

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership

A Project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon



Winter 2008

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter of the Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP), a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns. This winter holds many exciting projects in store as we look forward to the spring. Please forward this newsletter to others you think may have an interest.

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PORTLAND AREA UPDATES

Cooking Classes to Kick-Off in March

The first of three series of cooking classes for people with low incomes will begin this March at First Presbyterian Church. The class will be held the first four Mondays in March from 10:00am – noon. The homeless and low-income populations at Julia West House and Alder House, both in downtown Portland, have been invited to participate. Lisa Bersani, a cook at Sisters of the Road Café in Portland, and Gretchen Doering, Food & Faith Program Assistant at Alton Collins Retreat Center in Eagle Creek, will instruct the courses. We are delighted and grateful to have their help with this project! Each week, food-related topics will be covered as students learn to prepare meals with fresh vegetables in the microwave. Shara Anslow, a PSU Masters student and member of OSU Extension, is adapting OSU recipes for microwave cooking as both Julia West House and Alder House provide microwaves for their guests to use. At the end of the course, students will be given a reusable bag filled with donated pantry items and kitchen equipment from Trader Joe's, Pearl ACE Hardware, Mirador Community Store, and Fred Meyer. Students will also be the first to receive coupon books this summer from the That's My Farmer Coupon Program at First Presbyterian Church.

IFFP Contributes to Community Efforts

Farm-to-congregation coordinator Cristina Stella has been a part of two exciting projects in the Portland community. Since November she has been on the Northwest Earth Institute's (NWEI) Food Curriculum Committee. Along with graduate students, gardeners, business owners, active citizens, and Food Policy Council members, Cristina has helped create an NWEI discussion course about food which will be ready for nationwide publication in the coming months. For more information about NWEI, please go to www.nwei.org. Cristina is also representing EMO-IFFP as a community partner with Portland State University, advising students in the Social Marketing capstone course on their market basket survey. The students she has been working with will compare prices of five food products (organic apples, conventional apples, whole grain, processed grain, vegetable oil) at five types of stores (discount, supermarket, convenience, natural foods, farmers' market) in zip codes covered in the Everyone Eats community food assessment. Their work will contribute greatly to the assessment and we are very excited to include their research in our report.

Lents, Parkrose Farmers' Markets Improve Food Access

The Lents and Parkrose Farmers' Markets in Portland work to provide fresh food in underserved areas and at the same time, the markets have become cultural centers for their communities.

The Lents International Farmers' Market is Portland's first international market, established in 2005 by the Lents Food Group, a volunteer organization born from a partnership of Zenger Farm, Healthy Eating By Design, The Oregon Food Bank, The Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council, the Lents Neighborhood Association, and Pilgrim Lutheran Church. Featuring foods from many cultures and Hmong, Turkish, Hispanic, and Mien vendors, the market is truly international. It serves the diverse community of outer-southeast Portland, and accepts WIC, Senior FMNP coupons, and food stamps to ensure that customers of all incomes have access to culturally appropriate fresh food. The market has come to serve as a weekly community gathering place, with musical entertainment, chef demonstrations, and kids' activities. Contact Jill Kuehler at lentsfarmersmarket@gmail.com for information.

The idea for the Lents Market stems from the 2004 Lents food assessment and market basket survey conducted by the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council. The project revealed that Lents residents were food insecure and sought ways to overcome barriers to food access. The farmers' market was formed to provide the neighborhood with affordable fresh food. As a result of the Lents assessment the Food Policy Council's Food Access Committee has sought ways to replicate research in other communities that might suffer from food insecurity; in 2008 IFFP's farm-to-congregation coordinator, Cristina Stella, will use IFFP's assessment to inform the committee's food assessment recommendations.

