KERR CENTER

Field Notes

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Future Farms 2006

Farm-to-Table in Oklahoma

– *Wylie Harris*

Terry Peach

"The world is looking at Oklahoma," Kerr Center President Jim Horne told the crowd at *Future Farms 2006*, "because we've made so much progress so fast."

A diverse crowd of about 200 attended the conference on Aug. 25 in Oklahoma City. The educational event was sponsored by the Kerr Center, in cooperation with the USDA's Risk Management Agency and the USDA's Community Food Projects Program.

Building on the recent momentum of Oklahoma's Farm-to-School Program, *Future Farms 2006: Farm to Table*, focused on developing and expanding connections between Oklahoma farms and schools, colleges, restaurants and other food service providers in the state.

Oklahoma Agriculture Secretary Terry Peach got the morning's activities underway with a round of congratulations to the Kerr Center and its partner organizations for the successful launch of farm-to-school and related programs in the state.

"We need to have as many fresh nutritious fruits and vegetables in our schools as we can," Peach said. He added that the Ag-in-the-Classroom program is currently writing a curriculum to expand from grades K-6 to K-8.

Ag in the Classroom is a joint educational project of the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) and OSU Extension.

"Seventh and eighth graders are 'near consumers,'" he said. "We need to get them educated on good nutrition and make them better consumers."

He also mentioned the new downtown Oklahoma City Farmers' Market, which OSU-OKC and his department are promoting. "I hope it gets big enough that we have to block off the street."

Farm-to-school, Horne said, was Phase One of the Oklahoma Food Policy Council's Farm to Table Project. Phase Two is farm to table itself, involving restaurants, community supported agriculture, farmers'

continued on page seven

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture offers progressive leadership and educational programs to all those interested in making farming and ranching environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and economically viable over the long term.

The Kerr Center is a non-profit foundation located on 4,000 acres near the southeastern Oklahoma town of Poteau. It was established in 1985.

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What's New on the Web

More articles, reports, fact sheets and information on programs and upcoming events can be found on the Kerr Center's comprehensive website–www.kerrcenter.com. *Field Notes* is also available online.

New this fall:

■ **Grazing Lands Dollar$ and $ense: Developing Grassfed Livestock Production Systems**
An article on the August conference in Oklahoma City, with links to speaker websites. Also information on the important role of dung beetles in pasture ecosystems, and the USDA's proposed voluntary standard for grassfed livestock.

■ ***An Introduction to Agroforestry***
Covers the types of agroforestry and case studies of agroforestry projects here and overseas, including at the Kerr Center. Written by Kerr Center intern Chloe Johnson.

■ ***Closer to Home: Healthier Food, Farms and Families in Oklahoma***
As Oklahoma celebrates its 100th birthday in 2007, it is time to take stock of the health of Oklahoma's families and farms. *Closer to Home* is a look at Oklahoma's food system from farm to table. Two years in the making, this groundbreaking report features extensive research and original analyses. It is the first time that information about agriculture and agricultural markets have been combined with information on nutrition, health, food insecurity and hunger, into one report.
Closer to Home has a reader-friendly format. The report features about two dozen magazine-style articles about innovative people, businesses and programs contributing positively to a healthier Oklahoma. Along side the profiles we examine the issues raised by the article.
For example, alongside a profile of the Muskogee Farmers' Market, we investigate the economic potential of farmers selling direct to consumers (see p. 15). Alongside a profile of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's community garden program, we explore Oklahoma's high rates of food insecurity and hunger (see p. 3). Chapters are online at www.kerrcenter.com and the printed report will be available Jan. 1.

■ ***Oklahoma Farm to School: Resource Guide for Farmers***
100-plus pages of practical information compiled for Oklahoma farmers who want to sell to schools. Six sections include: Farm to School Basics, Connecting with Schools, Ensuring Food Safety, Picking and Packing for Schools, Food and Farm Education, Farm-to-School in Other States.

■ ***Oklahoma Farm to School: Resource Guide for Food Service***
100 pages of practical information for food service directors and personnel who would like to buy locally grown, farm-fresh foods. Sections include: The ABC's of Farm-to-School, Eat Smart-Farm Fresh, The Food Connection, Connecting with Students, Food and Health.

Also online:

■ **Oklahoma Farmer Speakers Bureau**

■ ***The Oklahoma Food Connection 2006: A Directory of Agricultural Producers, Crops and Institutional Buyers***

Closer to Home, The Oklahoma Farm-to-School Resource Guides and *The Oklahoma Food Connection 2006* are supported by the Community Food Projects Program of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grant #2004-33800-15141

Feeling Hungry: Food Insecurity in Oklahoma

– *Maura McDermott*

This is an excerpt from Chapter Two of *Closer to Home: Healthier Food, Farms and Families in Oklahoma*, a centennial report on Oklahoma's food system, online at www.kerrcenter.com. (See p. 2 for details.)

Most Oklahomans have never heard the term *food insecurity.*

This could be because most people in Oklahoma – 84.8%, according to the USDA – have "consistent dependable access to enough food for active healthy living." In other words, they are food secure. They can afford to buy the food they need (and want).

While people may fuss when one food item or another goes up in price, the majority of people in Oklahoma feel secure in their ability to feed themselves and their families, living as they do in one of the best-fed nations in the world.

It is a particularly cruel irony that in rural Oklahoma, where the wheat waves, the pecans drop and the cattle fatten in what Woody Guthrie called "pastures of plenty," people are not eating well.

Most Oklahomans take for granted this basic level of well being, but not all do. In every community in the state, people struggle to consistently have enough food to feed themselves and their children. They run out of food and money for food, they skip meals, they cut back on servings, they feed their children unbalanced diets, they rely on a few kinds of cheap foods to get by.

In 2004, about 15% (213,408) of 1.4 million Oklahoma households were caught in this trap and deemed "food insecure" by the USDA. The national average was 11.9%

In 5.6% (about 79,000) of households in Oklahoma, people went hungry and were classified as "food insecure, with hunger." The national average was 3.9%.

Oklahoma has the highest rate in the nation of food insecurity with hunger. The state's rate of hunger has been on the rise – up over a percentage point since the late 1990s, while other states with similarly poor showings have improved.

Everyone suffers in food insecure households. Often mothers go hungry in order to feed their children, and in the worst cases, the children go hungry. In families with the most extreme food insecurity, adults and children both can become chronically undernourished.

Food insecurity and hunger can reduce children's cognitive development and learning capacity and impair adults' work performance. Costs, both to individuals and communities, can be considerable.

A Private Misery, a Public Problem

Hunger and food insecurity are usually out of our sight, private miseries suffered by the poor that become public during food drives and holidays, when

What is household food security?

Definitions from the Life Sciences Research Office

Food security – Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life (without recourse to emergency food sources such as food pantries and soup kitchens).

Food security includes at a minimum:

1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods;

2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Food insecurity – Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Hunger – The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food; the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

What Can Be Done to Make Oklahoma More Food Secure?

