



# MESAS Newsletter

Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society

Volume 2, Issue 1

Summer 2002

## Farm Bill Wins and Losses for Sustainable and Organic Agriculture

During the Senate debate on the 2002 farm bill, supporters of sustainable agriculture and family farms were heartened by what looked like possible victories on several initiatives. Unfortunately many of these lost momentum and were defeated during the conference committee negotiations which resulted in a watered-down bill signed into law by President Bush on May 13.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 is a six-year bill that will spend more than \$180 billion over the next decade. The funding includes an additional \$82.5 billion over the previous farm program budget baseline. Conservation spending will get \$17.1 billion over the next decade (an 80% increase), and \$1.03 billion will go for rural development, including incentives to expand ethanol production, \$1.14 billion is for trade, \$405 million for energy programs, and \$1.3 billion in total for research. Payment limitations have been capped at \$360,000.

*"People throughout the nation, in both rural and urban areas, are waking up to the economic and environmental stakes they have in our national farm and food policy. The sustainable agriculture movement has grown much stronger as a result of its work on the farm bill."*

Kathy Lawrence, executive director of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture commends the sustainable agriculture movement for its profound impact on the quality of the farm bill debate, but cannot support the final bill.

In the Campaign's news release, Lawrence minces few words. "The extent to which this farm bill subsidizes the interests of the few in the corporate board rooms over the interests of the many in rural America," she said, "is obscene. By promoting big industry over family farms and ranches, this bill spells trouble for agricultural communities, the environment and consumers."

One of the biggest losses was meaningful payment limitations, approved by the Senate but dropped from the bill, which would have restored a measure of fairness, integrity and equity to farm programs. The Campaign wanted farm programs to "go in the direction of farmers getting a fair price from the marketplace" rather than being dependent on government payments.

Also lost from the final bill was the ban against meatpacker ownership of livestock which would have prevented meatpackers from purchasing livestock from producers prior to slaughter, a practice which allows packers to manipulate markets and prices of cattle, hogs and lamb. Reforms in the forced arbitration clauses of contracts under which many farmers produce for a single processor were also lost; contract farmers remain forbidden to settle disputes through the legal system, although they are now free to share the terms of their contracts with family members and key advisors.

Farm Bill continued on page 4

## Farm Profile

**Smith's Farm**  
Blaine, Maine  
Greg and Lance Smith

Fifth generation Aroostook County farmers Greg Smith and his cousin Lance co-own this large diversified farm in traditional potato country. They grow 6,000 acres of crops, which two years ago consisted of 2,500 in broccoli, 1,000 in potatoes and the rest in grains for rotation (barley, wheat, soybeans and oats). Since then Smith's production has gone to broccoli only. The reason? Smith's wanted to increase their land base and didn't want to make the market-dictated investments needed down the road in both broccoli and potatoes. They decided to specialize and to partner long-term with potato producers who also wanted more production acreage as well as longer rotations. This cross-farm integration of potato-broccoli, like the potato-dairy integration (see our Spring 2002 issue), gives both parties a greater land base without capital expenditure and has "worked very well" for all involved. Rotation with broccoli gives potato producers that brassica fumigation benefit that cuts down on potato diseases. Smith's also has 50 acres of MOFGA-certified organic land in a rotation of wheat, soybeans and broccoli.



Two years ago Smith's partnered formally with a potato grower in Florida in an LLC corporation which makes Smith's "a bigger player in the market" by being able to supply their same markets year-round. Greg thinks this "adds value to the customer and actually adds value to the Maine broccoli."

Like other Aroostook farms, Smith's has been through and come through "hard times." Encouraged by processors in the 1970s, farmers invested heavily in sugar beet production, a deal which went sour all the way around. Next it was French fries, again pushed by processors who moved into the area and out again. "They don't allow the guys to get an acceptable return on their investment," says Greg.

