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WALLACE CENTER NEWS

Conference Examines Role of Conservation in National Ag Policy, Farm Bill

The role of conservation in national agricultural policy and the 2002 Farm Bill specifically was the topic of a conference held this past summer by the Wallace Center, in collaboration with the Center for Sustainable Resource Development at the University of California, Berkeley; the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University; Kansas State University; the National Association of Conservation Districts; and the Gianini Foundation of Agricultural Economics at the University of California.

Conference participants addressed environmental trends associated with agricultural resources, federal programs to encourage environmentally sound agricultural practices, new information tools to improve agricultural policy and implementation, and ways to integrate environmental considerations into farm policy. For more details and a summary of the proceedings, contact the Wallace Center at wallacecenter@winrock.org.

Next Farm Bill Needs to Link Farmers and Business Resources, According to Kate Clancy

The 2002 Farm Bill should include new

funds and programs to link family farmers with existing business resources, according to Kate Clancy, Director of the Wallace Center, who spoke at a recent briefing for congressional officials. Specifically, Dr. Clancy proposed that money be provided for a pilot program integrating the Small Business Administration and Small Business Development Centers with the USDA to create a coordinated program of support for rural communities.

Reacting to the proposal, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, noted that, “More and more farm families are looking for additional income opportunities. It is important to help these businesses obtain the technical help and access to capital they need to get off the ground and build a stronger rural economy.”

Shelly Grow Joins Wallace Center as Program Associate

Shelly Grow has joined the Wallace Center as a Program Associate. She had been an intern with the Wallace Center last year, and has worked part-time since January on the Center’s Agriculture Policy Project. She recently completed her M.S. degree in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, and has a bachelor’s degree in

cross-cultural environmental studies from Grinnell College in Iowa. She is currently finishing consulting work for the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species.

Organic Farming Likely to Continue Fast Growth, Says New USDA Report

Strong market signals for organic agricultural products, along with increasing public and private support for organic farming systems, “make it likely that organic farming will remain a fast-growing segment of U.S. agriculture,” according to a report released recently by the USDA’s Economic Research Service. Certified organic farming systems were used on 1.35 million acres of cropland and pasture in 49 states in 1997, representing a doubling of organic acreage since 1992.

Obstacles to organic farming include “large managerial costs and risks of shifting to a new way of farming, and inability to capture marketing economies,” the report concluded.

U.S. Organic Farming Emerges in the 1990s: Adoption of Certified Systems is available on the Internet at www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib770/aib770.pdf.