

Farming Future Conference To Feature Diverse Workshops

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) will present the second annual Farming for the Future Conference on Feb. 5-6 at the Nittany Lion Inn on the campus of Penn State University.

Keynote speaker for the event will be Marty Strange, program director and co-founder of the Center for Rural Affairs (CRA), an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to research, education, and action for rural Americans.

The CRA is located in Walthill and Hartington, Neb. and has been a driving force for change in American agriculture for the past 20 years.

Strange is the author of "Family Farming: A New Economic Vision," published in 1988 and hailed as a landmark work in the areas of agricultural analysis and economics.

This year's conference will feature a number of speakers on rotational grazing and pasture systems. Roger Wentling, a consultant who has helped more than 150 farmers set up grazing systems, will discuss grazing in Pennsylvania and show slides of sustainable practices in use throughout the state. Allan Nation, editor of the monthly "Stockman Grass Farmer," will talk about grassland farming on a national and international scale.

Roman Stoltzfoos operates a 100-cow dairy and markets 50,000 certified organic chickens and turkeys per year from his Lancaster County farm. He utilizes

composting, rotational grazing, and a number of other sustainable practices. Garry and Linda VanDeWeert are Bradford County dairy farmers noted for their effective use of rotational grazing and various other cost-cutting practices. Both will describe their operations in detail.

Jodi and Ron Snyder have a 70-sow operation on pasture, producing specialty pork products for the organic market. They also raise sheep, poultry, vegetables, and fruit. They will talk specifically about their free-range feeding systems, fencing, and marketing of livestock products. Several other farmers who use rotational grazing will speak on other panels as well.

Row crop and vegetable producers will be interested in learning about weed control using cultivation from farmers Melvin Gelsing (300 acres of grain) and David Moore (commercial vegetable producer). The use of rye as a living mulch in tomatoes will be presented by Tom Jurchak and weed control using "systems and steel" as practiced by David Stern, a long-time organic vegetable pro-

ducer in New York state, will be featured in a workshop on Sustainable Vegetable Production Systems.

A panel of commercial vegetable growers will discuss "Alternative Vegetable Field Management Systems," comparing tillage, green manures, and permanent beds and offering their evaluations of methods they have tried. "Building Soil Through Tillage" is another workshop topic with fallows, rotation of tillage practices and fields, and green manures to be discussed by farmers utilizing those practices.

Forest land owners will be interested in learning about Pennsylvania's Forest Stewardship Program, a new program designed to protect and enhance Pennsylvania woodlands. The program offers cost share funds to woodland owners who institute various practices to improve the quality of their woods.

Several workshops will deal with farm composting, including one on farm composting basics, one on alternative systems for making on-farm compost, and one on farm utilization of organic materials.

A workshop on sustainable fruit production will address a variety of alternatives for reducing chemical use in strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries. In addition, organic fruit tree production will be discussed by a grower from New York.

A number of on-farm demonstrations were undertaken last summer by PASA with funding from the American Farmland Trust. There will be a presentation of observations and results from these trials, which include two experiments in controlling blight in tomatoes, two experiments in reducing starter fertilizer rates in corn, two rotational grazing research projects, and several other on-farm experiments.

Cover cropping will be addressed by Dr. Marianne Sarrantonio of the Rodale Institute, author of two books on the subject. She will talk about the use of cover crops to serve multiple functions in various farming systems. In addition, Ron Gargas will discuss his use of cover crops in small grain production as a way to build soils.

Policy issues affecting sustainable agriculture will be addressed in several workshops: "Organic

Foods Production Act and Certification" and likely impacts on Pennsylvania producers, "Farmland Preservation" through the use of easements and/or zoning, and "Policy Issues for Organic and Sustainable Agriculture." In this latter workshop, Marty Strange will present a national outlook on the importance of the 1995 Farm Bill, Cheryl Cook of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union will present a Pennsylvania perspective, and Lamonte Garber of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will discuss pending legislation in the area of nutrient management.

Closing keynote speaker will be Cornelia Flora Butler, a rural sociologist, professor and head of the department of sociology at Virginia Tech. She has worked in the areas of farming systems research, rural economic development, rural women's issues, and the links between the health of communities and sustainable agriculture.

For further information about PASA and/or conference registration, contact PASA, P.O. Box 316, Millheim, PA 16854 (814) 349-9856.



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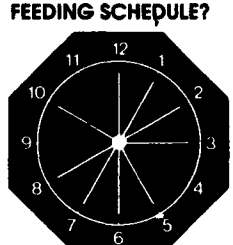
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