When McCain's wanted more Maine potatoes two years ago, producers didn't jump real fast. "Back then [in the 70s] you

Smith's Farm continued on page 3

## MESAS Board of Directors

**John Dorman**  
Double D Farms  
Exeter, ME

**Scott Howell**  
Under Hill Farm  
Blue Hill, ME

**Rob Johanson**  
Goranson Farm  
Dresden, ME

**Nanney Kennedy**  
Meadowcroft  
Washington, ME

**Dennis King**  
King Hill Farm  
Penobscot, ME

**John Nutting**  
Androscoggin  
Holsteins, Inc.  
Leeds, ME

**John Snell**  
Snell Family Farm  
Bar Mills, ME

**Lee Straw**  
Straw's Farm  
Newcastle, ME

**Adrian Wadsworth**  
River Rise Farm  
North Turner, ME

## President's Message

*By Adrian Wadsworth*

In many ways MESAS is still defining itself as a statewide organization. We are clearly dedicated to helping Maine farmers become more sustainable, but it is sometimes less clear how to accomplish that. Over the next year we will more specifically identify options and opportunities for achieving our goals while recognizing our unique position to act as a bridge between various groups in the state and not duplicating the efforts of other farm organizations. Our non-profit status allows us to work with other non-profits in unique ways.

MESAS has focused on farmer-to-farmer sharing of ideas and innovation through our programs at the trade show, which highlight how farmers are restructuring their businesses to reduce input costs and attract and retain a greater share of the consumer's dollar. SARE funding has allowed us to capture on tape the detailed experiences of some of these Maine farmers so that we can help to educate agricultural professionals, bureaucrats and bankers about these new opportunities. Our summer tour continues to allow us to visit innovative farms and discuss with the farmers how they are taking advantage of their marketing opportunities.

Andrew Files' representation of MESAS on the Agricultural Council of Maine Board of Directors for the past several years allows us to be involved with all of the major commodity and general farm organizations in the state as they discuss state policy and meet with government officials to explore ways to positively impact Maine farmers. Andrew's willingness to be involved has helped raise the awareness of others about our mission and his presence has made AGCOM a more representative organization.

Stew Smith and Andrew Files are part of the new Eat Local Foods Coalition, which promises to help move the local food connection in Maine to a new level. MESAS has also been involved with Common Good Ventures in exploring other possibilities to enhance local market opportunities for Maine farmers. Announcements about these new and exciting projects should be coming out in the next few months.

The MESAS newsletter aims to share what other national organizations are doing to move the case for sustainable agriculture forward. There are farmers all over this country who are questioning the status quo and the fundamental intelligence of an industry that is disconnected from the consumer. To be effectively involved in the political process as an organization or as individual citizens we must have an idea of the nature of the debate.

It is my hope that MESAS can provide a forum for celebrating the successes of Maine farmers, exploring the challenges that we all face, and working on solutions that lead to a stable and secure environment. As we move forward into this new century we will have to think outside of the box, be willing to forge new alliances and find new solutions to old problems. As Albert Einstein said: "The significant problems that we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

Please feel free to contact me with questions, suggestions or criticisms at (207) 224-8296 or [aewadsworth@yahoo.com](mailto:aewadsworth@yahoo.com). ▲

## MESAS Research Committee Meets with Researchers

The MESAS Research Committee, chaired by MESAS board member Nanney Kennedy, met for the fourth year in early April with university, Extension and USDA researchers to discuss farmers' needs for research and researchers' plans and progress. The committee consists of three MESAS farmer reps, one legislative rep and one industry rep and for the past two years the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners have also been represented.

MESAS Executive Director, Stew Smith, reiterated that farmers need research that helps push product prices up and production costs down by reducing off-farm inputs and increasing on-farm marketing services. This can be done with integrated systems based on economies of scope rather than economies of scale.

Eric Sideman, MOFGA's technical advisor, cited the need for information on scale-appropriate weed control for small farms as well as two issues that have arisen from USDA's national organic certification standards. Very little is known about the so-called inert ingredients in pesticide formulations, especially the widely used pyrethrums, since manufacturers' have claimed proprietary secrecy. Pathogen research would also be helpful in assessing (and objecting to) USDA's composting rules, which are based on EPA rules devised two decades ago for controlling pathogens in sewage sludge, not farm manure. Sideman thinks USDA's required C:N ratio and temperature ranges for compost are too narrow and the number of turnings required are excessive.

