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INSTITUTE NEWS

Keeney to address IAA symposium

Dennis Keeney, Director of the new Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, will give the keynote address on "Concepts and Components in Sustainable Farming Systems" at the February 28, 1989, Institute Symposium. The overall theme of the one-day symposium, to be held in Washington, DC, is "Sustainable Farming Systems: Needs and Opportunities."

Following Keeney's talk, Frederick Kirschenmann, an organic farmer from Windsor, North Dakota, will provide a viewpoint on "Low-Input Farming in Practice." David Bezdicek of Washington State University will speak on crop rotations in low-input systems, and Frank Baker of Winrock International will outline the role and potential of animal agriculture in integrated low-input farming systems. Richard Harwood of Winrock International will moderate the sessions on diversified systems.

In afternoon sessions, policy considerations related to sustainable farming will be addressed by two panels including Sandra Batie of Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Douglas Young of Washington State University, John E. Lee of the USDA Economic Research Service, Charles Benbrook of the National Science Foundation Board on Agriculture, Ken Cook of the Conservation Foundation, and Ron Kroese of the Land

Stewardship Project. The two panels will be moderated by Otto Doering of Purdue University and Maureen Hinkle of the National Audubon Society.

For information on the symposium, contact the Institute.

Bender, Liebhardt, Ohrstrom, and Watkins elected to IAA board

Four new directors, who bring wide experience in alternative agricultural research, education, farming, and business, were elected to the Board of the Institute for Alternative Agriculture at its September 10th meeting in Davis, California. James Bender, from Weeping Water, Nebraska, is a farmer, writer, and board member of the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. William Liebhardt directs the Sustainable Agriculture Program at the University of California-Davis and was formerly the assistant director of the Rodale Research Center. Per Bye Ohrstrom is owner of P. O. Ohrstrom & Sons and Maxicrop U.S.A., two seaweed product companies in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Gordon Watkins is owner of Rivendell Gardens and its associated Greengrocery in Arkansas as well as president of the Ozark Organic Growers Association. The four will join the IAA Board at its March, 1989, meeting.

The Board also set in motion a long-range planning process and approved

the 1989 Symposium plans. Following its meeting, the directors visited the Ed Sills 1,200-acre organic rice/popcorn/almond farm north of Sacramento. The group also traveled to the University of California's agroecology farm in Santa Cruz. The 17-acre farm has diverse cropping areas, including an aquaculture wastewater treatment system, and is the site of the world-renowned Alan Chadwick organic garden. Agroecology Program Director Steve Gliessman led the tour.

"Meeting in California allowed the Institute Board to learn more about the status and direction of sustainable agriculture in that important state," says Jim Lukens, President of the Board.

IAA co-sponsors low-input, organic conferences

The Institute is co-sponsoring two national conferences this spring. The first, with the Soil and Water Conservation Society and others on March 8-10 in Omaha, Nebraska, is "The Promise of Low-Input Agriculture: A Search for Sustainability and Profitability." Its purpose is to look at ways to incorporate sustainable, low-input production practices into conventional farming systems. The meeting is designed for technicians at all levels of government--those who advise farmers directly and those who work on long-range policy.

The second conference, co-sponsored with the Center for Science in the Public Interest and to be held March 16-17 in Washington, DC, is the National Conference on Organic/Sustainable Agriculture. This conference will have sessions on such topics as standards for organic foods, marketing efforts, the economics of organic/sustainable farming, and its policy needs.

For further meeting information, see the list of Upcoming Events in this Journal.

IAA joins Natural Resources Council

In November, 1988, the Institute became a member of the Natural Resources Council of America, a national group centered in Washington, DC, which fosters cooperative efforts to promote adoption of public policies to protect the environment. Over 60 national groups comprise the membership of the NRCA, including such diverse groups as the National Wildlife Federation and the American Farmland Trust, the Alliance for Environmental Education and the Society for Range Management.

NRCA programs include a monthly round table on environmental issues, multiple task forces designed to help members work together on specific policy areas, Congressional/executive breakfasts, briefings, and numerous publications on information of broad use to its institutional members. The Institute views this membership as part of its effort to share information on alternative agriculture with a broad range of other national groups and to strengthen efforts of such groups to find sound solutions to resource degradation problems related to agriculture.

Congress votes \$4.45 million for low-input in '89

Low-input farming research and education were named for \$4.45 million

in the FY1989 budget passed by Congress and signed by the President on October 1. That is a half-million more than the \$3.9 million appropriated for the program in 1988. The figure is a mid-point compromise between the House recommendation of \$3.9 million and the Senate proposal for \$5 million, but it is well under the \$15 million figure suggested by the Institute for Alternative Agriculture and other supporters of the program. Funds will continue the grants program for whole-system, low-input projects which got underway this past summer.

The program got an upbeat review at a September conference called to gather viewpoints on its 1988 track record and to make recommendations for its future. "If we didn't have this program, we'd have to start it," commented House Agriculture Committee staffer Skip Stiles. IAA Executive Director Garth Youngberg summed up the assets of the 1988 program. "Open participation was genuine, USDA and land-grant involvement in low-input agriculture through this program helped create a positive climate for the work, and the timing was propitious," he said. "A strong coalition of consumers, environmentalists, and farmers is interested in the direction of low-input farming."

For information on the '88 projects or the proposal process for 1989, contact the following: *Northeast Region*: Fred Magdoff, Department of Plant and Soil Science, Hills Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, (802) 656-2630; *Southern Region*: Charles Laughlin, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, (404) 542-2151; *North Central Region*: Warren Sahs, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583, (402) 472-2973; *Western Region*: David Schlegel, Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of California, 300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-3560, (415) 987-0029; *Cooperative State Research Service*: Patrick Madden, CSRS-OSPPS, USDA, Washington, DC 20250-2200, (202) 447-3640; Dixon Hubbard, ES-USDA, 3851 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-0990, (202) 447-2677.



Sustainable agriculture association formed in Indiana

At a charter meeting on November 1, Hoosier supporters of sustainable agriculture gathered in Indianapolis to form the Indiana Sustainable Agriculture Association (ISAA). Dave Swaim, a crop consultant from Crawfordsville, Indiana, was elected president of the group. Other officers and directors include farmers, researchers, extension agents, and state representatives.

Agriculture in the future will require the balancing of economic, ecological, and social concerns," the ISAA statement says. Its founders see the association as a way to increase public awareness of progress in sustainable agriculture, encourage good research, facilitate adoption of sustainable techniques on Indiana farms, and encourage a spirit of cooperation among farm, business, research, and environmental and regulatory groups.

For the future, look for meetings, field days, formation of local support groups, and publication of a newsletter, the group says. For more information, contact Dave Swaim, 807 South Green, Crawfordsville, IN 47933.