- Connect low income families with high quality, affordable food, including fresh, local produce, through community based initiatives such as farmers' markets, CSA farms, farm-to-school programs, and school and community gardens.
- Set a state goal of cutting the incidence of food insecurity in half (from 15.2% to 7.2 %) and completely eliminating hunger in Oklahoma by 2012 (five years).

  Make this goal the subject of a state public health campaign, *Hunger is not OK!*

More policy ideas to improve the health of Oklahoma families and farms are online, in each chapter of *Closer to Home.*

Oklahomans invariably respond generously.

The poor depend on a safety net of federal and state programs, such as food stamps, the school lunch and breakfast programs, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program, and these have been very effective in preventing starvation in the U.S. Oklahoma has a high rate of participation (96.6%) in the federal food stamp program, and was recently recognized for its efforts for significantly improving access to this program.

In addition to the government safety net, private non-profit organizations like the Regional Food Bank in Oklahoma City and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma together serve every county in the state, supplying food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens with donated food for over 100,000 people each week.

Despite these public and private efforts, in recent years the campaign to reduce rates of food insecurity even further has stalled, with rates going up and down according to the health of the economy. After the 1996 World Food Summit, the United States set forth a national goal of cutting in half the rate of food insecurity – from 12% to 6% – by 2010. However, in 2004, the national rate was hung at 11.9%, having gone up in the previous five years instead of down.

The Meaning of Food Insecurity

In Oklahoma, about half a million people are food insecure. These data come from an annual survey that the USDA conducts of a nationally representative sample of 60,000 households, including 1,927 in Oklahoma. The survey asks ten questions about "food conditions" at the household level and among adults in the household. If there are children present, an additional eight questions are asked.

Food insecurity can be occasional or chronic. According to the latest (2004) survey, the food insecure households at some time during the year had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources.

About a third of those households were food insecure to the extent that one or more household members were hungry at least some time during the year because they could not afford enough food. In Oklahoma, almost 200,000 people lived in these "food insecure with hunger" households.

According to the USDA, "the prevalence of food insecurity varies among households of various types. Rates… were higher in households headed by single women with children and in Black and Hispanic households. Geographically, food insecurity was more common in central cities and rural areas than in suburbs, and in the South and the West."

As one would expect, food insecurity goes hand in hand with poverty.

It shouldn't be surprising then that Oklahoma, as part of the South, with many rural counties and high poverty rates, has high rates of food insecurity.

The Poor: Always with Us?

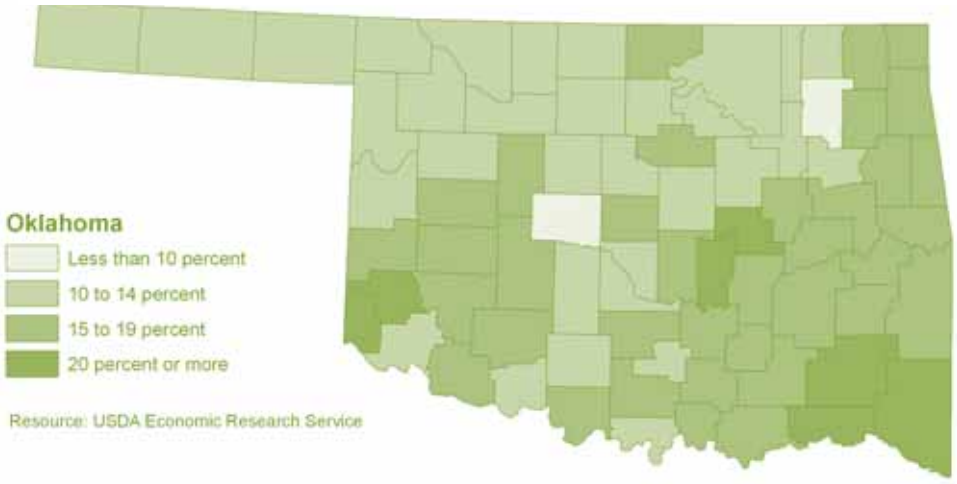
In Oklahoma over half a million people are below the poverty line – 14.6% of the state's population of 3.5 million. [8] This is higher than the national rate of 12.5%.

In rural Oklahoma, the average rate was 16.3%. The dozen poorest counties in the state are rural, with rates of poverty approaching or exceeding 20%. (See map.)

In Oklahoma, the numbers of children in poverty are even higher: an average of 21% statewide. In five counties – Pushmataha, McCurtain, Seminole, Choctaw and Harmon – over 30% of the children are poor.

The Oklahoma State Board of Health has identified poverty as a "fundamental factor" that prevents the state from improving its health status. In its 2006 *State of the State's Health* report, the board says that "poverty is the single best predictor of health status whether we are

Percent of total population in poverty, 2003



speaking of countries, states, counties or zip codes. Poverty, poor health and poor education are linked."

Another contributor to poor health among low-income Oklahomans is obesity.

This seems counterintuitive: how can someone be food insecure and also overweight?

Researchers have found that the highest rates of obesity are found among population groups with the highest poverty rates and the least education. Poverty and food insecurity are associated with lower food expenditures, low fruit and vegetable consumption and lower quality diets.

Researchers point to over-consumption of "energy-dense" foods (such as snack foods, desserts, fast foods and soft drinks) which may contain a higher proportion of refined grains, added sugars and vegetable fats. Such foods are tasty and cheap – and fattening, if eaten too often. (See sidebar.)

Such foods are readily available everywhere, whereas healthier alternatives such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains are not. People in many rural counties in Oklahoma are finding that access to healthier foods is getting more difficult as convenience stores and gas stations move in and grocery stores move out of their communities.

It is a particularly cruel irony that in rural Oklahoma, where the wheat waves, the pecans drop and the cattle fatten in what Woody Guthrie called "pastures of plenty," people are not eating well.

The Community Approach

Poverty and hunger are nothing new in Oklahoma. Many Oklahomans have experienced privation or heard stories of how their parents or grandparents coped during the Great Depression – families living on potatoes and biscuits (made from that all-essential sack of flour), kids seining for fish in the creek, daddies shooting squirrels and mamas picking lambs' quarters from the side of the road – working every day to scrape together the next meal, and sometimes not making it.

Oklahomans are justly proud of this tradition of self-reliance. In good times and bad, farm families looked forward to eating the fruits of their labors. They enjoyed the green beans, tomatoes, peaches and other fruits and vegetables picked fresh from the field or home

Obesity and Food Insecurity

According to the Center on Hunger and Poverty and the Food Research and Action Center, there are specific factors that contribute to weight gain among people who are food insecure:

The need to maximize caloric intake – low-income families must stretch their food money. Families may choose to maximize the calories they buy (more calories per dollar) so that family members do not suffer hunger.

The trade-off between food quality and quantity – food-insecure households will reduce food spending by changing the quality or variety of food they eat before they reduce the quantity of food eaten. As a result, while families may get enough food to avoid feeling hungry, they also may be poorly nourished because they cannot afford a diet that promotes health and averts obesity.

Overeating when food is available – research indicates that chronic ups and downs in food availability can cause people to eat more when food is available than they normally would.