Marianne Sarrantonio, who heads the sustainable agriculture degree program in Orono, is running vegetable cropping systems trials, looking at soil quality and weed control with trials at Colson's New Leaf Farm in Durham, Maine. She is also doing cover cropping trials at the Rogers Farm and a broader project which is highlighting the biological and economic performances of organic farms in the Northeast.

The Potato Ecosystem Project remains Greg Porter's primary focus with other projects looking at different levels of integration with cropping and manure amendments as well as crop rotation, nutrient uptake, soil physical properties and a potato breeding program which will bring a number of late blight-resistant and insect-resistant varieties to the market soon.

At the request of the Maine Potato Board, Tim Griffin, research agronomist with USDA/ARS, is looking at the potential for brassicas to control powdery scab and other diseases in potatoes and has a number of on-farm trials taking place. He is also looking at

nutrient cycling with and without a livestock component and the effect that cropping practices versus amendment practices have on soil properties.

Eric Gallandt, Assistant Professor of Weed Ecology and Management, is exploring the potential of mustard and rye for weed management as well as cover-cropping practices and how they influence invertebrate weed seed predators. His aim is to

*Research continued on page 5*

probably had 2,500 farmers," says Greg, "and today you have about 700 growers. They are business people. They're there because they've gone through the tough times and they understand the numbers.... Growers today are producing on the basis of being efficient.... They've had to be lean and mean.... They don't have excess equipment, they don't have extra land, and they don't have that excess storage."

*The traditional way of marketing Maine's crops has been in price, but Smith's has found "it isn't all price. It's service, it's quality, and it's attitude. It's how you deal with your buyers," says Greg.*

### **Sustainable Survival**

"When we talk about sustainability we refer to it as land and land base and fertility," says Greg. "Being a farmer, that's my first sustainability. On the next level you have sustainability on the financial side.... It takes adjustments on both levels.... So if you can stay agile enough on the financial side and make the adjustments as you go [rather than in giant leaps] then it's sustainable.... The position we were in in the 80s, we couldn't afford to get out of it and couldn't afford to make the adjustments."

In the early 90s they hired a management consultant who insisted they formalize the planning process, which "brought a whole new aspect to the business, a lot of advantages that we hadn't considered.... We sold off the truck stop and the restaurant... made some organizational changes... sold off some of our forest and reduced debt."

Sustainability on the production side is achieved through attention to variety selection, soil tith, organic matter, and erosion control. Rotations are customized according to the needs of a particular field, farm-produced compost boosts low productivity areas, cover crops and slash-and-ridge reduce erosion, and Integrated Pest Management plus tricks learned from the organics fine-tunes pesticide applications.

The traditional way of marketing Maine's crops has been in price, but Smith's has found "it isn't all price. It's service, it's quality, and it's attitude. It's how you deal with your buyers," says Greg. "If we protect them, if we help our customers grow, help solve their problems, then we're going to grow with them," and everyone benefits on the price side. "In bad price years," says Greg, "buyers don't take us to the low lows, and on high-price years we don't take them to the high highs."

Diversification into broccoli and organic production began in the early 80s. When Greg visited California's broccoli country, he noted that marginal broccoli packed with plenty of ice sold better than perfect broccoli with no ice. Although in Maine's northern market it was assumed that ice wasn't necessary, Smith's found it a critical marketing tool. So they leased icing equipment, put extra money into a "sharp looking box," and "turned some heads" in the market for the critical first impression. They shipped 60,000 to 75,000 cartons the first year and one million in 2000.

Another head-turning venture came out of Smith's cull chute where heads without stems that couldn't be bunched went home with employees or into the compost. Smith's found a market 15 years ago, first in New York's Asian district, and today these broccoli "crowns" are a premium product sold in supermarkets everywhere.

