adequate sward height and/or by using vegetative buffer strips along streams.

Incorporating grassland agriculture into row crop production systems, year 3 of 3, \$11,200; M. Mensching, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Knoxville (2002-39) The project goal is to increase farmer use of grass-based conservation alternatives in Madison, Warren, Marion and Mahaska counties. A farm was selected in each county to serve as a demonstration site. The producers (who will receive incentive payments for participation) are providing economic and management information for incorporating grasslands into crop production systems on marginal soils. Each farm offers a unique perspective and soil conservation and management challenge.

Investigation of the influence of tillage for management of woolly cupgrass, year 4 of 4, \$10,800; M. Owen, ISU agronomy (2001-56) This research looks at woolly cupgrass response to various management practices. Data are not yet clear regarding the best tillage-weed management regimes, but it is clear that timing is very important. To be most effective, tillage should occur later in April or early in May, a few weeks after initial emergence. Woolly cupgrass emergence occurred in mid-April of each year of the study so far, but tillage on or shortly after first emergence did not reduce later season populations of the weed.

Organic matter nutrient budgeting, year 3 of 3, \$40,00 (2002-4) This is a collaborative effort with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, Practical Farmers of Iowa and the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute. Investigators are working closely with farmer cooperators to develop and document a nutrient budgeting tool that will assist farmers in management decisions to cut excess nutrients from their farming practices without assuming extra risk. The project is primarily concerned with tightening corn budgets and managing soil organic matter.

Sustainable grape production for the reestablishment of Iowa's grape industry, year 3 of 3, \$14,234; G. Nonnecke, ISU horticulture (2002-46) In response to increased interest in viticulture in Iowa, researchers are looking at whole-systems management practices related to culture and training, pest management and cultivars suitable for grape growing in Iowa. Three production systems (conventional, best management, and organic) and 15 cultivars have been established in central and southwestern Iowa. Preliminary data have been obtained for cultivar performance, herbicide drift injury, vine hardening and leaf senescence.

Sustaining agricultural producers through direct marketing of processed foods, year 3 of 3, \$6,000; C. Chase, ISU Extension, Waterloo (2002-16) Many agricultural producers want to look beyond commodity crops toward food crops to increase farm profitability. Before farmers invest time and money to make these changes, they need information about the potential demand for various processed food products, and profitability of various raw food and processed food products. This education and demonstration project is collecting data to address these questions.



Tom Frantzen (in truck) demonstrates an implant used to track pasture-raised animals.



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Letter

HIGHLIGHT EVENTS

October 20 – Seminar by agriculture scholar Jules Pretty, “Economics as if the Real World Mattered,” 3:10 p.m., Science152, ISU campus. Pretty is director of the Centre for the Environment and Society at Great Britain’s University of Essex. He has reviewed studies of more than 200 sustainable farming projects on 70 million acres in 52 countries. He is the author of eight books including, *The Living Land: Regenerating Agriculture*; *Unwelcome Harvest*, *Agri-Culture: Re-Connecting People, Land and Nature* and his newest book, *Guide to a Green Planet*. His visit is sponsored by the Leopold Center’s Ecology Initiative.

November 14 – Brown bag seminars followed by open discussion, John Reganold, “The effects of alternative and conventional farming on soil quality and other sustainability indicators,” and Stephen Jones, “Breeding wheat for sustainable systems,” Noon to 2 p.m., 3140 Agronomy, ISU campus. Both are professors in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University.

December 1 – Seminar by Arpad Pusztai and Susan Bardocz, the Rowett Research Institute in Scotland, “Genetically modified foods: Potential human health effects,” 4:10 p.m. followed by a reception, Gallery, ISU Memorial Union, Ames.



Iowa Farm & Field Fest

Director Fred Kirschenmann was a guest of WOI Radio and a featured speaker at the Iowa Farm & Field Fest near Boone in August. His topic, “Is there a future in farming?” looked at challenges facing agriculture.

Iowa and the EPA

Water quality and Iowa agriculture will be the topic of the 2003 Shivers Lecture on November 3. The speech is sponsored by the Leopold Center and Gamma Sigma Delta, an ISU agriculture honorary society.

Jim Gulliford, administrator for Region 7 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will present, “The EPA’s perspective on agriculture and its relation to water quality in Iowa.” The speech will be at 4:10 p.m. in the Pioneer Room of the ISU Memorial Union on campus in Ames, with a reception at 3:30 p.m.

Gulliford represents the EPA in a four-state region that includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.