

**Greener Fields Forum October 22-24, 2001
St Louis, Missouri**

Participants

(Listed in alphabetical order)

**Dr. Elizabeth Barham
University of Missouri**

Dr Barham is conducting a long-term international comparative research project on place-based labeling (labels of origin or geographical indications). The research is tracking labeling efforts in four sites: Missouri, Canada (Quebec), France and a watershed project between Spain and Portugal. The sites are selected to provide a trace on how grassroots, place-based labeling efforts are impacted by changes in food regulation at the transnational and global level. Key research themes include identity, democracy, rural space and traditional knowledge as intellectual property within international trade regimes, and rural development in marginalized areas based on specialized food products.

**George Boody
Land Stewardship Project,
Minnesota**

George Boody has served as Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project since 1994, and was the General Manager of LSP from 1990 to 1993. In addition to management and fund raising responsibilities at LSP, George has directed two education and research projects identifying the ecological, social and financial benefits from farms employing a variety of production methods, including intensive, rotational grazing as a management practice. During the past twenty years he has worked with farmers and professionals on sustainable agriculture, community development and energy conservation.

LSP is involved in eco-labels in several ways. LSP a partners in the Midwest Food Alliance. A number of farmer members of LSP are organic producers. We also have several other marketing initiatives to help develop direct or local markets for sustainable agriculture.

**Carolyn Cairns
Consumers Union, New York**

Consumers Union has recently developed a new online encyclopedia of eco-labels, www.eco-labels.org, designed to educate, inform, and empower consumers. The project, made possible with a grant from the Ford Foundation, aims to educate consumers about the environmental impact of household products, inform them about the meaning of the different labels and claims they encounter at the supermarket, and empower them to think critically about what they find.

The site currently includes detailed information on the programs and organizations behind labels found on food and forest products. For each label, the site includes an evaluation of the labels' credibility, based on whether the standards behind it are clear, consistent, independently verified, and environmentally meaningful. The site also looks at the label's sponsoring organization governing structure and potential for conflicts of interest. Plans are underway to expand the site to include labels found on other products including personal hygiene products and household cleaners.

**Denise Chevalier
Consultant with Cooperative
Development Services,
Iowa**

Denise was the project manager for the Iowa Organic Growers and Buyers Association "Marketing Iowa's Organic Products" in the mid-nineties and served as a member of the Organic Advisory Board to the Secretary of Agriculture, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. She is working with National Cooperative Growers Association on certain aspects of the Co-op brand under development.

Kristen Corselius
Institute for Agriculture and
Trade Policy, Minnesota

IATP's mission is to help create change toward a socially and environmentally just food system. One role that IATP plays is as a collector and sharer of information on trends occurring internationally which affect agriculture, the environment and trade. Eco-labeling is a piece of the larger movement towards purchasing power (labeling, socially responsible investing, procurement and standards) in which consumers are making social and environmental statements with their dollars. Is this specific enough? While we do not specifically represent an eco-labeling initiative, but we study the forces that drive or are impacted by eco-labeling so it makes it a bit more difficult to define.

Linda Elswick
Director, Sustainable Agriculture,
Humane Society of the
United States, Washington, DC

HSUS is interested in the use of labels to address the humane treatment of farm animals in production and processing in addition to social, economic and environmental criteria. The Farm Animals/Sustainable Agriculture section of HSUS is working with the National Council of Chain Restaurants and some supermarkets to secure their support for humanely and sustainably raised animal products. There is considerable progress in Europe in educating the public about humane production practices. We will also be commenting on/exploring the concept of using "Codes of Good Farming Practices" being considered the UN Food and Agriculture Organization as a means of transitioning to sustainable agriculture.

Jim Ennis
Midwest Food Alliance
(MWFA), Minnesota

Midwest Food Alliance is a joint project of Wisconsin-based Cooperative Development Services and Minnesota-based Land Stewardship Project, and a partner with The Food Alliance, based in Portland, Oregon. Jim is directing a team in the development and implementation of the Midwest Food Alliance eco-labeling program in the Upper Midwest.

Introduced to consumers in 2000, the program includes 30 MWFA-Approved farmers, over 60 product varieties and four grocery store chains. Jim has over ten years of marketing and project management experience, leading cross-functional teams in marketing food and consumer products with The Pillsbury Company and The Clorox Company respectively. He currently serves on the North Central SARE Technical Committee.

