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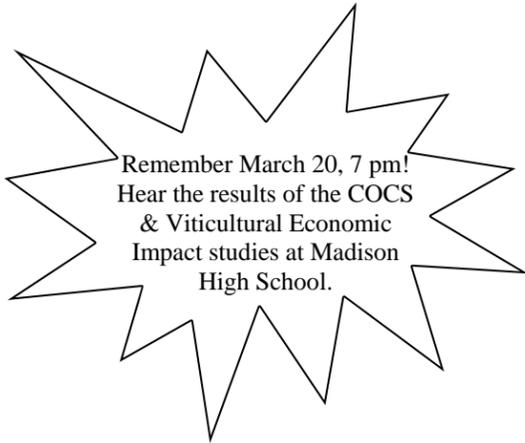
The Seedling

Cultivating Agricultural Sustainability

Agricultural Newsletter of the Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District

Volume 4, Issue 1

Return Service Requested



Riding the Local Food Wave

The local food movement has spread like wild-fire and is very likely to endure. Discussions of locally grown foods are sprouting up (if you will) everywhere from local to national media. Restaurants serving locally grown foods are attracting loyal customers; The Cleveland Plain Dealer and The News Herald recently featured St. Joseph Vineyard and Harpersfield Winery, respectively; best-selling novelist Barbara Kingsolver wrote about her family's experiences of eating locally grown food in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*; the January 2008 issue of *bon appetit* magazine features local, seasonal foods. Daniel Briones, director of catering at the Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia and president of the National Association of Catering Executives, says, "We're seeing a significant trend toward "green" events, which often means locally grown and organic ingredients".



Klco Farm Stand in North Perry Village

This change in thinking about where the food we eat comes from is a conscious reaction to how unconscious we have become about our food. We are realizing that purchasing food grown closer to home will give us fresher, better tasting, more nutritious food that uses far less energy in its path to our table. It keeps some of our food dollars closer to home, which benefits our local economies, sustains our local growers, and keeps agriculture a part of our communities.

At Lake SWCD, we are happy to capitalize on this new consciousness because it can help us in our mission to preserve our agricultural heritage. We plan to feature locally grown foods in season this year in our *CrosSection*

Newsletter, on our website, and in local media with information on what is in season, where it can be purchased, and how it can be used in the home.

Many of you who read this newsletter are agricultural producers. You can take advantage of the numerous resources that exist to let consumers know about your products- not only families but chefs, caterers and other food retailers. A good place to start is by registering with these local food directories that will provide your listing free of charge:

Ohioproud.org

List your operation in the Ohio Farmers Market Directory. The directory includes on-farm markets, roadside markets, farmers' markets, pick your own and Christmas tree farms. Call 800-IM-PROUD.

Fresh Fork Market

The brainchild of five Case Western Reserve University students, Fresh Fork Market is a "virtual farmers market" which will connect local farmers to local restaurants. Preparing for a launch in the Spring of 2008, Fresh Fork Market is a web-based system that will operate in the Cleveland area. Fresh Fork Market will manage orders, pick up and deliver farm produce to area restaurants within 24 hours at no cost to the farmer. Keep up with their progress at freshforkmarket.com and register your operation to get in on the ground floor!

Of Note

Crop Disaster Loans

Emergency loans are available for producers who suffered production and physical losses from the freezing conditions April 1 to April 29, 2007 and/or drought during the 2007 growing season. Please contact Jack W. Barthels, Farm Loan Manager at USDA's Farm Service Agency at 330-297-7633, extension 107 or jack.barthels@oh.usda.gov.

Easement Purchase Programs

The 2008 funding rounds for the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP) and the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) will be announced soon. We anticipate that the applications will be due in early May or June.

If you would like to apply to either program, please give us a call so that we have time to gather your information and complete your application.

The Forest Legacy Program is now open to Northeast Ohio Counties. It will pay landowners to permanently protect their woods as working forests. See ohiodnr.com or give us a call for more information.

