IAA to co-sponsor seminars for extension agents

Two workshops designed to train Cooperative Extension Service agents in techniques of low-input, diversified farming and community resource management will be co-sponsored by the Institute for Alternative Agriculture and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) in the late fall of 1987.

The first workshop will be held at the Agricenter International in Memphis, Tennessee; the second is scheduled for Bozeman, Montana. Each three-day workshop will include presentations on low-energy agriculture, management of rotations and legumes, soil and water conservation, ground water pollution and its control, alternative crops, diversified marketing, and community planning around local resources.

County and state agents from multistate areas in the Southeast and West will be invited, as will soil conservationists, farmers, rural organizations, and community planners. Speakers will include university and national experts as well as specialists from the Institute for Alternative Agriculture, NCAT, the American Farmland Trust, and other groups.

The National Center for Appropriate Technology, the primary sponsor of the workshops, is a private, nonprofit corporation which works to encourage technologies that use natural resources in an efficient, environmentally and socially sound way. The workshops are part of NCAT's efforts to develop a national system for disseminating information on low-input, diversified farming and community resource management. The proposed NCAT system, called the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), has been named for $500,000 of U.S. funding by the 1987 Agriculture Appropriations Act.

Papendick receives soil scientist award

Robert I. Papendick, a member of the editorial board of the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* and an international authority on soil and water management with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was named Area Scientist of the Year in 1986. He received $15,000 to help support his research.

Papendick was honored by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for "exceptional research leadership and outstanding contributions in dryland water management, plant-water-microbial relationships and erosion control."

Papendick's research reversed textbook theory on managing water in dry areas and impacted 5 million acres of wheatland in the Pacific Northwest alone. He showed that farmers could slow down evaporation during dry, hot summers by maintaining a loose soil mulch over the seedbed. Previous thought--based on moist, Midwest conditions--was that such a layer would quicken evaporation.

Papendick is also widely known for his research on no-till seeding for erosion control in the Pacific Northwest. He recognized that no-till, or not disturbing the soil before seeding, is the only practical solution for erosion control in the highly erodible Palouse area of eastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and northern Idaho.

Papendick, who has been with ARS for 21 years, heads the Land Management and Water Conservation laboratory in Pullman, Washington.

IAA newsletter for extension agents published

A special monthly Institute newsletter designed to carry information about alternative agricultural methods to the nation's 3,000 county extension directors and area specialists began publication in January, 1987. "This newsletter is designed to provide information on research, publications, events, and initiatives that will be helpful to agents and specialists at the county and state level," said IAA Executive Director Garth Youngberg. The *Alternative Agriculture Resources Report* will be mailed gratis to extension personnel for one year under a grant from the Ruth Mott Fund. Subscriptions to the newsletter are also available to others at a cost of $16 per year ($14 for IAA members).

Pesticides miss pests, Pimentel says

Of the approximately 500 million kilograms of pesticides applied in the United States, often less than 0.1% of those applied to crops actually reaches target pests, concludes Cornell scientist David Pimentel in an article published in BioScience in 1986. Over 99% moves into the ecosystem without damaging pests.

Research is needed to develop better means of targeting pesticides to pests, Pimentel argues. Improved application technology could help reduce pesticide use by at least half without diminishing the effectiveness of pest control. Pimentel points to major economic, environmental, and public health benefits that would flow from such research.

Agenda set for IAA ground water protection symposium

Dr. George Hallberg of the Iowa Geological Survey will present an overview of issues related to agricultural chemicals in ground water at the March 3, 1987 IAA Symposium on "Ground Water Protection: Potential for Avoiding Contamination by Agricultural Chemicals." Dr. Stuart Cohen, manager of the ground water program at Biospherics, Inc., in Rockville, MD, will discuss the development of a national strategy for ground water protection.

A farmer viewpoint of the issues will be given by Kansas farmer John Vogelsberg and Indiana farmer Jess Andrew, who will speak on opportunities and obstacles in farming with less chemicals. An overview of alternative production and protection systems will be presented by Dr. Robert Papendick from the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Pullman, Washington, and Dr. George Bird from Michigan State University. Research, information, and policy needs for ground water protection will be addressed by Dr. Robert Miller from North Carolina State University, Dr. Charles Francis from the University of Nebraska, and Dr. Charles Abdalla from Pennsylvania State University.

"The symposium will present a full range of constructive and workable management alternatives for solving the problem of ground water contamination within the context of modern production agriculture," says IAA Executive Director Garth Youngberg. The symposium will address regulation, but focus on the contribution of economically viable, low-input production systems that largely exclude the use of toxic agricultural chemicals.

The one-day event will be held on March 3, 1987 in the conference room of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Washington, DC. For registration information, contact the Institute for Alternative Agriculture, 9200 Edmondston Road, Suite 117, Greenbelt, MD 20770.

RESOURCES

Ground water protection agenda published

An agenda for protection of ground water that includes some major alternative directions for agriculture has been published by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute in Washington, DC. The agenda calls for national farm policy and USDA efforts aimed at promoting "realistic" crop yields while reducing the use of agricultural chemicals. Overuse of farm fertilizers and pesticides are cited as a major source of ground water contamination in rural areas.

In an idea based on new federal soil conservation regulations, the report recommends that sound nutrient and pest management programs should be required for participation in federal farm support programs. The Extension Service should focus on overall profitability and resource protection rather than simply high production levels, the report says.

Copies of *Ground Water Protection* are available for $5 from EESI, Suite 200, 410 First Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003.

Sourcebook on alternative agriculture in universities

A description of sustainable agriculture programs and courses in 18 major U.S. universities has been published by the Wisconsin Rural Development Center. Listings include current programs and future plans. Names of contact persons are given. Copies of the 56-page *Sustainable Agriculture Research Sourcebook* are available for $4 from the Rural Development Center at P.O. Box 504, Black Earth, WI 53515-0504.

1987 organic supply directory available

The 1987 Organic Wholesalers Directory, listing over 200 wholesalers, distributors, and manufacturers of organic food and farm supplies in the U.S. and Canada, is now available. The price is $19 (plus $1.75 for shipping) from the California Agrarian Action Project, P.O. Box 464, Davis, CA 95617.

Organic methods booklet published in Australia

Small-Scale Farming and Horticulture, a 75-page guide to strategies for organic growers, has been published by the Organic Growers' Association of Wembley, Australia. Basic principles, some practical guidelines, and references to Australian sources of information are featured. Contact Jeanette Conacher, Organic Growers' Association, W.A., Inc., P.O. Box 213, Wembley, W.A. 6014, Australia.

Drinking water booklet from Kansas Rural Center

A 28-page practical and easily readable booklet - *Is Your Water Safe to Drink?* - answers questions about drinking water in Kansas. Topics include what toxins might be in the water, effects of drinking contaminated water, state programs for protection, and methods of testing and treating water. Copies are $1 each from Kansas Rural Center, 304 Pratt Street, Box 133, Whiting, KS 66552.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0889189300001351 Published online by Cambridge University Press