



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 18-21. 2nd Conference on Agroforestry in North America will be held at the Holiday Inn University Plaza, Springfield, Missouri. Contact University of Missouri, University Extension Conference Office, 348 Hearnes Center, Columbia, MO 65211; (314) 882-2429.

Now through October. Sustainable Agriculture On-Farm Research and Demonstration Program 1991 Field Days, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, are being held several times a week throughout the state. Contact Doug Gunnick, David Ball, Energy & Sustainable Agriculture Program, 90 West Plato Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55107; (612) 296-3820.

September 5-6. Eighth Annual Field Days at the Thompson Farm in Boone, Iowa. Contact Rodale Institute, 222 Main Street, Emmaus, PA 18098; (215) 683-6383.

September 13 through May 19, 1992. Nine agriculture short courses will be sponsored by the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Contact Agriculture Center, 250 W County Home Road, Sanford, FL 32773; (407) 323-2500, ext. 5559.

September 14-15. New Jersey Organic Country Fair is sponsored by the Natural Organic Farmers Association of New Jersey. Contact John Canright, (201) 356-9498.

September 20-22. Common Ground Country Fair, sponsored by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, will be held at Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor, Maine. Contact the Association, P.O. Box 2176, Augusta, ME 04338; (207) 623-5115.

September 20-22. 1991 Seeds of Change Conference, sponsored by Gila International Center of Diversity, will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and focus on bioremediation and biodiversity. Contact Gila, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail #10, Santa Fe, NM 87501; (505) 984-1338.

September 28-29. Farm Heritage Festival, sponsored by Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, will be held at Prince Georges Equestrian Center, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Contact Barbara Kern, (301) 249-7077.


October 5-10. Farming Systems Research and Extension in the 1990s: Critical Issues and Future Directions, sponsored by the Association for Farming Systems Research-Extension, will be held at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Contact AFSRE, Institute of International Agriculture, MSU, 324 Agriculture Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824; (517) 353-5262.

October 6-9. New Crops: Exploration, Research, Commercialization, sponsored by the Department of Horticulture, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. Contact Kathy Hyman at Purdue, (317) 494-2758.

October 29-November 2. Globe-scope Americas: Charting a Sustainable Future, sponsored by Global Tomorrow Coalition, will be held at the Omni International Hotel in Miami, Florida. Contact John McKain at the Coalition, 1325 G Street, NW, #915, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 628-4016.

November 10-13. International Conference on Agriculture and the Environment, sponsored by Ohio State University, will be held at the Holiday Inn, Columbus, Ohio. Contact Dr. Clive Edwards, Department of Entomology, OSU, 1735 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-3786.

November 21-22. Conference on Innovative Policies for Agricultural Research to be held in Boston, MA. Conference themes include needed changes in the professional and institutional setting for the conduct of alternative agricultural research. Contact William Locheretz, School of Nutrition, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155.



"On-Farm Research Techniques" report available from IAA

"On-Farm Research Techniques," the first in IAA's Occasional Paper Series, is a report from a workshop organized last November to discuss how on-farm research can contribute to minimizing farming-related environmental and social problems. As interest in research on alternative agricultural systems has increased, disparate ideas have emerged about what on-farm research can accomplish, when it is appropriate, and how to do it properly. In addition to reviewing research techniques, this paper examines such important issues as farmers' research versus researchers research, on-farm activities that complement research, appropriate choices of farms to be studied, collaborations among many groups of people with diverse interests, and barriers to acceptance of on-farm research.

The report was prepared by Molly D. Anderson and William Lockeretz of the School of Nutrition at Tufts University, Medford, MA. Copies are available for \$6.00 from IAA, 9200 Edmonston Road, #117, Greenbelt, MD. 20770

upon which a foundation of sustainable development can be built—it can provide insight into both the capabilities and limitations of the natural and human resource. Assessment of the current natural/human resource base (e.g., via “Rapid Appraisal” or Hildebrand’s (1981) “Sondeo”) further reveals the foundation upon which a sustainable economy can be based. Next it is essential that some flexible ground rules be established as to the boundaries, structure, goals, and policies under which the community will function. Finally, the community must develop the capability of measuring sustainability, which includes indicators of local socioeconomic conditions, succession, mineral cycles, water cycles, and energetics, to determine if they truly are on the road to sustainable development. If a process such as this doesn’t take place, we will continue to be entrapped and bogged down with “the end justifies the means,” “technological fix,” “it’s the public perception that counts,” “they’re the bad guys,” “those terrible, nasty chemicals,” and other unhelpful rigidities that have plagued past efforts to deal with an ecological approach to whole systems living.