The Parkrose Farmers' Market has enjoyed similar success in outer northeast Portland. Beginning in May 2007 this farmers' market has occupied the parking lot of Parkrose High School on Saturdays, and ten percent of its stall space earnings are donated to the school. It is funded by a grant from the East Portland Neighborhood Association and private donations. Featuring eleven farmers, the market will start its second season the first Saturday in May 2008. More information can be found at <http://parkrosefarmersmarket.org/home.html>.

CORVALLIS UPDATES

Food Justice Efforts Thrive

As the days lengthen, farmers, chefs and organizers are laying plans to improve local food access for low-income residents in Corvallis. Under a new, three-year USDA Community Food Projects grant, project staff and partners are seeking ways of using common assets of faith communities—kitchens, land, and volunteers—to build community food security.

Lessons from congregation-based projects will be published in a manual and shared nationwide with other faith communities and organizers as projects progress. All programs will emphasize low-income leadership and empowerment rather than a traditional charity model.

Intaba Liff-Anderson, chef/proprietor of FireWorks Venue in South Corvallis, joined the EMO team in January to develop a community kitchen. She will lead regular hands-on cooking classes for low-income people using fresh, local produce at Corvallis First United Methodist Church. Liv Gifford, IFFP coordinator since 2005, will launch a campaign advertising the newly available food stamp access at local farmers' markets and organize a bulk buying club for Latino parishioners at St. Mary's Catholic Church. A community garden project is also in process.

This new phase of work builds on past successes in Corvallis, including a regional community food assessment and the "That's My Farmer" coupon program, now a collaboration of 10 faith communities, 10 farms and several local food banks. The project hopes to add two farmers and congregations in 2008. In 2007, "That's My Farmer" sold over \$13,000 in farmers' market coupons to members of congregations. Ninety-one coupon booklets, worth \$1638, were distributed to low-income families through four agencies. "That's My Farmer" will be coordinated this year by L.I.N.K.S Americorps Member Anna Cates. Anna is from Montana, has a degree in History from Dartmouth, and works part-time as CSA coordinator for Gathering Together Farms. She came into contact with our program shortly after moving to Corvallis and working at the Corvallis Saturday Farmers' Market last fall. She will work out of the St. Mary's office and can be reached at (541) 757 1988 or thatsmyfarmer@gmail.com.

NEWS

New Farm-to-School Bill Passes Oregon Legislature

On Friday, February 22, the House and Senate passed a bill, HB 3601, to that will fund a position within the Oregon Department of Education to assist schools wanting to participate in Oregon's new farm-to-school program. The bill passed with a 59-0 vote in the House and a 29-0 vote in the Senate and is way to the Governor for his signature. This position is seen as an essential to the farm-to-school position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture who recently hired former Wildwood chef Cory Schreiber to make connections between farms and schools.

According to the January 22 article in which *The Oregonian* endorsed the legislation, "Parents want their kids to eat more fresh produce, schools want to serve it, and Oregon farmers are eager to sell it." Schreiber will need a counterpart with expertise in school nutrition to help him navigate the education bureaucracy." More information about this important bill can be found at <http://www.ecotrust.org/farmtoschool/>.

Willamette Valley Farmers Switch from Grass to Food

According to OSU Extension, about sixty percent of the Willamette Valley farmland is in grass seed production. As grain prices hit record highs across the world market, many local farmers are considering switching from grass production to crops such as wheat and beans. With current market prices, food crops are more lucrative than grass. For some farmers it has become a moral issue, as decades of grass seed production can deplete soil and crop farming can restore its vitality. In addition, crops contribute to a more sustainable local food system which benefits both farmers and local communities. Harry Stalford and his wife, Willow Coberly, see the current situation as an opportunity to convert their farm to organic agriculture, a move they have been considering for the past ten years. Their story represents the need of many local farmers to stay competitive in the world market while keeping the Willamette Valley fertile and prosperous. [Summarized from: A Growing Advantage: Local farmers seize the opportunity to create a sustainable food cycle. By Tim Christie, *The Register-Guard*, January 19, 2008.] **Note:** A Central Willamette listening session is being organized by Friends of Family Farmers (FOFF) for March 13 at First Alternative Food Co-op, 1007 SE 3rd Av. in Corvallis. Call Meagan at 503-622-1061 for info.