### **Growth**

Part of the drive behind growth at Smith's Farm "comes out of necessity, or the market demands it," says Greg, "but some of it

comes from the make-up of the people." He and Lance are always looking at the next venture and employees are always looking at ways of improving and growing too. "I think an operation of this size, if you're not growing at a certain rate, then you're dying at a certain rate." But growth on such a scale is not necessary for survival. Greg's neighbor who's been producing seed potatoes for years has expanded very little. "He is probably making a decent living," says Greg, "and putting money away every year so he can have a decent retirement when he's done. He does it very modestly... I look at that and respect that and envy it at times."

### **Globalization and Competition**

For 50 years Maine farmers struggled to protect Eastern markets from subsidized Canadian imports, and Smith's Farm was among them. "But we finally decided there wasn't a lot we could do about it," recalls Greg, "other than figure out how we could do better, more efficiently, and meet them head on in the markets. Since we've taken that attitude and done it, it's worked, and today it appears that we can compete."

*"We need to preserve the farmland of Maine and the country. And the best most economically feasible way of doing that is to make farming viable.... Once the farmland is built to houses, you've lost it. You've lost it forever."*

Smith's has sold products in South America, the Caribbean, England, Scotland and Canada. "We only go into a country when they have a need for it [as when England and Spain needed broccoli]... otherwise they produce their own food.... They want to feed their own people. Sometimes I question whether the U.S. wants to feed their own people or they just want to buy the cheaper food from other countries.

"I always remember Dad talking about the cheap food policy in the U.S.," says Greg, "but if the American consumer wants to buy their food as cheap as they can, that's a short-term outlook." In the long term, says Greg, "we need to preserve the farmland of Maine and the country. And the best most economically feasible way of doing that is to make farming viable.... Once the farmland is built to houses, you've lost it. You've lost it forever."

Greg thinks selling development rights to the state and selling the land to another farmer would help, but Maine's program concentrates on southern Maine where development pressure is more intense. He also thinks the Maine Department of Agriculture needs to advocate for Maine growers on both the marketing and production side and "sell Maine agriculture to Maine people first. I don't think we've done that well until the last few years. All I heard for 15 years was bad news about agriculture in Maine" led by potatoes. But Greg thinks that's changed. "Growers have done some things they needed to do in fertility and storage and I don't think anybody can argue that in the last three years Maine has produced the best processing potato in North America.... There are other pieces out there too... a lot of little growers doing vegetables for the consumer.... Something that's as important as agriculture that actually brings money into the state, that's a key part of the health of the state."

Another issue debated for years is over the Prestile Stream watershed where 95 percent of the land is controlled by farmers. The stream quality is much improved since the 60s when it "ran purple" from pollution. Now EPA wants to upgrade it even more, and five government agencies, each with their own interests, are butting heads and going in the direction of dictating what farmers

can and cannot do. The farmers advocate sedimentation ponds that intercept runoff before it reaches the stream. Farmers could use the ponds for irrigation and remove sediment and return it to the fields. "Any time soil goes down the stream," says Greg, "that's soil I'll never see...They [the agencies] seem to want to put up roadblocks more than they want to help you solve the problems."

### **Optimism**

Greg believes that to be successful at farming, "you've got to have a passion for it. You have to understand it and enjoy it." And you have to be an optimist. Speaking on the state of Maine agriculture, Greg told legislators, "I'm an optimistic person and I'll tell you why I think I am. I'll tell you what I do.

"I go out every spring in May. I take a million dollars and I bury it in the dirt. And if Mother Nature does everything that she's supposed to do, and I've done everything right up to that point, and all comes up in good shape, I'll put another million dollars into nurturing that crop and taking care of it and getting it into storage. And if I've done everything right up to that point and I've got it in storage, now I'll take a third million dollars and I'll put it into taking care of it, packaging it and marketing it. I'll do all of that in hopes that somebody is going to pay me \$3 million and one dollar so I can go back and do it again next year." ▲

### **Farm Bill** *continued from page 1*

The Rural Entrepreneurs and Microenterprise Assistance Program, included in the Senate bill but dropped by the conferees, would have helped low and moderate income people acquire skills and financing to start small rural businesses and access technical assistance after start-up.

