

# Science for Sustainability Working Group



## 2004 Highlights

The Science for Sustainable (S4S) Working Group formed in 2002 to advance the knowledge and application of sustainability principles in CSREES programs and procedures. Comprised of program leaders and specialists whose programs encompass sustainability in agriculture, communities, and forestry, the S4S team and individual members completed or initiated several projects in 2004 which better position the agency and its partners to serve stakeholders who are interested in and committed to sustainability. This summary highlights some of the S4S accomplishments in 2004. For a more complete listing of projects, contact the S4S Working Group Coordinator, **Alexandra Raver**.



## S4S: Providing Sustainability Leadership for CSREES

**A major focus of the working group's effort in 2004 was to broaden and deepen the agency's understanding of the principles of sustainability**

The **S4S Working Group** planned and conducted a series of seminars that increased awareness of sustainable systems and issues. Topics in the seven-part series included:

- Policy Implications for Different Farming Systems
- Land and Community Toolbox
- Ecological Visions: A Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan of Ecological Research, Education and Outreach
- Advancing the Implementation of Sustainability Forestry Principles through a University Partnership
- Intensive Rice Systems
- Higher Education for a Sustainable Future
- Chefs A 'Field

S4S members **Greg Crosby** and **Lisa Duriancik** developed a "Sustainable Development" web page that serves as a gateway for linking to other resources and opportunities.

A CSREES grant-funded workshop, "Advancing Science for Sustainability", was conceived and conducted by the **S4S Working Group**. This effort resulted in nearly 50 public and private sector leaders in sustainability participating in a two-day workshop describing CSREES Sustainability Programs and providing stakeholder input which broadened and deepened the agency's programmatic commitment to sustainability.

**S4S Working Group** members provided the leadership for recruiting, screening and interviewing candidates from universities for a temporary position to expand the agency's leadership in organic production systems. A selection was made, resulting in the hiring of **Dr. James Kotcon**, West Virginia University, for the one-year position.

A new NRI program, "Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities" was developed by S4S members and implemented by the Competitive Programs unit. **Diana Jerkins** and **Siva Sureshwaran** provide leadership for the program.

To ensure that sustainable and organic agriculture was well-presented in the Plant Protection Portfolio Review for the PART, working group members recruited **Dr. Jerry DeWitt**, Iowa State University, a scientist and former IPA with a career-long connection to sustainable agriculture.

S4S members **Mary Ann Rozum**, **Greg Crosby** and **Eric Norland** served on the committee that proposed revisions to the current classification system and provided recommendations on better incorporation of sustainability concepts.



## S4S: Outreach into USDA

### Beyond the work within the agency, S4S members provided significant contributions to these USDA projects



S4S members **Jill Auburn** and **Diana Jerkins** led discussions with USDA-ARS about a jointly-funded IPA that would support sustainable agriculture research in both agencies. These discussions grew out of the recommendations of the Multi-Agency Committee to Strengthen and Enhance the Collaborative Relationship Between ARS and CSREES.



S4S member **Carmela Bailey** participated in the USDA team which implemented the Farm Bill - Section 9002 - Federal Procurement of Bio-Based Products. This involved developing procurement policies which were published in the Federal Register. Dr. Bailey also developed an exhibit on sustainable energy development for the Secretary of Agriculture's ministerial Conference on Agricultural Science and Technology in Sacramento, CA.

S4S member **Greg Crosby** was a USDA delegate to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in New York. Several other S4S members assisted in drafting the United States position papers.



S4S members **Greg Crosby, Jill Auburn, Sally Maggard** and **Eric Norland** provided extensive support to the USDA Council on Sustainable Development, including organizing council seminars and contributing to the Council's discussions about strategic directions. CSREES is also providing assistance in redesigning the council's website.



## S4S: Expanding our Reach Through Partnerships

### The creation and maintenance of partnerships is a key strategy of the working group in order to expand our reach.

S4S member **Greg Crosby** provided leadership for one of the partnerships that emerged from the World Summit on Sustainable Development. My Community, Our Earth: Geographic Learning for Sustainable Development (MyCOE) resulted in 200 projects submitted by students from over 27 countries;

a cadre of 517 volunteer mentor experts from 63 countries; 2,091 resources kits distributed; 10 student projects displayed at the WSSD in 2002 and other international venues; a documentary video produced in Spanish and English; a 2005 website for student project work; new linkages to the U.S.

- Caribbean Area White Water to Blue Water Partnership; and new partners such as NOAA and the Office of Naval Research.



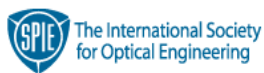
## S4S: Expanding our Reach Through Partnerships (continued)

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CSREES and the Forest Service jointly funded the university-based Sustainable Forestry Partnership which was appointed by the Forest Service as Co-Chair of the National Roundtable on Sustainable Forests. S4S member **Eric Norland** served as the coordinator of this effort and continues to function as an official liaison between CSREES and the Forest Service.



A white paper, "Turning Small Snapshots into a Bigger Picture for Sustainability," was authored by working group member **Dan Schmoltdt** and presented as a keynote address at the "Remote Sensing and Modeling of Ecosystems for Sustainability" conference during the 2004 Annual Meeting of the International Society of Optical Engineering.



The National Sustainable Living Network was established during the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). **Greg Crosby** continues to serve as the agency contact and coordinates a national listserv and periodic conference calls of the network.



As a result of **Greg Crosby's** participation and leadership, CSREES is one of the major partners in the planning and funding of the Conservation Learning Summit in the fall of 2006. This meeting will be hosted by the Paul F-Brandwein Foundation. It will focus on: career mentoring and nourishment of future leaders that lead to conservation careers; articulating the transformation from conservation to the environment to sustainability; and defining future knowledge and skill sets needed for the conservation workforce of the 21st century.



S4S members **Greg Crosby** and **Diana Jerkins** were involved in planning and conducting the Sustainability Summit and leading discussion groups about next steps and future directions. A direct outcome of the summit and CSREES involvement is the formation of the Federal Sustainability Council. The Summit was sponsored by Office of the Federal Environmental Executive and U.S. EPA.



S4S members **Alexandra Raver** and **Diana Jerkins** participated in Ecoagriculture Partners, an international group which formed at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. This has resulted in opportunities to share information about CSREES programs and accomplishments with a variety of national and international organizations, including a July 2005, invited presentation to the DC chapter by **Jill Auburn**.

S4S member **Greg Crosby** and **Dan Kugler** participated in the formation of the U.S. LandCare Initiative resulting in the designation of CSREES as a LandCare Pioneer by the national LandCare Steering Committee. S4S member **Michael Bowers** is participating in the strategic planning effort for US LandCare.



# About the S4S Working Group

The S4S Work Group meets the afternoon of the first Wednesday of every other month, provided there are agenda items. Working group communication and coordination is accomplished on the S4S listserv. Everyone who is interested in and leads programs that relate to sustainability is invited to attend the meetings and participate on the listserv. To join the listserv, contact **Alexandra Raver**, [araver@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:araver@csrees.usda.gov)

## **S4S Working Group Members**

### Competitive Programs

Leslie Gilbert  
Pat Hipple  
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Alexandra Raver  
Siva Sureshwaran  
Andrew Wilson

### Economic and Community Systems

Jill Auburn  
Fen Hunt  
Sally Maggard  
Patricia McAleer

### Families, 4-H and Nutrition

Mary Gray  
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### Natural Resources and Environment

Greg Crosby  
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### Office of the Administrator

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### Science and Education Resources Development

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