Final Chance for Farm Bill Reform!

UPDATE: House proposes Farm Bill that would cut funding for nutrition programs and hurt conservation efforts. The House and the Senate each passed a farm bill last year that included billions of dollars in spending above the current baseline on food stamps, conservation, energy and aid to the fruit and vegetable industry (\$11 billion in the Senate version and \$8.5 in the House). However House Agriculture Chairman Peterson and ranking member Bob Goodlatte, have proposed a new farm bill that includes a maximum increase of only \$6 billion, slashing nutrition program funds and reducing acreage available for conservation. This proposal and the way the House has gone about it is causing apprehension among agriculture leaders in the Senate.

Congressman McGovern expressed his concerns with potential cuts in Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill on the House floor. He told Congress, "This Farm Bill should not be negotiated on the backs of the hungry. Feeding hungry people is never wrong, but taking food out of their

mouths is. And that's what a reduction in the House-passed domestic nutrition title would do".

To help feed the hungry, address rising diet-related health concerns and reduce environmental degradation, nutrition and conservation programs must be fully funded. Establishing payment caps (similar to Dorgan-Grassley) of commodity subsidies (rather than cutting funds to food stamps programs and decreasing land available for conservation) would provide the funding these programs need to succeed.

National Call in Day: Please join friends and farmers on Wednesday February 27, 2008 and contact your Senator or House Representative with this important message ...

I am calling/writing to urge Senator/Representative _____ not to support a Farm Bill that takes food from the mouths of the hungry, hurts family farmers, and endangers our natural habitats. Congress(wo)man _____ should fully fund nutrition and conservation programs (as proposed in the Senate version of the Farm Bill) by establishing commodity subsidy caps. If you don't know your Senator and Representative's contact information, go to <http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/> Source: Andrew Kang-Bartlett, Presbyterian Hunger Program Go to www.betterfarmbill.org for more info.

Small Farms Conference a Big Hit

The Eighth Annual Extension Small Farms Conference at Oregon State University on February 16, drew record numbers of people from throughout the northwest. Workshops focused topics ranging from extending the growing season to launching social justice projects that benefit small farmers. The keynoter of conference was Dr. Fred Kirschenmann, farmer and Distinguished Fellow of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, who has been a keynoter for two of INEC's food and faith conferences. He spoke on "Small Farms: Agriculture of the Past, or Agriculture of the Future?" IFFP Director Jenny Holmes and Coordinator Liv Gifford joined Mercy Corps Coordinator Drew Katz for a panel discussion on linking socially disadvantaged farmers with direct markets, including faith communities, and increasing food access for low-income people. Both Mercy Corps' New Agriculture Project and IFFP continue to offer cutting-edge pilot projects throughout the Willamette Valley.

RESOURCES

Books

In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto reminds us that, despite the daunting dietary landscape Americans confront in the modern supermarket, the solutions to the current omnivore's dilemma can be found all around us. In looking toward traditional diets the world over, as well as the foods our families — and regions — historically enjoyed, we can recover a more balanced, reasonable, and pleasurable approach to food. Michael Pollan's bracing and eloquent manifesto shows us how we might start making thoughtful food choices that will enrich our lives and enlarge our sense of what it means to be healthy. [Review from Powells.com.] This book can be purchased through our website at http://www.emoregon.org/food_farms.php.

