

Rodale Institute Launches Organic Farm Price Index

KUTZTOWN (Berks Co.) — The Rodale Institute recently announced the launch of a first-ever wholesale price index of certified organic foods—The New Farm Organic Price Index (OPX). Now organic farmers will be able to sell their products competitively, according to what the same grain or vegetable, for example, is being sold for across their marketing region.

This index marks an important milestone for the burgeoning organic foods market, the fastest-growing segment of the food industry. Organic producers will benefit from market data such as is available in the markets for conventional foodstuffs, with pricing tools necessary for running their businesses profitably. The OPX will enable them to price their products fairly and avoid being victims of pricing deceptions.

OPX will track prices of selected produce, grains, dairy products, and meats that are organically grown or raised in the U.S. The price data—updated weekly—will be drawn from the best-

available public and private sources. The index will give farmers the baseline information they need to negotiate more successfully in the dynamic organic marketplace. OPX will be available free-of-charge on www.newfarm.org, the new version of The Rodale Institute's former publication, The New Farm Magazine. The website targets progressive farmers and their supporters worldwide.

"The New Farm Organic Price Index will serve as a vital tool for expanding the organic food market by providing much needed pricing information which has never before been tracked effectively in the organic industry," said Anthony Rodale, chairman of The Rodale Institute. "We believe OPX will strengthen the market for organic foods, and a strong market for organic foods positively impacts many aspects of life beyond agriculture; it regenerates the soil and enhances human health and the health of the community at large."

Local Student To Take Part In International Livestock Congress

HOUSTON, Texas—Bart Gill, son of Gary and Trudy Gill, Newport, and a junior at Penn State University, Main Campus, recently received the International Stockmen's Educational Foundation Travel Fellowship to the 2003 International Livestock Congress in Houston, Texas, February 24-28.

The travel fellowship was awarded to 25 students from nine countries including Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Ireland, Namibia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States.

Supported by the Bob and Vivian Smith Foundation, students are selected by a multi-national selection committee, with half of the 25 recipients representing international students.

Fellowships include airfare,

ground transportation, hotel, and scheduled meals during the International Livestock Congress.

Scholastic achievement, leadership experiences, and letters of recommendation are all part of the stringent qualifying requirements.

This setting provides the students with the opportunity to interact with world industry leaders and contribute to the solutions that will shape the advancement of the livestock industry into the next millennium.

Following their experiences, students are required to write a professional paper of not more than 12 pages to be submitted to the International Stockmen's Educational Foundation board and to their respective schools department heads.



Bart Gill

Papers are also published in the event proceedings and on the International Livestock Congress web site.

Miller Relected To Rural Pennsylvania Board

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—The Center for Rural Pennsylvania's Board of Direc-

tors recently reelected Representative Sheila Miller as chairman for the 2003-2004 Legislative Session. Representative Miller, who serves the 129th District in Berks County, has served as chairman since 1997.

Joining Representative Miller as officers are: Senator Mary Jo White of the 21st Senatorial District, which consists of Clarion, Forest, and Venango counties and parts of Butler, Erie and Warren counties, as vice chairman; Representative Mike Hanna, who represents the 76th District in Centre and Clinton counties, as treasurer; and Dr. C. Shannon Stokes, professor of Rural Sociology in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Penn State University, as secretary.

The Center's Board of Directors also includes Senator John Wozniak, who serves the 35th Senatorial District, which in-

cludes Cambria and Clinton counties and parts of Centre, Clearfield and Somerset counties; Jody L. Bruckner, executive director of the Pennsylvania Rural Development Council; Dr. Nancy Falvo, director of Clarion University's Health Science Education Center; Dr. Stephan J. Goetz, executive director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development; Dr. Robert F. Pack, vice provost for Academic Planning and Resources Management at the University of Pittsburgh; and Dr. Craig D. Willis, president of Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy research within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It was created in 1987 under Act 16, the Rural Revitalization Act, to promote and sustain the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities.



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