



Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network Newsletter

February 2010

PA-WAgN Launches Online Farmer-to-Farmer Information Sharing Tool

DID YOU MISS AN IMPORTANT FIELD DAY?

PA-WAgN has developed a virtual learning environment wherein you can review case studies, audio visual components, summaries, and resources pertaining to events. Participants and non-attendees may enhance the online environment and continue the farmer-to-farmer information sharing by posting comments at: <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu>
Look for more virtual field days as we introduce our 2010 learning opportunities!

PA-WAgN Seeks a Branding Icon

Get your creative energies geared up for PA-WAgN's graphic contest! We are in need of an icon to be used on all PA-WAgN publications and promotional materials. It must be an original photograph or artwork and the winner must give PA-WAgN full permissions to use as needed.

The WINNER will receive a Local Foods/Products basket valued at \$50 or more!

Entries must be received electronically via email to pawagn@psu.edu no later than Monday, March 1, 2010!

Contact Ann Stone at ams39@psu.edu with questions or comments.

PA-WAgN Receives New & Beginning Farmer Grant from USDA

The Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network is pleased to announce that we were awarded a three-year New and Beginning Farmer Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This new effort involves developing new educational efforts to link new and beginning women farmers with experienced women farmers.

We have four new initiatives for educational programs for and with women farmers. First, we are developing on-farm, hands-on, and participatory educational events for new and beginning farmers focused in three areas: business planning and marketing; sustainable production practices and value-added processing; and stewardship of air, land and water resources. Second, we are developing interactive on-line curriculum in the three focus areas, illustrated and supported by examples from the project's educational events, as well as creating "virtual learning communities" related to the event topics. Third, we are building the mentor-

ing capacity of regional leaders to strengthen networks between experienced and new and beginning farmers, and to facilitate the development of local mentoring relationships. Finally, we are enhancing partnerships with non-governmental and governmental organizations to deliver educational programs and enhance information access for new and beginning farmers into the future. We have multiple partners in this endeavor including PASA, Rodale, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Pennsylvania's Soil Conservation Commission, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Whether you are a new and beginning farmer or an experienced farmer, we hope you will actively participate in our educational and mentoring events. If you have ideas or suggestions for activities, please be in touch.

Carolyn Sachs
csachs@psu.edu

PA-WAgN Presents Workshop at 2010 PASA Conference

Join PA-WAgN for a PASA Farming for the Future Conference Workshop:

**Success in Farming:
The Benefits of Networking**
Saturday, February 6
9:10 a.m.

Melanie Dietrich-Cochran from Keswick Creamery will discuss selling at metropolitan workshops and the synergy of working with other farmers. Sandy Miller from Painted Hand Farm will discuss the importance of networking technology--including the Web and social networking tools like Twitter and Facebook--to enhance your farmers' market sales. And Jen Halpin from Dickinson College Farm will talk about networking in your community to develop and sell at local markets.

For complete conference details, visit: <http://www.pasafarming.org/conference2010>

PA-WAgN Hosts Women in Agriculture Day at PA Farm Show



From left to right, panelists Virginia Tallman Morton, Chris Swartz, Cathy Sout, Gwenn Sout, & Peggy Fogarty-Harnish present "Networking, Mentoring, & Collaboration"

Networking, mentoring and collaboration are essential to a successful farm business, according to the speakers at the sixth annual "Women in Agriculture Day," held in the PA Preferred VIP Room at the 2010 Pennsylvania Farm Show on Tuesday, January 12.

Linda Moist, from the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN), and Karen Powell, from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, kicked off the meeting with the welcome.

Kevin Paulter, Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service Pennsylvania Field Office, said the number of primary women operators increased 41 percent from 2002-2007. Women also make up 28 percent of opera-

tors in Pennsylvania.

Deputy Agriculture Secretary for Marketing and Economic Development Michael Pechart gave some updates on the 2010 Pennsylvania Farm Show. He told the audience that out of the 23 Farm Show scholarship winners, 15 were young women, proving the strong female influence in agriculture.

"I've always had a strong appreciation of the role women have and should play in the agriculture industry," says

Pechart.

The meeting also included four panels and question and answer periods. The first was a farmer panel, titled "Networking, Mentoring and Collaboration." Panel members discussed how they use these three tools on their own operations.

"Learning from one another is invaluable," panel member Peggy Fogarty-Harnish said. "The key to our success is working with other farmers."

Other panels included the "Buy Fresh Buy Local" Campaign: The Value of Working with Other Farmers; New and Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grants: New Opportunities for Farmers; Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Initiatives and USDA

Initiatives for Farmers.

As Ann Stone, PA-WAgN staff member, stated, "We want to increase your opportunities to share and learn from each other."

Sarah Caldwell
Research Assistant
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"In a twist of fate, I found myself at the marvelous PA-WAgN conference. My intention was to stay for a short time, to garner the purpose of the organization, and leave. I was so intrigued, that I stayed the whole day, and with a husband in tow. I really felt that the information and inspiration and enthusiasm of the conference must be shared. Obviously, I found great value in the day, and I want to thank you for affording the opportunity to me."

Farm Show Participant

Special Thanks!