Videos (*Great for your Earth Month study! Borrow these films from us by sending \$5 for postage & handling; call 503 221 1054 ext. 214 for availability.*)

The Organic Opportunity: Local Organic Food as Economic Development in Woodbury County, Iowa tells the story of the first county in the U.S. to mandate the purchase of locally grown organic food by county institutions. In 2005 the same county became the first in the nation to offer tax rebates to farmers who transition to organic agriculture, and the county is now offering access to farm land and housing to new farmers who relocate there to farm organically. Woodbury County is also home to the first farmers' market to exclusively sell "healthy, humane, homegrown" food. Collectively the stories of this county offer a model for change in any community interested in economic development and healthy food! (25 mins, Center for Economic Security, 2007)

What Will We Eat? The Search for Healthy Local Food explores the crisis in industrial agriculture and how, despite the power of industrial food, Michigan's first farmers' market to exclusively sell local organic produce has achieved success. Through the voices of small farmers and their customers in Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Indiana, this film focuses on the Sweetwater Local Foods Market and its role in creating a healthy, humane, homegrown alternative to industrial agriculture. The film also seeks to educate communities about how small farmers can prosper and the role of local food in both addressing health problems associated with bad nutrition and creating a sustainable economy. (26 mins, Chris Bedford Films, 2005)

Good Food: A Collection of Short Films on Food and Sustainability will entertain you while inspiring you to take action for a healthy and sustainable future. As a project of Media That Matters, this collection of twelve eight-minute-or-less films touches upon fair trade, globalization, GMOs, small family farms, sustainability, community activism, and the power of unhealthy food industries. It seeks to provide information about food issues and ways communities can regain control of their food supply. In addition to the twelve films in this collection, four more are available for viewing online at http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/mtm_good_food/#. Also available on the website are direct links to ways to get involved in the fight for good food. (1 hr 17 mins, Media that Matters, 2006)

A Sacred Duty: Applying Jewish Values to Help to Heal the World, produced by Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA), addresses the threat of an unprecedented catastrophe from global warming and other environmental threats from a positive Jewish perspective. The documentary features interviews with leading Israeli and American environmental, health, vegetarian and animal rights activists as well as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and secular leaders including Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Haifa and Dr. Yeshayahu Bar-Or, Chief Scientist for Israel Environmental Ministry. Although it is primarily intended for a Jewish audience, A SACRED DUTY speaks to people everywhere about the ethics of our relationship to the natural world in which we live. The movie's universal message will appeal to anyone interested in such topics as biblical teachings, Israel, the environment, health, nutrition, vegetarianism, hunger and resource usage. You can request a free DVD by sending your name and mailing address to JVNA's secretary/treasurer John Diamond (jdiamond4@cox.net). If you feel that you can profitably use more than one DVD, just let John know, with a brief description of how you plan to use them. Additional information about the movie may be found at www.asacredduty.com. (60 mins, Jewish Vegetarians of North America)

Recipe: Celery Root and Potato Purée *From The Art of Simple Food by Alice Waters, founder of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California.*
(<http://www.farmland.org/news/newsletters/farmfreshnews/1207.html>)

- 1 pound potatoes, preferably a yellow-fleshed variety such as Yellow Finn or Yukon Gold
- 5 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 medium celery root (about 3/4 pound). Peel, cut in half, and slice fairly thin
- Salt, to taste
- Milk, if needed

1. Cook potatoes until soft in salted boiling water. Drain. Pass the potatoes through a ricer or food mill and return to the pot. For a chunkier consistency, smash with a potato masher right in the pot.

2. Stir in 2 tablespoons butter.

3. In a separate heavy-bottomed pan, melt 3 tablespoons butter over medium-low heat.

4. Add the celery root and salt to taste.

5. Cover tightly and cook until quite soft, 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Lower the heat if the celery root starts to brown.