Until recently, we generally have referred to our efforts as conservation and sustainable *rural* development (CSR D) and often will continue to do so. However, use of the word “rural” may distract from the necessary partnerships required for a truly sustainable agriculture, which include partnerships between cities and the country, between farmers/ranchers and urbanites. A rural community includes basic biotic, soil, air, water, and energy resources from which local townspeople and farm/ranch workers, managers, and owners derive their living. It encompasses not just farming, ranching, and “natural” systems relatively untampered with by humans, but also urban communities. For example, Odum and Odum (1987) showed that, in Texas, industries based on agricultural products constitute 33 percent of the Texas economy. They pointed out that “many people who live in the cities are really part of the farm-based economic system but don’t realize it.” Krupicka et al. (1988) further discussed implications of conventional usage of the term “rural” and stressed that USDA analysts seriously underestimate the importance of agriculture to communities.

Nevertheless, because we believe that effective dialogue, trust, partnerships, and team building are so important in moving toward a sustainable economy, we have replaced the word *rural* with the more generic term *community*. We are certain that a spirit of community involving cooperation, leadership development, consensus building, and empowerment of the poor is essential for advancing toward relatively sustainable systems.

Similar processes are being developed and utilized by World Neighbors, Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest, the Uganda Rural Development and Training Program, Coordination in Development, Inc., Volunteers in Technical Assistance, and the Latin American Consortium on Agroecology and Development (CLADES). These processes are founded on communication and goals and bring people together to achieve a better quality of life. We believe that such a process is essential for developing policies and strategies supporting long-term sustainability.

References

1. Altieri, M. A. 1988. Beyond agroecology: making sustainable agriculture part of a political agenda. *Amer. J. Alternative Agric.* 3(4):142-143.
2. Brundtland, G. H. 1987. *Our Common Future: the World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, Great Britain. 400 pp.
3. Enshayan, K. 1990. Business as usual? *J. of Soil and Water Conservation* 45(3):166.
4. Harwood, R. R. 1990. A history of sustainable agriculture. In C. A. Edwards, R. Lal, P. Madden, R. H. Miller, and Gar House (eds.). *Sustainable Agricultural Systems*. Soil and Water Conservation Society, Ankeny, Iowa. pp. 3-19.
5. Hildebrand, P. 1981. Combining disciplines in rapid appraisal: the Sondeo approach. *Agricultural Administration* 8(6):423-432.
6. Krupicka, R., P. Funk, and G. Severens. 1988. Response to natural resource paper: North Central region. In R. D. Knutson and D. U. Fisher. *Focus on the Future: Options in Developing a New National Rural Policy*. Proc. Rural Development Workshops. Texas Agric. Ext. Ser. pp. 218-223.
7. Odum, H. T., and E. C. Odum. 1987. Ecology and economy: “emergy” analysis and public policy in Texas. Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. Policy Research Project Report 78. University of Texas, Austin, Texas. 178 pp.
8. Sherman, Richard. 1990. The meaning and ethics of sustainability. *Environmental Management* 14(1):1-8.

EPA may ban pesticide

EPA scientists have recommended banning the sale of parathion, one of the most poisonous pesticides used in American agriculture. It is used on fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains, and has poisoned more than 650 field workers since 1966, of whom at least 100 have died. New studies show that parathion could be a hazard to people and wildlife at a distance from farms because it drifts in the air and can linger in fog. Trace amounts may be ingested by consumers because of residues on vegetables. EPA will decide soon either to ban all of the pesticide or just some uses of it or take no action at all.