Scott Exo
Project Director, The Food
Alliance, Oregon

The Food Alliance is a non-profit organization that recognizes and rewards farmers who produce food in environmentally and socially responsible ways, and educates consumers about the benefits of sustainable agriculture. Farmers who meet The Food Alliance's strict eligibility requirements can market their products with The Food Alliance's seal of approval: Food Alliance-Approved.

The Food Alliance provides an independent, third-party approval process for farmers who are reducing (if not eliminating) their use of pesticides, protecting soil and water resources, and providing safe and fair working conditions. Growers who meet our strict eligibility requirements proudly display the Food Alliance seal of approval on their products. In addition to setting the criteria and administering the site inspection process for growers, The Food Alliance also partner with wholesalers and retailers to identify and promote Food Alliance-Approved products to consumers. Since 1997, TFA has approved 50 fruit, vegetable, nut and grain producers in Oregon and Washington, and an additional 25 beef producers. Dairy approvals are pending. 32 retail partners feature and promote Food Alliance-Approved products and frozen foods with the Food Alliance label can be found in over 500 additional grocery stores in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

John Green
Fellow, Rural Coalition,
Missouri

The Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural is an alliance of over eighty diverse and autonomous community-based organizations in the US and Mexico, including small farm cooperatives, farm worker groups and human rights organizations. Based on the shared interests of the member groups, the Rural Coalition has been involved in numerous projects aimed at promoting progressive policies for the benefit of rural communities and developing alternative models of food production and trade. One of the Rural Coalition's alternative projects is the SuperMarket which links limited resource and minority farmer and artisan cooperatives, helping them to collaboratively achieve the support and services needed to market their goods and coordinate other activities. To do this, participants employ innovative communication channels. Prominent among them is the use of the Internet for cooperative-to-cooperative and cooperative-to-consumer networking. Currently, consumers can purchase value-added goods from the project website—www.supermarketcoop.com.

The success of this online retail store over the last year prompted the development of a “virtual community supported agriculture” project, Small Farm Connection, where consumers can subscribe for a monthly delivery of fresh and value-added products from the participating cooperatives. An online Product Availability Warehouse will be tested this fall to further augment these efforts and offer more assistance to producers of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Faye Jones
Executive Director, Midwest
Organic and Sustainable
Education Services (MOSES),
Wisconsin

MOSES is a non-profit organization working to provide information and education to farmers and others on organic and sustainable agriculture. MOSES is the organizer of the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC), one of the largest organic farming conferences in the country; over 1300 people attended the last conference. The next UMOFC will be held on March 1 & 2, 2002 in LaCrosse, WI. Faye has been a certified organic market gardener for over 20 years, specializing in cut flowers for the last six years.

Laura Lauffer
Rhys Solutions, North Carolina

Laura Lauffer is a private consultant in public health and sustainable agriculture. Laura worked with the GreenerFields team to assess opinions of eco labels among organic leaders and lessons learned from their experiences in the organic market. In addition to working with GreenerFields, Laura works with Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and the University of North Carolina School of Nursing. Laura was the Executive Director of Carolina Farm Stewardship Association from 1996-1999. She lives and works on a small farm with her family.

Sarah Lynch
World Wildlife Fund,
Washington, DC

World Wildlife Fund is working to create incentives for producers to behave in ecologically sound ways, and work to engage consumers as well. WWF has engaged in a certification program to create labels to recognize producers and educate consumers. The label indicates that the product has been produced in conformance with responsible environmental standards. WWF helped found the two leading certification bodies for timber and seafood products, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). To promote responsible forest practices, we are working with a host of powerful partners, including the World Bank, and beginning to see real change. Forty million acres of forest have now been FSC-certified as well-managed. And major players, including Home Depot, the largest timber retailer in the world, are lining up to buy certified timber products. Three years after WWF joined with Unilever to create the Marine Steward-

ship Council, nearly a hundred companies have pledged their support. WWF is working with Whole Foods, Shaws, and other supermarkets, as well as restaurant chains such as Legal Seafoods, to secure new outlets for fish that have been harvested sustainably.

Richard Mandelbaum
Organizer and Policy Specialist for CATA, el Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (Farmworker Support Committee), Washington, DC

CATA is a grassroots farmworkers' organization based in the mid-Atlantic U.S., Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Richard has been with CATA since 1997, where he has worked on promoting public policy more equitable to farm workers, engaged in grassroots union organizing amongst mushroom harvesters in Pennsylvania, and conducted and developed educational workshops for farmworkers regarding their legal rights and ways to promote occupational health and safety. Richard is currently involved in a collaborative project to develop guidelines for a food label that would simultaneously certify fair and just working conditions for farmworkers along with economic equity for family farmers.