6. Pass celery root mixture through a food mill, or for a smoother version, purée in a blender.

7. Stir celery root mixture into the potatoes

8. If the purée is too thick, thin with milk. Taste and add salt or more butter if needed.

EVENTS

March 3, Portland Chefs Collaborative 8th Annual Farmer-Chef Connection, 8:00am-2:30pm at Oaks Park Dance Pavilion (Sellwood neighborhood, Portland). A day of informative workshops, networking, and lunch featuring Keynote Speaker Gary Paul Nabhan. Dr. Nabhan's work moves from policy to practice, as his founding of the Renewing America's Food Traditions and Forgotten Pollinators campaigns demonstrate. He and wife Laurie Monti raise Navajo-Churro sheep, Black Spanish turkeys and native crops in the pygmy woodlands near Winona, Arizona. Tickets are \$25; you can register by phone at 1 800 838 3006 or online at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/27165. More information about the event can be found at www.portlandcc.org.

March 14, Women's Health Network 2008 Lecture Series, Nourishment: Exploring the Many Facets of Food, , 8:00am-noon at The Kennedy School (5736 NE 33rd Ave, Portland). "Food Policy: How Local, State, and National Food Policy Affects What We Eat" is the first of four lectures for 2008. Continental breakfast will be provided, and all lectures are free and open to the public. For more information contact Jessica Duke at (971) 673 0361 or go to <http://www.puc.state.or.us/DHS/ph/wh/whn.shtml>.

Sunbow Farm Workshops. GRAFTING WORKSHOP, 3/2, Instructor Delbert McComb; TAO OF DUCKS, 3/9, Instructor Carol Deppe; COMPOST AND COMPOST TEA 3/16, Instructors Harry MacCormack and Shepard Smith; COSMIC AND OTHER SUBTLE INFLUENCES ON AGRICULTURE (Quantum and Nano Effects), 3/30, Instructor Harry MacCormack; WATER: CELLULAR VITALITY IN AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH, 4/13, Instructor Harry MacCormack; HIS STORY & HER STORY: AGRICULTURAL MODELS AND CURRENT LOCAL FOOD TRANSITIONS, 4/27, Instructor Harry MacCormack; ESSENTIAL SEED SAVING TECHNIQUES FOR HOME AND SMALL FARM, 5/4, Instructor Carol Deppe; IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GARDEN,

5/18, Instructor Harry MacCormack; WEEDS: THE TOUGHEST LIMITING FACTOR IN AN ORGANIC, BIOLOGICALLY BASED AGRICULTURE, 5/25, Instructor Harry MacCormack; FALL AND WINTER ORGANIC GARDENING, 6/1, Instructor Harry MacCormack. For details on these workshops please go to www.sunbowfarm.org or call 541-929-5782.

Growing Gardens Youth Grow Garden Club, Jan-March, Tuesdays at 3:50-4:50 (2003 NE 42nd Avenue #3, Portland). Elementary school students learn about gardening, nutrition, compost, soil health and more. Contact caitlin@growing-gardens.org or monica@growing-gardens.org or visit www.growing-gardens.org for more information.

March 27, Growing Gardens Gardening Basics Workshop, 6:00pm (2003 NE 42nd Avenue #3, Portland). An overview of gardening basics for people just starting out or brushing up. Learn to plan, implement and care for a healthy, affordable, and sustainable veggie garden. Open to the public. Donation \$3-\$10 (sliding scale). Please email emily@growing-gardens.org to register and get location details, or visit www.growing-gardens.org for more information.

Early-Mid April, Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership, Gatherings for partners and community in Corvallis and Portland. Times and locations, TBA. In Corvallis, we will kick off our new project with partners, farmers and friends. In Portland we will gather congregations and their farmers to celebrate a new year of partnering.

April 8, 9th Annual That's My Farmer! Event, 6:30-8:30pm at First United Methodist Church, 13th & Olive St, Eugene. Help us thank the farmers who grow our food! Join the twelve participating CSA farmers and their members for an evening of celebration. 6:30pm, Meet the Farmers; 7:30pm, Program begins; 8:30pm, Homemade ice cream.