The fight for limits on Environmental Quality Incentive Program payments, which subsidize waste management costs for livestock producers, now has a \$450,000 cap per producer over the 6-year life of the bill. The Campaign thinks this is "obscenely high" but it's better than the \$1 million the conferees preferred. Smaller caps would discourage the concentration of livestock production in huge confinement operations by forcing industry, not the taxpayer, to pay the cost of meeting environmental standards.

The biggest single win for sustainable agriculture in the 2002 Farm Bill is the Conservation Security Program established under the Conservation Security Act. This is the first conservation program set up as an entitlement for any who qualifies. The program rewards the practices used and the environmental benefits derived from those practices rather than the crops or livestock being produced as is the case in commodity payment programs.

Other smaller victories include: 1) restoration of food stamp benefits to legal immigrants; 2) country of origin labeling of meat, fruits, vegetables, peanuts and farm-raised fish, which will be voluntary this year and next but mandatory in the third year; 3) how an item is produced (grass-fed, free range, organic, etc.) now qualifies as value-added for the purposes of the Value-Added Market Development Program to help smaller farmers increase farm income through value-added strategies; 4) Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) including WIC and Senior FMNP authorized for six years with \$15 million per year; 5) improvements and increases in farmworker assistance programs; and 6) the Farmers Market Promotion Program provides grants to establish, expand and promote farmers' markets, but funding is discretionary. Funding for the Initiative for Future Agricultural

and Food Systems (IFAFS), will increase from \$120 million per year to \$200 million by year six for a total of \$1.3 billion in new mandatory funding. (MESAS is currently participating in an IFAFS-funded research project involving researchers at the University of Maine, Iowa State University and Michigan State University.)

Significant gains won by the organic agricultural industry include \$15 million for research in organic agriculture, \$5 million in organic certification cost-share to assist producers and handlers of agricultural products in obtaining certification under the National Organic Program established under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, exemptions from federal marketing orders for growers of 100% organic products, and other initiatives facilitating research and public reports of organic marketing and production.

The Organic Research Initiative will provide \$15 million of mandatory funding to be spent at \$3 million a year for 5 years. It expands the organic agriculture research and extension initiative to include on-farm research and development for working organic farms, determination of desirable traits for organic commodities, and identification of marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture. The \$15 million dollars is truly unprecedented for organic agriculture but pales in comparison to the \$180 billion total estimated cost of the farm bill. The language of the initiative makes two significant points: that Congress's intent is that this not be considered the only funding vehicle for organic research, and that it is their intent that organic be considered a legitimate priority of all USDA REE programs.

The issues of greatest debate among the committee conferees were all included in the Senate bill and "all were issues that the grassroots put on the table and which the conferees could not ignore," said Lawrence. Though many were lost in conference, "the wheels of change have been set in motion," she said. "People throughout the nation, in both rural and urban areas, are waking up to the economic and environmental stakes they have in our national farm and food policy. The sustainable agriculture movement has grown much stronger as a result of its work on the farm bill." The Campaign's work will continue during rulemaking and implementation and into the next round of federal food and agriculture debates, which Lawrence expects in two to three years, rather than six. ▲

*Source: National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, Organic Farming Research Foundation*

## **Summer Outdoor Farm Events**

**J**uly 28: Open Farm Days. Seventy farms throughout the state open for visitors, rain or shine. Obtain description and location of farms in brochures at Shop 'n Save stores, at [www.gettrealmaine.com](http://www.gettrealmaine.com), or call Jeannie Mathews at (207) 287-3491.

**A**ugust 5, 1:00-8:00 MESAS Annual Farm Tour. Visit three farms in York County, van transportation and evening supper. For info contact Andrew Files at (207) 5810-1853 or [andrew.files@umit.maine.edu](mailto:andrew.files@umit.maine.edu).

**A**ugust 20 and 21, 9:00-4:00: Maine Farm Days. Trade show at the Dostie Farm on Route 104 in Fairfield Center. See conservation practices, equipment demos, weed control and corn trials, rotating milking parlor, wagon tours, children's learning center. For more info: NRCS Somerset office (207) 474-8324.