Special Thanks to
LADY MOON FARM

&

PDA'S CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

for their sponsorship of PA-WAgN's program—
Farmer to Farmer: Women Sharing the Field
at the 2010 Pennsylvania Farm Show & to all of the dynamic speakers, panelists, and participants that contributed to a successful day of networking and information sharing.

Southeast Region Network Potluck

**IT'S A PIZZA PARTY
PA-WAgN STYLE!**

**Wednesday, February 24
11:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.**

**Home of Katie College
1170 Stoney Creek Road
Dauphin, PA 17018**

Take advantage of this excellent opportunity to network with farmers and share goals, ideas, production practices, challenges and opportunities for 2010.

Dough using PA-grown freshly ground wheat will be provided. Please contribute a pizza topping, salad, or dessert.

RSVP no later than Monday February 22 by contacting Ann Stone at ams39@psu.edu or 814.863.4489

Follow PA-WAgN on Twitter for up-to-the-minute information:

<http://twitter.com/PAWAgN>

Do You Have Historic Buildings on Your Farm?

Sally McMurry, Professor of History at Penn State University is seeking input from PA-WAGN members. She would like to know if members have historic farm buildings on their properties; whether and how they use them; whether they would like to have technical assistance (for example with regard to historic construction techniques); what obstacles they see to recycling older buildings, and what strategies might help deal with them; whether they can envision a use for historical information in relation to agri-tourism; and whether they would be likely to take advantage of tax credits for rehabilitating a historic building. Please contact Sally at sam9@psu.edu or 814-865-6097 if you have historic buildings

Pennsylvania's rich agricultural history is evident in the many historic farm buildings and structures that remain on farms throughout the Commonwealth. They pose special challenges for farm owners, because sometimes historic buildings are difficult to reconcile with modern farming practices. Yet today, preservation and adaptive reuse may increasingly present viable strategies for some farmers. Recycling buildings can be an environmentally sound strategy that is consistent with sustainable-agriculture principles.

Pennsylvania's historic agricultural building stock arose from small-scale diversified farming for local markets, and so the turn back to local foods may also present opportunities for farmers to reuse old buildings creatively. Recycling is also often more cost effective than building anew.

I am interested in finding ways to link preservation know-how with active farmers. As leader of the Pennsylvania Agricultural History Project, I have helped to develop guidelines to assess the historic significance of farm buildings and landscapes across the state. In the first instance, the guidelines serve as a resource for determining whether properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This is a worthy and needed function, but my goals for the project reach further. I would like to make the project more accessible and to connect with communities that might benefit from a partnership to develop ways to help Pennsylvania farmers who might want to recycle their historic farm buildings.

Sally McMurry
Professor of History, Penn State University
sam9@psu.edu

Penn State Extension Introduces Local Foods Marketing Project

Penn State Extension has a new local foods marketing project to strengthen the local food infrastructure in Western Pennsylvania. The project, coordinated by Community-Based Agriculture Program Associate Heather Mikulas, works to connect the supply and demand sides of our foodshed.

In Western Pennsylvania, there are many family farms that have been doing what they do so well for generations. Another new breed of entrepreneurial farmers, market gardeners and value-added producers are also working to fill the demand for locally produced food. Together, these producers bring a delicious diversity of products to the table. The new local foods marketing project, which includes a website dedicated to marketing local farms and farm product, <http://www.yumpittsburgh.com>, strives to create economic and business opportunities for value-added producers.

Eating is an intimate act that sustains our bodies, enlivens our celebrations and can enrich our communities. The local food movement is more than a trend—it's real, and draws on expertise and commitment from a wide variety of disciplines including farmers (of course), consumers, chefs, nutritionists, social justice activists, local governments, academics.

Strengthening our local food systems can have real impact in our communities. In this current era of global warming, fluctuating gas prices, scarce resources and food safety concerns, buying local and getting to know the person who grows your food can provide peace of mind to the consumer. Those

consumer dollars, in turn, support the local economy, and build community equity.

Here are some ways this new project can help support your business:

If you are a chef, retailer, or wholesaler, we can help connect you with the locally produced products your customers want.

If you are a producer and would like to connect with local businesses and consumers wanting local products, we can also help you with direct marketing efforts and marketing plans.

If you are an eater, check our web site at <http://www.yumpittsburgh.com> often to find markets, retailers, restaurants and fun events where local foods are featured. The web site offers timely information for and about farmers, food, events and resources in our community. And we want your feedback! Share info about your local food finds, events, etc. and they will be included on the calendar.

Profile your farm and market your products: Farm profiles, marketing materials and promotion of local farms and value-added products <http://www.yumpittsburgh.com>.

Contact Heather if you are interested in having your farm highlighted.

Heather Mikulas
hem12@psu.edu

Upcoming Events in Western Pennsylvania

Exploring the Small Farm Dream

Allegheny County Extension Office, March 9,16,23,30.

Local Food Showcase: A Grower/Buyer Event

Penn State Extension, Allegheny County and co-sponsor Chatham University are proud to announce the first annual local food showcase. This event—which will bring together Western Pennsylvania farmers, value-added producers, food industry purchasers, and consumers—will be held on March 11, 2010 from 1-4pm at Chatham University.

Farm to Table Conference: Where does your food come from?

A consumer-based presentation to participants at this annual local food and wellness conference. March 26 – 27, 2010.