Physiological changes – the body can compensate for periodic food shortages by becoming more efficient at storing more calories as fat.

What is poverty?

For a family of four with two children under 18 years: an annual income of $19,157 or lower.

Food Insecurity: State Rankings

With 15.2% of Oklahoma households deemed food insecure, Oklahoma is ranked 47th among the states, with only Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas ranked lower. Oklahoma's rate has increased since 1996.

Nearby states Kansas (12.3%) and Missouri (11.3%) have fewer food insecure people.

Best ranked states are North Dakota, New Hampshire, Delaware, Massachusetts and Montana, all with rates less than half of Oklahoma's.

garden, and shared the surplus with neighbors. Some sold to local processors or at farm stands or in urban markets.

This rural landscape has almost, but not completely, vanished. And looking back, it can be easy to forget that rural poverty fifty years ago was twice what it is today.

Arguably much has been gained in rural Oklahoma – but much has also been lost, including the tradition of self-sufficiency.

The Community Food Security Initiative, launched by the USDA in 1999, is a different approach to combating America's food insecurity that draws on this tradition of self reliance. This initiative connects low-income people with fresh, locally grown food.

The agency, which spends half of its budget on food assistance programs, sees community-based initiatives such as farmers' markets, community gardens, community supported agriculture (CSA) and farm-to-school programs as ways to boost the effectiveness of its nutrition assistance and education programs "by increasing the availability of high-quality and affordable food in a community."

Researchers at Rutgers University see community food security as "a process in which community-based programs work in tandem with a strong Federal nutrition safety net. The goal: moving people to self sufficiency and food security."

In addition, these initiatives can help rejuvenate rural economies by increasing market opportunities for farmers. In a state where more than half of the farms net less than $10,000 per year, such initiatives are needed.

Oklahoma has a number of fledgling community food projects, but many more are needed if the state is to make progress in eliminating hunger and food insecurity. And, with the state facing a long-term health crisis, caused in part by what Oklahomans are eating (and not eating), more opportunities to buy and/or eat fresh locally-grown produce will benefit all, regardless of income level.

Community Food Grants

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP) of the USDA's Cooperative Extension Service has existed since 1996 as a program to fight food insecurity through developing community food projects that help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities.

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs.

In 2004, the Kerr Center received a three-year grant from the Community Foods Grant Program. Oklahoma has high rates of poverty, food insecurity and hunger. Oklahomans, including schoolchildren, are experiencing an obesity epidemic and rank near the bottom of nutrition indicators. Many of Oklahoma's small farms and rural communities continue to struggle economically.

Project activities will include a state food system assessment/report and community foods educational campaign. Other activities include nutritional outreach, curriculum/activities on food and farming for schoolchildren and teachers, and farm-to-school programs and information guides.

The project will bring together groups from sectors (agriculture, health and education) that have not previously worked closely together, creating a critical mass of energy, expertise and enthusiasm that will lead to positive change.

For more on the Kerr Center grant activities go to www.kerrcenter.com.

FUTURE FARMS 2006

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markets, and other forms of direct and local farm sales.

"When I grew up," Horne said, "ag was just farming. Consumers were more distant. Now they're very involved. Talking about farming is really talking about food."

The Oklahoma Food Policy Council (a joint project of the Kerr Center and ODAFF) shares that unified perspective. The council, Horne said, tries to understand working of various sectors of food system. Then, it selects sectors where there is the opportunity to improve food security - such as in school meals.

The systems approach helped the Council find the 'legislative friends' - the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, and the Fit Kids Coalition - whose partnership enabled all three groups to take Farm-to-school from a pilot program of the Food Policy Council to an officially legislated state initiative.

The Oklahoma Departments of Education and Human Services were also instrumental in implementing an expanded farm-to-school program.

Viewing food policy as encompassing both farms and tables, along with everything in between, is not only effective as a tactic in the legislature. It also has positive effects that extend to all Oklahomans.

Briefly defined, Horne said, food security is the ability of a community or individual to meet most of its own food needs most of the time. "Five percent of families in the state go hungry," he said. "Many people go without access to grocery stores, in both rural and urban areas." (See p. 3 for more)

In addition to supplying school kids with healthier meals, Horne said, Farm-to-Table also boosts rural incomes, improving food security in both city and countryside. In this form of rural economic development, he said, "Schools and students are a captive audience - 500,000 meals per day is the maximum potential."

Overall, Horne pointed out, Oklahoma spends $8 billion a year on food. "Just 10 % of that to farmers would be $800 million into the farmers' pocket," he said. "That's a very attainable goal."

"I'm an ag economist," said Horne, who holds an M.S. in that field, as well as a Ph.D. in biology. "But let me tell you - it's not all about the bottom line."

"It's about several bottom lines. One of them is quality of life."

Photo credits: middle photo, this page, and Glyen Holmes, p. 9: Duane Harrel, ODAFF
Other conference photos: Maura McDermott

I-r: Rita Scott, president of Sustainable Green Country, BiBi Becklund, Lisa Merrell, both of Living Kitchens Farm, and Rachel Jackson, proud winner of the hoe door prize.

Long time sustainable agriculture supporter Edwin Kessler of Norman visits with Jim Horne, Kerr Center president.

Mark and Lynda Puckett of Dominion Farm and Ranch, winners of the garden bag door prize.

THE KERR CENTER
FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Future Farms 2006 Marketing Conference

Odd Couple

Anne Roberts, Executive Director of the Institute for Child Advocacy and advocate for the Fit Kids Coalition was the conference luncheon speaker. She talked about the "odd couple" of child welfare advocates and farmers working together for the succesful passage of Farm-to-School legislation in spring of 2006.

"It's been an extraordinary experience for all of us," she said, to "work together to make change happen."

For more on the Local Food Project, go to www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject. For more on Buy Fresh, Buy Local go to www.foodroutes.org.

Know Your Farmer

"Our goal," said conference keynote speaker Kamyar Enshayan, "is to make it easier for every meal served in a place like this [the Clarion Meridian Hotel] to be Oklahoma-grown. We want it to be a normal thing."

"It's strange and radical," he told the *Future Farms 2006* audience, "to import food from far away at the peak of the season when we live in an agricultural state."

Enshayan's comments apply equally well to Oklahoma and to Iowa, where he is a professor at the University of Northern Iowa and oversees the university's Local Food Project.

In Black Hawk County and neighboring counties, where Enshayan's Local Food Project is based, there are 8,500 farms, averaging 326 acres apiece. Gross farm sales are $1.08 billion, but production costs are $1.14 billion. That means that farms lose $62 million overall, in spite of $173 million in crop subsidies.

It also means that much of the $400 million spent every year on food in the region goes to farms in other places.

"It's a puzzle," Enshayan said. "So much agriculture, so little food."

"How do we reconnect farmers and residents, consumers?" he wondered aloud. "What if all Iowans ate five a day (meaning, five servings of fruits and vegetables), and 25% of it came from Iowa?"

Enshayan set out to answer that question by keeping track of his own family's food spending. Thirteen percent of it turned out to be for locally grown foods. So, Enshayan concluded, a goal of having everyone spend 10% of their food budget on local foods is not unrealistic.