## Maine Groups Preserving Farming

It is heartening to see the many ways in which the nascent back-to-the-land movement of the 60s and 70s, led by young people who had much to learn about farming, marketing, policy and organizing, has matured. Groups and programs such as Maine Farmland Trust, Maine FarmLink, Land for Maine's Future, and the Eat Local Foods Coalition display a level of expertise and effectiveness only hoped for 30 years ago.

### Maine FarmLink

Maine FarmLink was launched last year by Maine Farmland Trust, MOFGA, the Maine Department of Agriculture, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the Maine Agricultural Center to deter the loss of Maine's farmland to its "highest and best use" as housing lots and shopping malls. FarmLink connects farmers who are looking to retire or sell, but wish to see their farms remain active, with people who would like to farm. The program is modeled after similar efforts underway throughout the nation.

Application information provided by sellers and prospective buyers is entered into a database. When possible links are identified, the FarmLink coordinator contacts both parties who then work out the details of the agreement. It is suggested that sellers consider alternatives to immediate purchase, such as work-in options and long-term leases, which increase affordability for prospective buyers as well as a chance to learn how the farm is run. FarmLink is compiling a list of advisors and resource people that applicants can call upon for information about various aspects and types of transfer arrangements. The program currently has 35 farms and 17 prospective farmers in the database. Three years of funding for a one-day-a-week FarmLink coordinator was granted by Maine Farmland Trust.

### Maine Farmland Trust

Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) is a coalition of farmers and others who are working to retain Maine farmland as farmland. The group has moved quickly from informal beginnings in March 1999 to state incorporation, federal non-profit status and fundraising activities by the end of that year. Last August they hired a part-time executive director, attorney LuAnna Perkins, who had been a homesteader with her family in Alaska and Penobscot, Maine before entering law school.

MFT raises awareness among farmers and farmland owners that there are options to selling out to subdivisions in order to recoup their equity in their land. MFT also works with conservation land trusts to help them understand the difference between conservation easements, which preserve land in its present state, and easements on working farmland that must allow for flexibility in the types of management choices that farmers must make. Perkins frames the legal language for such working-land easements.

When landowners donate easements to land trusts, they are giving up some of the value of their land. Where commercial or residential development pressures are great, as in southern Maine, that value may be quite significant. Where pressure is not quite as great, easements are more affordable. Easements, however, are not the only way of preserving farmland, and not always the best. In some instances estate planning can be "an excellent land protection tool," says Perkins, who gives MFT-sponsored estate planning workshops around the state to help guide landowners and farmers through the process.

MFT also participated in the strategic planning process as part of an agricultural stakeholders' group convened by the Maine Department of Agriculture and funded partly by the State Planning Office to develop a state strategic plan for farmland

protection. The group hired an American Farmland Trust consultant to help steer them through developing a plan for Maine farmland protection, which is soon to be released. "That's been a real good move forward on the policy front," says Perkins. "We've also helped refine and continue refining the Farmland Protection Project under the Land for Maine's Future bond, a program that was difficult for farmland owners to navigate."

### Land for Maine's Future

The Land for Maine's Future bond issue was initially designed to purchase development rights on scenic and recreational properties. The last round of the bond issue set aside \$5 million for purchasing development rights from farmers, effectively paying them to restrict their land to disallow subdivision for residential or commercial purposes and to retain their land as farmland.

MFT President Frank Miles says purchasing development rights is "just a stop-gap measure for prime land or critical pieces of land in certain areas. There just isn't enough money to buy development

*Preserving farming continued on page 6*

### Research continued from page 2

decrease the size of the seed bank of weeds in the soil and to find effective low-input strategies for weed control that, in contrast to intensive cultivation, do not adversely affect long-term soil health.

Ken Andries' work with livestock will evaluate the production needs of red deer and of beef cattle (Angus and Belted Galloway) at the Whitter Farm. He is also interested in exploring the potential that rotational grazing of stocker calves in a grass-based system may have in the production of "choice" grade beef.

Wayne Honeycutt, Research Leader with the Orono USDA/ARS New England Plant, Soil, and Water Laboratory, says one-third of their resources focus on improving the efficiency of nutrient use in manure amended soils. About two-thirds are used to develop cropping systems and management practices for the Northeast that are profitable, efficiently use nutrients and water, and control pathogens/insects/weeds with minimal chemical inputs. Their research ranges from basic to applied and he asks farmers and farm groups to contact him about their research needs and interests.