Marty Mesh
Executive Director, Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG), Florida

FOG a non-profit farmer and consumer-based organization. FOG's ISO compliant certification program will soon operate as Quality Certification Services (QCS). QCS will offer expanded certification options both domestically and internationally, while working to help non-profit organizations focused on local and regional issues. FOG was formed in 1989 and included in its mission strengthening the connection between growers and consumers by increased interaction and the operation of a certification program to verify production/ process claims. Marty serves on the Board of Directors of the Organic Trade Association (OTA), Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) and the South Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG). He participated in a "Marketing Sustainable Agriculture" research trip which sought out lessons to be learned from European model. He is actively involved in the move toward product differentiation in the marketplace and the development of new areas of certification.

Ronda Perry & Lindsay Howerton
Patchwork Family Farms, Missouri Rural Crisis Center, Missouri

In the environment of corporate concentration and record numbers of independent family hog farmers being driven out of business, Patchwork Family Farms, the economic development project of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, seeks to improve both the environmental and economic sustainability of our limited resource farm members and the communities in which they live while providing high quality food at affordable prices. For this, Patchwork has been recognized as a model of sustainability in both Missouri and around the country.

Patchwork is a cooperative marketing effort that has helped ensure the livelihood of independent family hog farmers in Missouri. Patchwork producers receive no less than 43 cents per pound or 15 percent above market price, whichever is higher. This is significant because Patchwork producers were paid an average of 53 cents per pound last year, resulting in \$50,000 more dollars for their hogs than if they had sold them on the open market. In return, producers raise their animals in traditional ways using the following growing standards: Growth hormones or synthetic growth promoters are prohibited, No continuous feeding of antibiotics, Animals must have access to fresh air, sunshine and high quality feed necessary to maintain good health, Animals are raised with social responsibility, using environmental stewardship and sustainable growing practices.

Our label was designed and approved in 1994. We went through additional revisions in 1997, making changes in color and design. Our label design is reflective of our name and the farm families we represent.

Keith Richards
Executive Director Southern
Sustainable Agriculture
Working Group (Southern
SAWG), Arkansas

Keith has been a proponent of quality value-added production, eco-labeling, and grassroots marketing collaborations among farmers for the past 15 years. He recently co-authored the book, "Greener Fields: Signposts for Successful Eco-Labels," and has written numerous other articles and booklets including "Making It On the Farm: Increasing Sustainability Through Value-added Processing and Marketing." He has toured Denmark with the "Marketing Sustainable Agriculture" project in 1998, and studied the Label Rouge marketing and production system in France in 2001. Southern SAWG is currently coordinating the development of a pilot regional business and marketing incubator service for sustainable family farmers who want to add value to their raw products and sell them more directly to consumers. They are also a partner in research on how to apply aspects of the French Label Rouge system to U.S. pastured poultry production.

Jim Riddle
Independent Organic
Inspectors Association,
Minnesota

Over the past 20 years, Jim Riddle has been an organic farmer, gardener, inspector, educator, policy analyst, author, and consumer. He was founding president of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association, (IOIA), and co-author of the IFOAM/IOIA International Organic Inspection Manual. He has helped train hundreds of organic inspectors throughout the world. He is a member of the U.S. delegation to Codex, served on the board of the International Organic Accreditation Service, and chairs the Organic Trade Association's Accreditation Committee. Jim is co-author of the OTA's American Organic Standards. He chairs the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Organic Advisory Task Force, and was instrumental in the passage of Minnesota's landmark organic certification cost-share program. Jim serves as secretary of the National Organic Standards Board, which advises the USDA on organic agriculture policies. Jim is a dedicated environmentalist, homesteader, and family man.

Jim is very interested in seeing the development of "companion labels", which accompany organic claims and verify compliance with different standards, such as "fair trade", "locally grown", "social justice", or "family farm raised". I see organic as the premier label for ecological agricultural production, and look forward to cooperating on other compatible label schemes.

Robynn Schrader
Director, The National Coop-
erative Grocers Association
(NCGA), Iowa

NCGA is a member organization of 58 food co-ops nationwide, operating more than 70 retail locations with approx. \$350 million in combined sales volume. NCGA has entered into an exclusive licensing agreement to re-develop and use the Co-op brand in our member stores. We are in the midst of design and consumer testing of the new label. Our intent is to roll out the new Co-op brand in our member stores nationwide in 2002.