To move toward that goal, the Local Food Project enrolled in the "Buy Fresh/Buy Local" campaign, which is active in 18 communities in 15 states, including Alabama and Missouri.

Kamyar Enshayan

The Iowa version puts the campaign logo on glossy newsprint directories of local farms, and on table-tents in restaurants that serve locally grown food. It is also seen on banners in grocery stores as well as on a billboard on a major road two blocks from the local farmers' market.

The efforts are paying off. Over 80% of the farms participating in the area's "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign have seen their sales increase, some by as much as 20%.

Enshayan also described buy fresh/buy local campaigns in other states. In Alabama, where the campaign is spearheaded by the Dept. of Agriculture, the message to "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" is on 200 billboards and prominently displayed in 82 farmers' markets and over 100 farm stands in the state.

A campaign in Kansas City, said Enshayan, resulted in a 36% increase in sales of locally grown food sold through locally-owned and operated supermarkets in the metropolitan area.

For Enshayan, the question is simple: "You know your doctor. You know your dentist. Do you know your farmer?"

The answer should be obvious.

Farm-to-School: Meeting Popular Demand

Oklahoma's new farm-to-school program grew to its largest size ever this fall, with almost six times as many new schools participating.

Glyen Holmes

Oklahoma-grown honeydew melons joined watermelons on the farm-to-school menu, as the program switched gears from a pilot project to a state program sanctioned by the Oklahoma legislature.

Just how farms and schools may get involved in farm-to-school programs was discussed during the farm-to-school track at *Future Farms 2006.* Doug Walton of the Kerr Center, Chris Kirby of the Oklahoma Food Policy Council and Stephanie Curtis of the Oklahoma Department of Education explained the program to about 75 farmers and school food service personnel.

Connie Whitmore, a farmer who has sold items to the Stillwater public schools, was on hand to relate her experiences.

Walton also distributed the brand new *Oklahoma Farm-to-School Resource Guide for Farmers* and the *Oklahoma Farm-to-School Resource Guide for Food Service* (see p. 2 for more info).

Two nationally-known speakers— Glyen Holmes, Executive Director of the New North Florida Farmers' Cooperative, and Vonda Richardson, Extension Marketing Specialist at Florida A&M University, shared their considerable experience with farm-to-school during their session.

l-r Stephanie Curtis, Debbie Matz, and Dee Baker from the Oklahoma State Dept. of Education

The New North Florida cooperative began in 1996 selling produce to one school in Florida. Today they sell to fifteen school districts in Florida, Georgia and Alabama, serving 300,000 students.

In 2004, four Oklahoma school districts participated in a pilot farm-to-school project, organized by the council. The schools served Oklahoma-grown seedless watermelons for lunch during August and September.

The watermelons were so popular with students and food service that in fall 2005 two school districts were added to the four, tripling the number of melons delivered.

Earlier this year, the program drew the attention of state legislators, who passed a bill making farm-to-school an official program within the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. The Oklahoma Dept. of Education has actively promoted the program through workshops and conferences for school food service personnel.

Due to these efforts, farm-to-school continues to expand faster than ever. This last fall, the number of participating schools rose to 343, in a total of 35 districts.

Participating school districts in 2006 ranged from Sayre, in far western Oklahoma, to Dewey in the northeast part of the state. Both smaller districts such as Pond Creek-Hunter in Grant County and larger districts such as Oklahoma City and Tulsa participated.

This year a new produce item, honeydew melons, were offered to schools along with the seedless watermelons. The watermelons were supplied by Bob Ramming, and the honeydews by Bruce Price and Marlin Unruh, all of Hinton.

Kirby has worked closely with the growers, schools, and over ten different distributors to make sure the program runs smoothly. The Kerr Center and the Food Policy Council have worked on the program since 2002.

Food for Thought

During his hour in the limelight at *Future Farms,* Howard Sacks related insights from how the "Food for Thought" initiative that he directs is building a sustainable food system at the level of a single county in Knox County, Ohio.

By the end of the hour, the Kenyon College professor had given the audience plenty to chew on.

Food for Thought's story began when the county next to Knox was overrun by suburban sprawl during a single decade. Worried that it might be next in line, the county began a broad public dialogue. The outcome: a resolve to maintain the county's rural character.

That's a job that's easier said than done, and some of the options residents considered to keep their county's rural identity were unpopular.

For instance, restrictive zoning laws could halt development, but were unpopular with farmers who might want to sell their land, and flew in the face of private property rights.

Agricultural conservation easements offered another route. But at an average cost of $8,000 per acre, in a county where 200-acre farms are the norm, the only way to pay for the easements would be through new taxes.

"So," Sacks explained, "We argued that the most effective way to maintain rural character was to create a dependable market for local foods—with no new taxes or laws."

In 2001, as a first step in bringing such a market into being, Food for Thought created a directory of local farmers. They packed it with a chart showing the seasonal availability of local foods, and an essay on the history of farming in the county.

Howard Sacks talks to a conference attendee.

> "The most effective way to maintain rural character was to create a dependable market for local foods. With no new taxes or laws."

Then they squeezed it all into a booklet small enough to fit into a glove compartment, on the theory that parents would read it while sitting in the parking lot waiting to pick up their kids from school activities

The next year, the group started a farmers' market in the county seat's struggling downtown. That, says Sacks, "let us use 'downtown development' instead of 'local food' as a slogan," making the project appealing to many more people.

The market was – and remains – a huge success, but economically it represents only a small part of food spending in the county. "We were trying for that magical ten percent," Sacks said.

In order to reach that level, Sacks explained, "you have to work with institutional buyers."

Food for Thought's solution was to connect one of the county's biggest institutional buyers, Kenyon College, and a local food distribution company. The college offered to buy more from the local distributor, if the distributor, in turn, would source more of its offerings from local farms.

To cover any higher prices associated with local sourcing, the college put up $100,000 – but in the end, only $20,000 of that was necessary.

The arrangement worked, and Kenyon College is now committed to be procuring 30% of its food from local sources within the next two years.

The college is building a new $25 million dining hall designed specifically for local food, with more prep space, more cold storage, a big flash freezer, and a waste pulverizer.

Institutional sales bring a whole new set of requirements for farmers, including liability insurance, consistency of quality, and reliable supply and delivery. And although this initiative opens a new market to local farmers, they still receive wholesale prices in the arrangement.

So Food for Thought's next step was to have the college contract directly with local farmers for some items. So far, this effort has focused on apples, but produce and even meats are not far behind.

"Knox County is the largest sheep producing county east of the Mississippi River," Sacks said, "but if you can get lamb in the supermarket, where's it come from? New Zealand."

Even the direct contracting approach can leave small, niche, and organic farmers out of the loop. The county's growing local food system needs more venues where they can sell, Sacks said, and a place where they can store their products to keep them cool.

Luckily enough, the owner of a historic downtown building decided to donate it to the group. Food for Thought is now busy converting the turn-of-the-century wholesale grocery into a year-round indoor farmers' market, with a cold storage facility and a community kitchen built in.

