

A Search For 'True Security'

(Continued from Page A21)

genetically modified corn.

To learn more about Ritchie's work, see www.newdream.org or www.iatp.org.

about sustainable farming and food distribution practices.

"For years, I'd heard from hundreds of people that we need something," he said.

Bowser said PASA has grown

“It's clear today, if you destroy your small farmers and your food security inside a great nation, you will weaken yourself to the point that you will invite and be vulnerable to outside attack.”

— Mark Ritchie
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

The conference included a wide selection of workshops, such as The Health Benefits of Grass-fed Livestock; Marketing Value-Added Products; Local Food Systems and World Trade; Women in Agriculture; Community Food Security Who's In Charge of the Food Supply?; The Soil-Plant-Ruminant Health Connection; Sustainable Dairy Farms in the 21st Century; and How To Start a Community-Supported Agriculture Farm.

Brian Syder, PASA's executive director said that more than half of the 1,200 people at the conference were farmers.

"We have some power because we (PASA members) are farmers and because we are farming well," Snyder said.

Honoring A PASA Pioneer

PASA presented its Sustainable Ag Leadership this year to Tim Bowser, the first executive director of the organization when it was launched in the early 1990s. He served in the position for 10 years.

Bowser grew up an Erie County fruit farm and graduated from Penn State with a master's degree in rural sociology. He worked for Penn State extension for about 10 years, employed in its small-scale ag center and with integrated pest management.

While working as an extension agent, Bowser said he was made aware of the need for an organization to educate people

both in numbers and influence over the years.

"I've seen tremendous progress," Bowser said of the group that within the last two years has broadened its scope to also include political action.

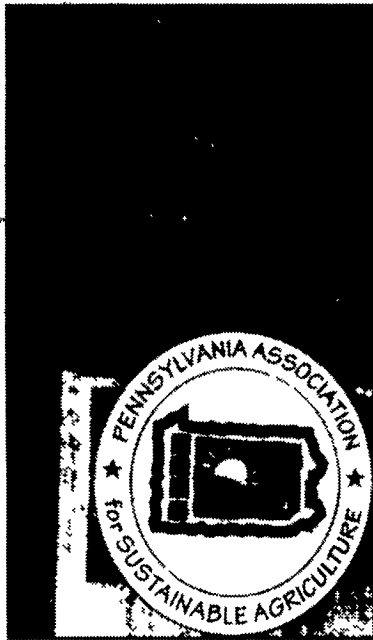
"There's hope here, and it's all about connecting people," he said.

Bowser now serves as executive director of FoodRoutes, a central Pennsylvania-based organization that works at connecting farmers and consumers.

'Successful Farming' Editor Speaks At PASA Conference

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Cheryl Tevis, ag issues editor at Successful Farming, the nationwide ag magazine based in



Cheryl Tevis

Iowa, delivered a closing keynote address at the 12th annual conference of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) at the Penn State Hotel and Conference Center last weekend.

Tevis affirmed PASA's work toward creating a more sustainable farm and food paradigm in the state.

"The time is ripe to question the status quo," Tevis told the group. "Although the role agriculture has played in making this country is clear, the path ahead is unclear. Conventional agriculture is not nurturing farmers or communities."

Tevis said that more can be done to convince family farmers that they may be missing opportunities to thrive through more sustainable practices.

"Agriculture must develop new market channels," she said. "Opportunities abound in the diversity of American consumers' food choices. In the future . . . choices will increasingly be influenced by food ethics."

While these opportunities exist, getting the products to consumers can be a "daunting task" that requires broad support and cooperation.

"Farmers who are making the transition to different marketing and production methods are going to need community support," Tevis said, noting that many conventional farmers have been "browbeaten by industry arguments that it can't happen."

Tevis reminded the group that the U.S. was founded by people who took action against the prevailing attitudes of the day.

"The United States of America was founded by activists," she said. "Our agriculture, as well as our nation, is better off with more, not fewer, activists."

"Farmers must claim a stake in the United States. We must apply the tools of democracy."

Tevis urged land grant educational institutions to support sustainable ag practices.

"Our challenge for land grants is to foster programs that cause the public to once again view ag as a public good," she said.

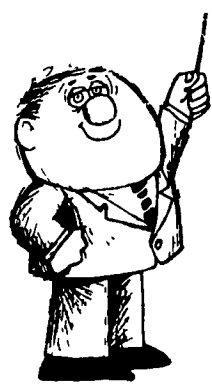


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