Michael Sligh
Rural Advancement Founda-
tion- USA, North Carolina

Michael is the Director of Sustainable Agriculture for the Rural Advancement Foundation International, (RAFI-USA). He is also a founder of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, (SSAWG), a founder of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, (NCSA), charter member and founding chair for the National Organic Standards Board, (NOSB), and NGO member to UN / FAO Codex Food labeling Committee. He is a co-author of the Greener Fields Report - Signposts for Successful Sustainable Agricultural labeling. He is a former farmer and anthropologist.

Isabelle St-Germain
Coordinator Fair Trade
Program, Quebec, Canada

Équiterre is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting ecological, socially just choices through action, education and research from a standpoint that embraces social justice, economic solidarity and the defense of the environment.

Équiterre is active on the following issues: promotion of organic agriculture and community supported agriculture; development of peri-urban agriculture zones; promotion of fair trade; promotion of ecologically sound modes of transportation; promotion of home energy efficiency; education around climate change and air pollution. Currently, Équiterre has four programs: Ecological agriculture, Fair trade, Sustainable transportation & Energy efficiency. Équiterre is currently conducting research into policy mechanisms for improving the market share of fair trade coffee in northern markets. The research is expected to have policy relevance to eco-label products generally. Our coffee campaign disseminates information on fair trade coffee which, as apart of its certification criteria, includes environmental production practices

Ralph Stelling and Phyllis
Stelling
Ral-Den Dairy & Land Stew-
ardship Project, Minnesota

Ralph and Phyllis Stelling and their son, Dennis, and daughter in-law, Ronda, farm on the rolling hills of southeastern Minnesota. They milk about 100 cows on 240 acres. Ten years ago, when faced with the choice of investing in expensive facilities or converting to Management Intensive Rotational Grazing, Ralph and his family chose grass-based production. In recent years they joined with four other families using similar production methods to form PastureLand. That organization promotes healthy, reliable community food sources and the benefits of grass-based production. Through PastureLand they are marketing cheese, butter and eventually other products from the milk. The Stellings and other members of PastureLand recently became certified through the Midwest Food Alliance. The Stelling family currently markets most of their milk through the nearby Plainview Milk Products cooperative. They have also been active in the Land Stewardship Project for many years, helping to form the Farm Beginnings Program.

Margaret Wittenberg
Vice President of Govern-
mental & Public Affairs,
Whole Foods, Texas

Whole Foods Market is the country's largest chain of natural and organic food supermarkets. Even with rapid growth, Whole Foods Market remains a uniquely mission-driven company—highly selective about what we sell, dedicated to our Core Values and stringent Quality Standards, and committed to the principles of right livelihood, team member empowerment, community service, conscientious retailing, and support for organic agriculture. Prior eco-label work to list: National Organic Standards Board 1995-2000, Marine Stewardship Council Senior Advisory Group 1999-present.

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Ecological Principles — Draft 7/5/2001

Please read in preparation for the Forum

In our Greener Fields Phase I research we learned that there are many different sets of principles driving this direction toward ecological valued-added labeling.

We determined that the development of shared principles are needed at this time; to effectively measure the progress of standards toward these principles, to better explain the benefits of eco-labeling to the public, to better communicate between labels, to protect legitimate labels from unfair co-optation and shared principles are widely understood as essential first steps toward reciprocity and external evaluation.

Our attempt here is to consolidate these various principles to foster a more focused discussion. We need to assess and evaluate:

- Our consensus on these principles,
- What principles are still missing?
- What is the state of progress on operationalizing these principles?
- Which principles are most lagging behind and why?

We also assume the following economic trends in agriculture are partially driving eco-labeling:

- Increased vertical integration of value chain (farmer to processor to wholesaler to distributor to retailer)
- Increased consolidation of farmland (fewer farmers)
- Increased emphasis on narrowly-defined efficiency - more control over infrastructure, content and capital
- Organic farm gate prices are not institutionalized or protected
- Organic retail is also experiencing consolidation

And we also assume that linking the benefits and accounting of agricultural goods at the place of origin and on through to the point of purchase will:

- Maintain greater value at the farm,
- Creates farmer and retail markets for clean water, clean air, habitat, biodiversity, social equity, labor rights etc.
- Ensure farmers who produce clean water, protect biodiversity, save energy, and participate in fair trade, will receive a premium for their products and a fair return throughout the food chain.
- Create a new infrastructure to create integrity and credibility.

Principles of Sustainable Agriculture to guide eco-labeling programs:

- Systems approach which supports and maintains eco-system integrity