When asked whether the new retail space would take market share from existing local grocers, Sacks shook his head. His goal is to "mainstream" local products.

"Knox County is the largest sheep producing county east of the Mississippi River, but if you can get lamb in the supermarket, where's it come from? New Zealand."

Howard Sacks

"I think if we can really build this, there's *so much* economic potential that it's not going to end up hurting anybody."

Summarizing the lessons Food for Thought has learned so far in the course of rebuilding Knox County's local food system, Sacks said, "It will only work in response to the needs and interests of the community.

"One size does not fit all – with either farmers or institutional buyers," he continued. "It takes an evolutionary approach: you can't just lay this thing down all at once and make it work. You have to think long term."

Much more information on the Food for Thought initiative is available online at http://rurallife.kenyon.edu/FFT/index.html

THE KERR CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Future Farms 2006 Marketing Conference

RMA

Future Farms 2006: Farm to Table was sponsored in cooperation with USDA Risk Management Agency, an equal opportunity provider.

Counting Your Chickens: Marketing Pastured Poultry

Mike Walters with one of his heritage turkeys

For more information on Walters Hatchery, visit www.historicalturkeys.com, or see the summer 2005 issue of *Field Notes,* online at www.kerrcenter.com.

A short profile of Walters is online at the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern SSAWG) website: www.ssawg.org/walters.html

Pastured Poultry: Walters Hatchery is featured in the Natural Farming Systems of the South series of cds, available from Southern SAWG.

"I'm going to tell you how to sell to restaurants," Mike Walters told listeners at the beginning of his talk. For the next 75 minutes, that's exactly what he did.

Walters operates Walters Hatchery in Stilwell, selling pastured heritage turkeys and chickens, along with pheasants and quail. The farm raises the greatest number of heritage turkey varieties - eleven - of any producer in the U.S., and is the exclusive supplier for Dean & Deluca, the gourmet online store.

He hatches in April for Thanksgiving delivery, and as of early August, all 450 birds for 2006 were already spoken for.

Walters is also involved with Heifer International on a free-range poultry project, and is writing parts of a heritage turkey manual with the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

Considering all that, it's a safe bet that Mike Walters knows more than a thing or two about marketing pastured poultry. That's the bet that drew his *Future Farms* audience, and he didn't fail to deliver.

"You have to be confident, know your product is better, have a reason why it's better," he began.

Minding the P's and Q's

But before launching into marketing, Walters said, it's important to spend some time making sure all the relevant regulations have been observed.

"Selling poultry is a business," he said. "You have to register with the state."

Contrary to many people's fears, said Walters, "Registering is simple. Most forms are one page and take 10 minutes each." An additional benefit, he pointed out, is that potential customers can find producers through the registrations. "The state will refer you customers," he says.

Since poultry is a food item, Walters said, producers must also comply with the regulations of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and

Forestry. For on-farm poultry slaughter, the state of Oklahoma sets an even more restrictive limit than the federal one: a maximum of 1,000 chickens (or 250 turkeys, or any equivalent-weight combination) in one year.

Walters has his birds processed at a USDA inspected plant across the border in Arkansas. "Restaurants are more comfortable with the USDA label," he explains.

Making the Sale

"Now that you're legal," Walters continued, there are several marketing issues that poultry producers need to consider: "Can you produce year-round? How many can you do? Can you provide 150 birds per month, every month?" Chickens are an easier sell than turkeys, Walters explained, because they're year-round.

According to Walters, questions that restaurants will have for a prospective poultry supplier include consistency of delivery, quantity per week, and price breaks for quantity.

Producers should also know whether they'll be delivering whole or parted-out birds, and be ready for questions about boneless, skinless, chicken breasts. (Walter's hint? "They don't grow that way, folks.")

"Stand by the way you want to raise your birds," he advised, be it free range, organic, natural, grassfed, and so on.

Other tips: "Name your business. Keep it simple. Carry the business name on all products. The label and the business name should be the same."

For instance, he explained, all of his packages bear the 'Walters Hatchery' label, whether they contain chicken or turkey.

Also, "make an attractive label. Packaging is extremely important, whether it's a bulk package or a small one-bird package."

His last bit of advice: "Pictures are worth a thousand words," says Walters, who takes plenty of photos to show customers.

How farmers can sell directly to restaurants was the topic of three sessions at *Future Farms 2006: Farm to Table.*

Tim Richards and Kurt Fleischfresser, owner and chef of The Coach House restaurant in Oklahoma City, discussed what they look for when buying locally.

The Coach House features seasonal cuisine highlighting the best local produce and regional specialties. Richards buys a lot of locally-grown tomatoes to use in his culinary creations.

Fleischfresser is also a partner in Irma's Burger Shack, where the menu features hamburgers made from Oklahoma beef.

Tim Richards, Executive Chef, Bodean Seafood Restaurant, Tulsa

Farmer-speakers in the sessions were Connie Whitmore of Coyle, who has been producing vegetables for over twenty years, and Susan Bergen of Peach Crest Farm in Stratford. Mike Walters (opposite page) also spoke and provided the free-range chicken served at the "Taste of Oklahoma" lunch.

"A Taste of Oklahoma" Luncheon

Fresh Vegetables

Juliet tomatoes, assorted sweet peppers
Nuyaka Natural Farm, James and Jennifer Cooper, Bristow
Dressings supplied by Garden Club, Oklahoma City

Fresh Fruits

Watermelon – *Sugar Creek Farms, Bob Ramming, Hinton*
Honeydew melon, *Bruce Price, Hydro*
Cantaloupe, *Pink*
Potato Salad – *Potatoes from Nuyaka Natural Farm, Bristow*

Asparagus Green Beans

Nuyaka Natural Farm, Bristow

Sauteed Squash with Basil

Squash from Downtown Farmers Markets, Oklahoma City
Basil from Nuyaka Natural Farm, Bristow

Roasted Free-Range Chicken

Walters Hatchery, Mike Walters, Stilwell

Buffalo Roast

Wichita Buffalo Company, James and Sandy Stepp, Hinton

Assorted Desserts

La Baguette, Oklahoma City

Oklahoma-grown lunch made possible by the Community Foods Projects Program of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grant # 2004-33800-5141

Farm Direct: Direct Sales' Potential for Increasing Community Food Security

– *Wylie Harris*

This is an excerpt from Chapter Six of *Closer to Home: Healthier Food, Farms and Families in Oklahoma,* a centennial report on Oklahoma's food system, online at www.kerrcenter.com. (See p. 2 for details.)

Farmers have been hearing that they have to get big or get out since the go-go days of the 1970s. By now, many have recognized that line for the breed of bull that it is. Some have gone further, grabbing that bull by the horns in a direct approach – direct farm sales, to be exact.

To understand what's behind that approach, it helps to know exactly what direct sales are. A decent rule of thumb is that if the farmer and the customer see one another's faces, whatever business they transact can be tallied up in the direct sales column.

CSA (subscription) farms are the new kids on the direct-sales block. Farmers markets and farm produce stands are classic examples, as are pick-your-own operations.