<p>LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 125 E. Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077 440/350-2730 FAX 440/350-2601 Toll-free Numbers: 428-4348 x 2730 Madison/Perry 918-2730 Cleveland/Western Lake County 800/899-LAKE outside Lake County only E-mail: soil@lakecountyohio.gov Web site: www.lakecountyohio.gov/soil Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-4:00 pm</p>	<p>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BILLIE KAMIS (2006), WILLOUGHBY HILLS, CHAIR CHRIS LEGROS (2007), WAITE HILL, VICE-CHAIR DENISE BREWSTER (2006), CONCORD, TREASURER BRUCE LANDEG (2007), MENTOR, FISCAL AGENT RICHARD BAKER (2008), NORTH PERRY, SECRETARY</p>
<p>STAFF MAURINE ORNDORFF, Ag Programs Technician PAUL BOWYER, Stormwater Specialist PAM BROWN, District Secretary/Treasurer DAN DONALDSON, District Administrator CHAD EDGAR, Urban Stream Specialist BETH LANDERS, Education/Info Coordinator MATTHEW SCHARVER, Resource Protection Specialist AL BONNIS, District Conservationist, NRCS JOHN NIEDZIALEK, WR RC&D Coordinator, NRCS</p> <p>Lake County Commissioners Robert Aufuldish Ray Sines Dan Troy</p>	<p>LAKE SWCD IS A PROUD MEMBER OF: Lake County Farm Bureau American Farmland Trust Nursery Growers of Lake County Ohio, Inc. National Association of Conservation Districts Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts</p> <p>The Seedling is written and edited by Maurine Orndorff, Lake SWCD Agricultural Programs Technician.</p> <p>The public is invited to attend Lake SWCD's monthly Board meetings, held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at 125 East Erie St., Painesville. Meeting announcements appear under the public agenda in the News-Herald and on the District website. Please call in advance to let us know you will be attending.</p> <p>WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER All Lake SWCD and USDA programs and services are available without regard to race, age, gender, national origin, political beliefs, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.</p>

See Riding

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(Continued from page 1) *Riding*

Newfarm.org/farmlocator

Provides links for food businesses looking for local sources of fresh produce, farms that sell directly to consumers, farms that sell or provide services to other farmers, and farmers who want to sell to restaurants or other commercial buyers.

Oeffa.org

If your farm is certified organic, or if you are a member of Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (even if your farm is not certified by a third party), you can get listed in OEFFA's Good Earth Guide to organic farms and gardens.

Localharvest.org

List your farm, market, restaurant, food co-op or other food-related business.

Countryside Harvest Guides

This series of local food guides includes the NE Ohio Farm Directory, listings of Farmers' Markets, Community Supported Agriculture, Grocers & Retailers, Restaurants Cafes & Caterers, and Specialty Food Producers. Call the Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy at 330-657-2178.

Eatwild.com

A guide to grass fed meat, dairy and other wild foods.

MarketMaker

MarketMaker is a very new interactive Web resource that users can search to find producers, processors, distributors, farmers' markets, buyers and other food industry data. MarketMaker uses mapping technology to provide comprehensive buyer and seller information, demographic and census data to allow both buyers and sellers to query, map and locate data. It connects agricultural markets and clients locally and across state lines.

MarketMaker was launched in 2004 by the University of Illinois Extension. Ohio will be the 10th state to join the network. It is being brought to Ohio through a collaboration of Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Farm Bureau and the Center for Innovative Food Technology.

Every Ohio producer can sign up for a free listing on the site. The initial database will include listings for producers, wineries, farmers' markets, meat processors and retail food businesses. MarketMaker will help consumers find your business, but can also help you to target specific audiences. For example, if you wanted to market your gourmet goat cheese to regional restaurants, you could query the database to find chefs and restaurants in neighborhoods with households earning over \$100,000.

Go to directmarketing.osu.edu/ohiomarketmaker/ to register and check out the network where it is up and running in other Midwestern states.

Plant Information Online

Nursery growers can take advantage of the online Plant Information service, which offers consumers nursery information, retail and wholesale plant sources and citations for plant information and illustrations. Register your nursery at plantinfo.umn.edu/arboretum/default.asp.

Pickyourn.org

A guide to pick your own produce farms by state and region.

Ourohio.org

If you are an Ohio Farm Bureau member, you can submit a market to its Buying Local Directory. Markets include fruit, vegetables, meat, baked goods, cider, cheese, annual & container grown plants, trees, Christmas trees, agritourism, llamas & alpacas, wineries, garden centers, retail greenhouses, horses and roadside markets.

Small Farm Central

You can get help with setting up your own website and connecting with your customers with Small Farm Central. This on-line service will help you to set up a professional website at a low cost, and enable you to send mass emails to customers, create an events calendar, sell locally or to a worldwide audience, collect payments via credit card, share recipes, track sales trends, all with help from knowledgeable staff. Look at working examples and get a free website demo to see how Small Farm Central can build your farm's web presence and business at smallfarmcentral.com.

Conservation Easement News

A Bill was introduced on November 27, 2007 to the 127th Ohio General Assembly to partially exempt conservation easement property from taxation. The intent of H.B. 401 is to enable landowners with a conservation or agricultural easement to request that the county auditor reduce the tax on the easement restricted land at half its taxable value. The landowner would have the ability to opt for either the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) rate, if the land qualifies, or the 50% easement value.