Throughout the meeting it was clear that all participants were open to collaborating on projects of mutual interest, although with the exception of Ken Andries' interest in "choice" beef, little of the marketing side of the ledger was represented. Not even the most efficient, sophisticated, ecologically sustainable production methods are or have been keeping farmers in business. In that regard Nanney Kennedy stressed the need for work in the area of value-added processing.

The MESAS research committee has recently lost its legislative and industry rep members as people have gone elsewhere, even out of state. Anyone interested in filling those positions should contact Adrian Wadsworth at (207) 224-8296 or [aewadsworth@yahoo.com](mailto:aewadsworth@yahoo.com). Readers may contact any of the above researchers through the University at (207) 581-1110. ▲

### MESAS Mentoring Program

We still have approximately 20 established sustainable farmers who are willing to work in a mentoring capacity with farmers who want to learn. Anyone who might like to lend a hand in getting the program rolling at the administrative end should give Andrew Files a call. Anyone interested in participating as a mentor or farmer should also contact Andrew at 5782 Winslow Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5782, phone: (207) 581-3135, e-mail: [andrew.files@umit.maine.edu](mailto:andrew.files@umit.maine.edu). ▲

Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society  
The University of Maine  
5782 Winslow Hall  
Orono, Maine 04469-5782  
Phone: (207) 581-3135  
e-mail: [andrew.files@umit.maine.edu](mailto:andrew.files@umit.maine.edu)

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 8  
ORONO, ME

The Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society is a nonprofit organization of farmers and others who support the sustainable agriculture concept and its application to the production of food and other agricultural products. Our mission is to explore, develop and promote agricultural systems and practices that allow Maine farmers to retain a greater share of consumer expenditures for farm products.

The MESAS Newsletter is published 4 times a year by the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society. This issue is supported by funds from the Northeast SARE program of the USDA cooperative agreement 99-COOP-1-7416. To be placed on the mailing list contact MESAS through the addresses on the mailing label. All other correspondence should be sent to Pamela Bell, Editor, MESAS Newsletter, 638 Main Road, Milford, ME 04461 or call Pamela Bell, (207) 827-5688. We welcome ideas and input of all types from readers.

**Preserving Farming** *continued from page 5*

rights for all of Maine's land, or the nation's. The best way to preserve farmland in perpetuity is to make farming profitable." Toward that end MFT, with a board of directors which reads like a who's who of progressive Maine agriculture, is also involved in marketing initiatives like the Eat Local Foods Coalition.

**Eat Local Foods Coalition**

The Eat Local Foods Coalition (ELFC) is a group of several Maine organizations working to promote the purchase and consumption of locally produced food. Still in its early development stage, ELFC has committed this year to evaluating farmers' markets in order to understand the challenges and devise programs to improve these direct-marketing outlets that make farming profitable for many small farmers.

All of these groups and activities rely heavily on volunteer work, taxpayer financing or private foundation funding and thus depend heavily upon effective educational efforts that reach beyond the already converted. "We have to find people who really like agriculture and have funds to give away," says Miles. Most would agree that we also have to find people who really like agriculture and have time and energy to contribute to these efforts.

*Contacts: Maine FarmLink, Coordinator Susie O'Keefe, (207) 469-6465 or 568-4160 or [www.state.me.us/agriculture/mpd/farmlink](http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/mpd/farmlink);  
Maine Farmland Trust, PO Box 1597, Bucksport, ME 04416, (207) 469-6465; Eat Local Foods Coalition, Russell Libby, MOFGA Executive Director, P.O. Box 170, Unity, ME 04988, (207) 568-4142.*

**JOIN MESAS**  
**for sustainable agriculture**

**Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society**  
**The University of Maine**  
**5782 Winslow Hall**  
**Orono, Maine 04469-5782**

- Farmer Member—I depend on farming activities for a substantial portion of my livelihood.
- Support Member—I support sustainable agriculture and will receive all MESAS privileges except voting rights.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town

State

Zip