Agritourism and agritainment are newer names for another longtime regular in the direct-sales lineup. Selling the farm experience as much or more than the crops grow, these farms encompass everything from corn mazes to cow-chip bingo.

More recently, online farm sales have begun to blur the boundaries of what constitutes "direct." If a transaction takes place entirely in cyberspace, the farmer and customer may never lay eyes on one another, hear one another's voices, or seal the deal with a handshake.

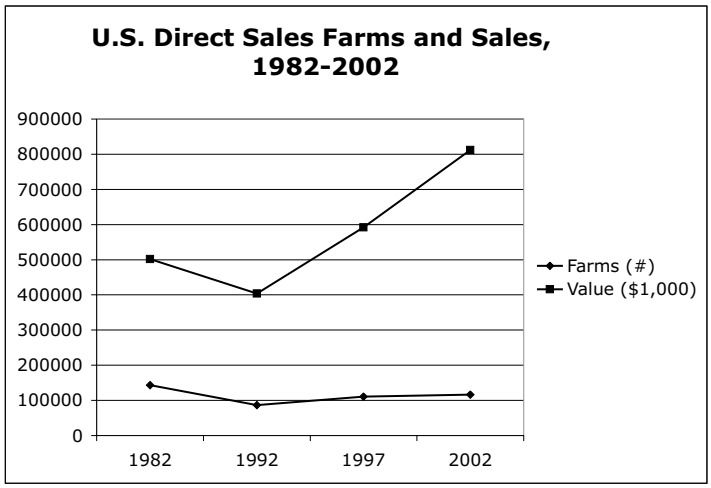
Yet online sales are growing. That's plain from the success of the Oklahoma Food Co-op. USDA direct-sales experts advise that a website is a fundamental part of the farm business plan.

Direct sales over the Internet may not happen face-to-face, and that highlights another key aspect of what makes direct sales direct: the absence of intermediaries between farmers and customers.

Pocketing the Difference

Direct sales' lack of middlemen is one of their main attractions from the farmer's point of view. Nationwide, for every dollar that shoppers spend on food in stores and restaurants, only 19 cents makes it back inside the farm gate. (That's down from 31 cents back in 1980.)

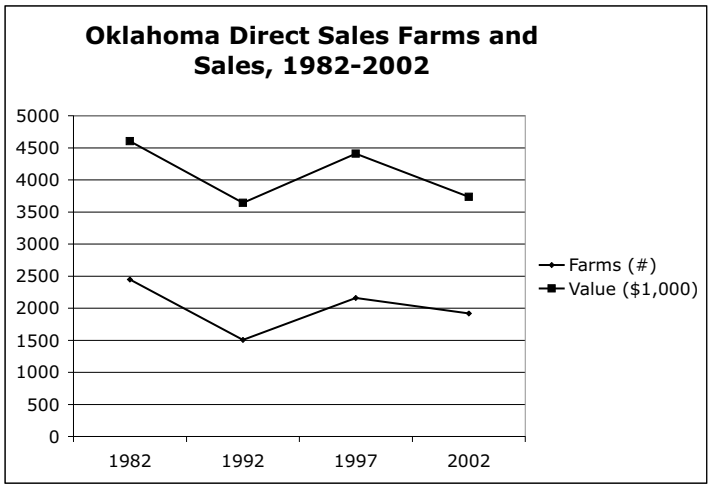
Farmers engaged in direct sales can capture a much higher share of customers' food dollar, up to all 100 pennies of it.



Those pennies add up. Nationwide, the average value of direct sales per farm is nearly $7,000. In Oklahoma, the same number is considerably lower, just under $2,000 (see figures).

Just bringing Oklahoma farms' direct-sales receipts up to the national average, then, would increase the state's farm-level income by $9.6 million.

If Oklahomans put just five percent of what they already spend on groceries toward food bought direct from local farmers, it would work wonders for Oklahoma's agricultural economy,



Potential increase in average per farm income from direct farm sales.

Region	County Type	Grocery Spending in County	5% of Grocery Spending in County	Average Net Farm Income…	…and Potential Increase from Direct Farm Sales
CENTRAL					
Oklahoma	Metro	$1,054,057,000	$52,702,850.00	$1,901.00	$41,564
Cleveland*	Metro	$163,274,000	$8,163,700.00	-$3,683.00	$6,309
Pottawatomie*	Micro	$40,668,000	$2,033,400.00	-$1,873.00	$1,223
Seminole	Rural	$23,526,000	$1,176,300.00	$1,864.00	$1,008
Cluster total		*$1,281,525,000*	*$64,076,250.00*	*-$436.82*	*$11,884*
SOUTHWESTERN					
Comanche	Metro	$59,090,000	$2,954,500.00	$3,676.00	$2,487
Stephens	Micro	$44,333,000	$2,216,650.00	$3,186.00	$1,631
Caddo	Rural	$23,773,000	$1,188,650.00	$10,590.00	$790
Tillman	Rural	$6,789,000	$339,450.00	$28,053.00	$573
Cluster total		*$133,985,000*	*$6,699,250.00*	*$1,873.11*	*$1,443*
NORTHWESTERN					
Garfield	Micro	$111,603,000	$5,580,150.00	$19,963.00	$5,152
Major	Rural	$17,379,000	$868,950.00	$12,336.00	$989
Woods	Rural	$9,920,000	$496,000.00	$1,841.00	$652
Cluster total		*$138,902,000*	*$6,945,100.00*	*$12,436.38*	*$2,551*
NORTHEASTERN					
Tulsa	Metro	$845,946,000	$42,297,300.00	$1,783.00	$36,909
Washington	Micro	$46,995,000	$2,349,750.00	1,987.00	$2,774
Nowata*	Rural	$11,869,000	$593,450.00	-$1,061.00	$669
Cluster total		*$904,810,000*	*$45,240,500.00*	*$967.08*	*$15,709*
SOUTHEASTERN					
Leflore	Metro	$75,344,000	$3,767,200.00	$22,503.00	$1,955
Pittsburg	Micro	$21,991,000	$1,099,550.00	$2,310.00	$652
Latimer	Rural	$11,036,000	$551,800.00	$4,421.00	$748
Cluster total		*$108,371,000*	*$5,418,550.00*	*$11,609.13*	*$1,245*

- Assumes 5 % increase in direct farm sales.
- Starred (*) counties currently have negative average net farm incomes.

increasing the income of individual farms by anywhere from several hundred to tens of thousands of dollars (see table).

To reach that five percent, every Oklahoman would have to spend about $67 on farm-direct foods each year.

That would buy about a pound of vine-ripe tomatoes each week over the entire season at the Tulsa's Cherry Street Farmers' Market. (A survey showed tomatoes from the farmers' market could be had for a better price than at Wal-Mart.)

At $2.74 each week, that's less than many people spend on soda pop.

Fresh from Your Friendly Local Farmer

Direct sales' appeal to consumers may be harder to quantify, but it's powerful nevertheless. The freshness and variety of direct-sale foods undoubtedly contribute – think of heirloom tomatoes and bison steaks, for example.