The reduction in the rate of taxation is justified by the fact that the land value is reduced when a conservation easement is placed on it. This reduction in value is acknowledged by the federal government, which provides *income* tax and *estate* tax reductions for conservation easements. The Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT) has been working to get Ohio to enact *property* tax benefits for landowners who want to protect their lands from development.

You can help this bill become law by asking your State Representative to support this important conservation initiative in Ohio.

Traditional & Endangered Foods

A coalition of experts on sustainable agriculture and food aficionados has put together a list of North American plant and animal foods that are at risk of extinction, and is working "to bring cultural and culinary mainstays of the past into the new millennium". The recently released *Renewing America's Food Traditions* highlights twenty authentic American foods and includes a "Redlist" of 700 America's Endangered Foods, which includes 81 fish and shellfish, 26 native wild food plants, 51 rare livestock and poultry breeds, 234 heirloom vegetables, 248 fruits and berries and 55 grains and nuts.

According to Dr. Gary Nabhan, Director of the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University, "these foods have declined as their wild habitats or agricultural landscapes have been degraded or destroyed. Hybrids and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) have usurped their markets, while ethnic communities have lost traditional ecological and culinary knowledge about their harvesting and preparation."

The seven organizations that have created *Renewing America's Food Traditions* (RAFT), and that are working to rescue endangered native foods are American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, Chefs Collaborative, The Cultural Conservancy, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Northern Arizona University, Slow Food USA and The Seed Savers Exchange. RAFT is assisting family farmers, fishermen, foragers and ranchers of both Native American and immigrant cultures to revive the production and use of these foods to benefit their own communities, and to market and distribute the foods to the wider American public.

Renewing America's Food Traditions can be downloaded from environment.nau.edu/publications/RAFT.htm. It is a fascinating read of histories, flavors, and success stories and it has references for obtaining seeds and breeds.

Opening Doors for Ag Labor

We recently facilitated a meeting between Concord grape growers and Nursery growers to address the sharing of employees. It was rewarding to see the channels of communication open, as they discussed how to meet the labor needs of the two industries and benefit the local skilled Hispanic horticultural workers. As a follow-up, we will be working with the Agribusiness Committee of the Lake County Development Council and Lakeland Community College to create a Concord grape pruning training video this year.



Educational Opportunities

The Farmland Center does a good job of maintaining a listing of educational opportunities for agricultural operators. Remember to check periodically for updates at thefarmlandcenter.org.

Current offerings include a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Workshop on January 26, at the Boston Store in Peninsula; a Farm Business Estate Planning course on January 28 and February 4 in Smithville, Ohio; an Agricultural Financing Program on February 20 in Smithville; and Exploring the Small Farm Dream in March (date and location to be determined; register early because this class fills up quickly).

Growing Green

American Farmland Trust outlined six ways that farmers are growing green in its Winter 2008 issue of *American Farmland*. By "growing green", farmers and ranchers can help address environmental and resource issues while supplementing their farm's income.

The set of six:

1. SEQUESTERED CARBON
2. ENERGY CROPS
3. ELECTRICITY FROM MANURE
4. WIND AND SOLAR POWER
5. CLEAN WATER
6. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

You can read more about growing green at farmland.org/resources/aftmagazine/2008winter/default.asp.

What is sequestered carbon all about? It is the newest and probably the least understood of the green options. Energy industries have begun to purchase

carbon credits in the open market to mitigate climate change. Farmers can sell carbon credits and receive payments for planting grasses, trees or using no-till, practices that trap or sequester carbon in the soil rather than releasing it into the atmosphere.

Credits are collected, or aggregated (by the Ohio Farmers Union, among others) and sold to the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), the world's first greenhouse gas emission registry and trading system. At the present time, the CCX does not recognize a cropping region for Northeast Ohio, but forestry practices that meet the protocols qualify. The prices recently paid by the CCX equate to \$2.00 per acre for no-till cropping and \$4.00 for grass stands, minus any fees.

We have done some research on carbon credits on behalf of the viticultural industry to see how vineyards could qualify for carbon credit trading. In order for grapes to qualify, we need to have research to show the CCX the rates of sequestration per acre for grapevines. Such research is a long-term process that will require decades of research, a source of funding, and a desire for the research to be done. Call us if you think your vineyard operation would benefit from being able to sell carbon credits.

Learn more about carbon credit trading on the National Farmers Union website at nfu.org.