OPPORTUNITIES

Zenger Farm, a six-acre working farm bordered by ten acres of vital wetland habitat in the historic Lents neighborhood in southeast Portland, is offering educational field trips for groups interested in food and farms. Their mission is to promote sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship and local economic development through a working urban farm. With subject-specific themes, their field trips feature the opportunity to build a relationship with your food and explore natural and cultivated environments within the city limits; they also include a sensory-based tour of the farm and wetland and a chance to get a little muddy with hands-on projects. More information can be found at <http://www.zengerfarm.org>. If your congregation or group is interested in a trip this spring please contact Cristina Stella at (503) 221 1054.

Sauvie Island Center also offers educational field trips. The center aims at increasing food, farming, and environmental literacy in the Portland community. The center teaches youth and adults about farms, the food they grow, and the landscape in which they exist. Located next to a working farm just miles from Portland's downtown, Sauvie Island Center offers field trips which include hands-on activities and education around food and its relationship to the land. More information can be found at <http://www.sauvieislandcenter.org>. If your congregation or group is interested in a trip to the farm please contact Cristina Stella at (503) 221 1054.

Can your farm provide fresh food for Portland's low-income community? IFFP in Portland is looking for a local farm to provide produce at wholesale cost each week throughout April for our cooking classes. The classes, created for homeless individuals and families with low-incomes, will teach participants how to incorporate fresh, local produce into emergency food box meals. **IFFP is currently seeking volunteers to procure fresh**

produce for our upcoming cooking classes. Volunteers are needed to help with the pick-up and transport of food items on Saturdays from the Hillsdale Farmers' Market to our kitchen sites in Portland. More details will be finalized in the next few weeks; please contact Cristina Stella at 503.221.1054 or cstella@emoregon.org if interested. We are also seeking volunteer cooking instructors for the summer.

The Corvallis Tilth Organic Gardening Club is holding our annual Organic Fertilizer Sale on the first three Saturdays in March (1st, 8th, and 15th) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Alternative Co-op 3rd Street Store. We are asking for volunteers to help customers, weigh products, carry and load bags. We especially need volunteers who can lift 50+ bags. In addition, if you are someone who knows about organic fertilizers, we always need "experts" on site who can help people understand which products are best for their particular gardens. Each shift is 2 1/2 hours -- from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. or from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you can work at least one 2 1/2 hour shift on one of these days, please contact Terry Rossiter at 541-829-0086 or trossite@hotmail.com.

Thoughts on Faith, Food and Community from Faith Traditions

Islam

Your community is but one community, and I am your only Lord. Therefore serve Me. Men have divided themselves into factions, but to Us they shall all return. He that does good works in the fullness of his faith, his endeavors shall not be lost: We record them all

The Prophets 21:93-94

United Methodist Church

We believe our culture is impoverished and our people deprived of a meaningful way of life when rural and small – town living becomes difficult or impossible. We recognize that the improvement of this way of life may sometimes necessitate the use of some lands for nonagricultural purposes. We oppose the indiscriminate diversion of agricultural land for nonagricultural uses when nonagricultural land is available. Further, we encourage the preservation of appropriate lands for agriculture and open space uses through thoughtful land use programs. We support governmental and private programs designed to benefit the resident farmer rather than the factory farm and programs that encourage industry to locate in non-urban areas. We further recognize that increased mobility and technology have brought a mixture of people, religions, and philosophies to rural communities that were once homogeneous. While often this is seen as a threat to or loss of community life, we understand it as an opportunity to uphold the biblical call to community for all persons. Therefore, we encourage rural communities and individuals to maintain a strong connection to the earth and to be open to: offering mutual belonging, caring, healing, and growth; sharing and celebrating cooperative leadership and diverse gifts; supporting mutual trust; and affirming individuals as unique persons of worth, and thus to practice shalom.

We support a sustainable agricultural system that will maintain and support the natural fertility of agricultural soil, promote the diversity of flora and fauna, and adapt to regional conditions and structures – a system where agricultural animals are treated humanely and where their living conditions are as close to natural systems as possible.