It may be that all direct sales contain at least a hint of agritourism, in the brush with farm life that comes from receiving a tomato from the hands that grew and picked it, rather than plucking it from the automatically misted racks in the supermarket produce section.

There's nothing wrong with nostalgia for farm ways, but it doesn't contribute much to community food security. Still, direct sales make several important contributions to CFS.

For one, most forms of direct sales necessarily involve farmers and customers from the same community, strengthening the relationships that make up the local food system.

Again, that relationship is less clear for online sales – though the Oklahoma Food Co-op is a prime example of using internet marketing to enhance food sales within the state.

Direct sales also meet community food security's mandate to keep more farms on the land, offering supplemental income to many part-time farmers who might drop out of agriculture without it.

Farmers can grow tomatoes into the winter in a greenhouse. Robert Stelle sells his at the OSU/OKC farmers' market.

Playing Catch-Up

While direct sales thus offer substantial opportunities for enhancing community food security in Oklahoma, so far the state has not capitalized on them to the same degree as other areas of the country.

Compared to other states with similar populations and rural demographics, Oklahoma has lower per capita direct sales – only half the level in neighboring Arkansas (see table).

Nationwide, the number of farms with direct sales and the total value of those sales, have been growing steadily since 1982.

In Oklahoma, by contrast, farm numbers and direct sales totals have held fairly constant (see figures, p. 14).

The barriers to the development of direct farm sales in Oklahoma are physical, institutional, and cultural.

The state's extreme and quirky weather make farm production challenging and risky, while the lack of market infrastructure creates a different sort of obstacle.

Likewise, direct sales approaches may require a different set of "people" skills than traditional commodity crops.

Though real, these barriers are not insurmountable. A determined effort to overcome them could well put the growth of direct farm sales in Oklahoma back on track with the national trend.

That, in turn, could have an impact on Oklahoma's community food security that is positive, dramatic – and direct.

"Grocery spending in county" figures in box p.15 from:
2004 Survey of Buying Power and Media Markets

Direct Sales in Oklahoma and Selected Other States, 2002

State	Total Value of Direct Sales	Per Capita Value of Direct Sales
Iowa	$11,651,000	$3.97
Kansas	$9,001,000	$3.32
Kentucky	$10,497,000	$2.57
Arkansas	$5,674,000	$2.10
North Carolina	$17,245,000	$2.07
Alabama	$8,039,000	$1.79
Louisiana	$4,897,000	$1.09
Oklahoma	$3,735,000	$1.07

Meeting to Explore Growing and Marketing Pumpkins and Related Crops

Farmers and gardeners who want to learn more about pumpkins, squash, melons, and cucumbers are invited to attend the 2006 Oklahoma Cucurbit Meeting, Friday, December 15, from 9 to 3 at the Grady County Fairgrounds in Chickasha.

The meeting is free and includes lunch.

OSU researchers will talk about the production and marketing of these popular crops.

The information will be of interest to all growers, says Dr. Jim Shrefler of OSU, whether they sell at farmers' markets, produce stands or ship out of state.

Dr. Francis Mangan of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Massachusetts will be guest speaker.

He will discuss growing and marketing exotic, tropical pumpkins for the growing ethnic markets in the U.S. Dr. Mangan has extensive knowledge of the many exotic cucurbit crops used by various ethnic groups.

Other speakers will present information on the 2006 Oklahoma specialty melon trials, developments and opportunities with the Oklahoma Farm-to-School Program, and cucurbit vegetable pest management.

Research into organic production and Oklahoma Mesonet weather products that help with irrigation scheduling will also be covered. Additional topics are still being developed.

For more information or to be added to the meeting mailing list to receive a flyer, contact Dr. Shrefler at 580.889.7343 or jim.shrefler@okstate.edu.

More information on Mangan's work is available at www.worldcrops.org.

"Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms" Conference Set for January 25-28

The popular annual conference of the Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SAWG) Southern region, will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, Jan. 25-28. Organizers expect 900 "forward-thinking farmers and sustainable food advocates" from around the South to attend.

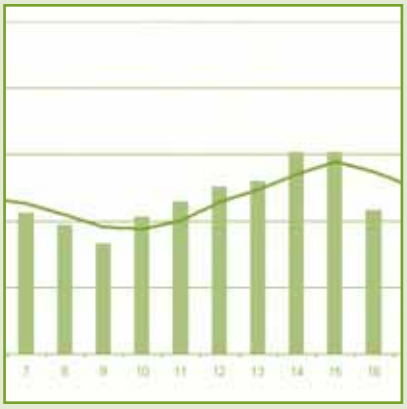
SSAWG conference is known for its high quality sessions, interesting field trips and in-depth mini courses and short courses. Farmers who are making sustainable agriculture work on their farms share their expertise with conference-goers, as do university researchers and experts from non-profit organizations.

The conference will offer fifty practical sessions on a wide range of topics: sustainable and organic livestock and horticulture production, direct marketing, community food systems, agriculture policies and more.

In addition to the regular program, there are optional educational programs available. These include six sustainable farming field trips, eight sustainable farming short courses, three community food systems mini-courses and an "on-farm exchange" with an experienced organic vegetable farmer.

One pre-conference mini course on Friday, Jan. 26, from 9-noon, will feature the Kerr Center (see sidebar) and *Closer to Home: Healthier Food, Farms and Families in Oklahoma,* the just completed assessment of the food system in Oklahoma from farm to table. (See p. 3 and p. 14 for excerpts from the report.)

For complete conference information, or to pre-register (lowest rates before Dec. 22) go to www.ssawg.org/conference.html or call 678.494.0696.



"Creating Useful Community Food Assessments: Way Beyond the Numbers"

will help community food activists understand the usefulness of community food assessments and how they can support organizational work.

Using the recent experiences of the Community Farm Alliance in Louisville and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Oklahoma, instructors will discuss how to design an assessment, how to make the information gathered come alive, and how to use the process and resulting report to advocate for policy changes and programs.

This mini course will give attendees a wealth of ideas on how to gather information about the food and agricultural system in their areas, (even if without much funding), and how to use that information to further community food systems work. Trainers will be Joe Schroeder & Ivor Chodkowski, Community Farm Alliance (KY); and Maura McDermott, Wylie Harris & Doug Walton, Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture (OK).

This minicourse will be offered at the 2007 "Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms" conference in Louisville, Jan 25-28. See story, left.

Horticulture for Food and Fun: 2007 Horticulture Industries Show

The 26th annual Arkansas/Oklahoma Horticulture Industries Show (HIS) is set for Friday, January 5th and Saturday, January 6th from 9-5 at the Holiday Inn City Center, in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The show's theme for this year is "Horticulture for Food and Fun." Each day kicks off with a keynote address. This year, Drs. Ed Mahoney and Carla Barbieri, of Michigan State University, will present the keynote addresses.

Dr. Mahoney is an associate professor of tourism and agriculture at Michigan State University. He has developed new web-based surveying methods for understanding the extent and impacts of agricultural diversification, agritourism, and farm marketing.

He and Dr. Barbieri have co-led the annual North American Farm Market Survey. They will present some of the survey's findings, and their implications for horticultural producers, in the Farmers' Market Growing/Sustainable Agriculture track.

Each day's keynote address will be followed by several concurrent sessions organized around the topics of Christmas Trees, Vegetables, Fruit, Herbs, Farmers' Market Growing/Sustainable Agriculture, and Public Gardens/Master Gardeners. Attendees will also have time to visit the trade show.

Farmers' Markets and Sustainable Agriculture

In the Farmers' Market Growing/Sustainable Agriculture track, several farmers from Arkansas and Oklahoma will address different topics related to direct marketing, agritourism, and sustainability.

Cathie Greene, of Wild Things Farm in Pocola, Oklahoma, runs a 90-acre "u-pick" operation, and hosts a variety of agritourism activities including a corn maze, group tours, and a summer camp.

Lisa Merrill and Lisa Becklund will relate their experiences on their 7-acre Living Kitchen Farm and Garden in Bristow, Oklahoma, where they use the vegetables they grow as the basis for cooking classes, meal delivery service, "kitchen coaching," and farm-to-table dinner parties.

The track will also feature several presenters from the Fayetteville Farmers' Market, including Jim Lukens, whose talk is titled "Farmers' Markets as a Destination." The Fayetteville Market on the downtown square is a popular place for friends and families to meet, shop and be entertained.

The Kerr Center sponsors the HIS Show, along with the University of Arkansas, Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Community College, and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation.

The show's program and registration forms are available on the H.I.S. Show website at http://home.okstate.edu/Okstate/dasnr/hort/hortlahome.nsf/toc/HIS. More information is available via email to donna.dollins@okstate.edu or by phone at 405-744-6460.

2007 Horticulture Industry Show: Sustainable Agriculture /Farmers Markets

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

General Session:
Diversification: One Strategy for the Survival of Our Farms and Ranches, Dr. Ed Mahoney (presenter) and Dr. Carla Barbieri, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Where Fun Grows: Bringing Folks to the Farm, Cathie Greene, Wild Things Farm, Pocola, OK

Success with Farmers' Markets and On-Farm Sales: Lessons Learned from National Research, Dr. Ed Mahoney and Dr. Carla Barbieri, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Farmers Markets as a Destination Jim Lukens, Fayetteville Farmers' Market

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

General Session -
Agritourism: Striking a Sustainable Balance between Food and Fun, Dr. Ed Mahoney (presenter) and Dr. Carla Barbieri, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Hardin Farms in Central Arkansas: On-Farm Tourism and Community Supported Agriculture, Jody Hardin, Hardin Farms, Little Rock, AR

Worth Eating: Sharing the Farm Experience, Lisa Merrill and Lisa Becklund, The Living Kitchen Farm and Garden, Bristow, OK

What Makes a Good Farmers Market Display to Enhance Sales, Judy Kavan and Peggy Meringer, Fayetteville Farmers Market

Growing a "Mid-Size" Organic Farm, James & Jennifer Cooper, Nuyaka Natural Farm, Beggs, OK

Roundtable: Current Farmers Market and Sustainable Agriculture Issues (bring your own topics for discussion)

For more information, see box on p.19

What does *sustainable* mean?

Sustainability: Maintaining the present without compromising the future.

"What is sustainable agriculture? It is in large part, a wedding of ecology and agriculture. It proposes that a farm must be not only economically but also ecologically healthy if it is to be viable over the long term. It also proposes that farmers and farm workers should be afforded a good quality of life and be treated fairly. A sustainable agriculture will yield healthy rural communities and towns, which are key to the overall health of our nation."

The Next Green Revolution: Essential Steps to a Healthy, Sustainable Agriculture, by James E. Horne, PhD, and Maura McDermott

"Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable--to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

World Commission on Environment and Development, Brundtland Commission, "Our Common Future"

(quoted on the Oklahoma Sustainable Network website, www.oksustainability.org)

For more information about the 2007 Horticulture Industry Show:

Annual North American Farm Market Survey
www.farmmarketresearch.com/closenote.html

Wild Things Farm
www.wildthingsfarm.com

Fayetteville Farmers' Market
www.fayettevillefarmersmarket.org

Hardin Farms
www.hardinfarms.com

Living Kitchen Farm and Garden
www.livingkitchen.homestead.com

Nuyaka Natural Farm
www.localharvest.org/farms/M10002

Managing for Drought: Ag Conference 2006

Free!

DEC. 6, 9-2, LE FLORE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, POTEAU

Learn Effective Strategies for Weathering the Drought

- **Effective Nutrient Management**
  Dr. Josh Payne, OSU area animal waste management specialist
  - Litter Market, Coccidosis, and Weed Seeds
- **Nutritional Strategies for Weathering the Drought**
  Jack Wallace, OSU area livestock specialist
  - Culling decisions for a drought stricken cow herd.
  - Early weaning options.
  - Limit feeding to reduce hay needs.
- **Spring Forage Management on Droughty Pastures**
  Chris Rice, OSU area agronomist
  - Use of cool season grasses such as small grains and ryegrass.
  - Fertilization strategies for warm season, introduced grasses.
  - Herbicide and fertilizer options during and after a drought.
- **Surviving a Drought**
  David Redhage, ag economist, Kerr Center
  - Financial and tax considerations.
- **Beef, Poultry, Goats- Integrated Systems for Production Waste Management**
  Dwight Guy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dr. Jim Britton, OK Foods, Inc., Dr. David Sparks, OSU area food/animal quality& health specialist
  - Diversification and Increased Management
  - Parasite Control

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Questions?

Call NRCS, 918-647-3554

Or LeFlore County OSU Extension, 918-647-8231

3 hrs. poultry CEUs

Calendar

DECEMBER 5 & 6:
Oklahoma Turning Point Forum/Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition Conference,
Oklahoma City. www.okturningpoint.org or call 405.271.6127

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 6:
Managing for Drought Conference,
Le Flore County Fairgrounds, Poteau
See p. 19

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15:
Oklahoma Cucurbit Meeting,
Grady County Fairgrounds, Chickasha,
See p. 17

JANUARY 5 & 6:
Oklahoma & Arkansas Horticulture Industries Show, Holiday Inn City Center, Ft. Smith, AR, see p. 18

JANUARY 18:
No-till workshop, Hollis.

FEBRUARY 8:
No-till workshop and SPARC annual meeting,
Ft. Cobb. Potential SPARC members are invited. Contact Great Plains RC&D for more info. 580.832.3661. (See spring 2006 *Field Notes* for more on SPARC.)

JANUARY25-28:
"Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms" Conference,
Louisville, KY, see p. 17

Check www.kerrcenter.com
often for information on upcoming events

Consider Becoming... a Friend of the Kerr Center

Since 1965, the Kerr Center has helped Oklahoma farmers and ranchers diversify and become better stewards of their land. Now the Kerr Center is also helping people from all walks of life understand the importance of sustainable food systems.

Supporting the work of the Kerr Center is easy: just go to www.kerrcenter.com and click the Friends of the Kerr Center button. Or call 918.647.9123

The Kerr Center is a non-profit 501(c)3 foundation. All contributions are tax deductible.

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