



ATTRA techs study 'Label Rouge'

American team hopes to import French poultry system to U.S.

Two ATTRA technical specialists are visiting France this month to study how free-range poultry is grown and marketed there under a national certification system known as "Label Rouge." They hope to import French innovations in production and marketing to the growing pastured-poultry movement in the U.S.



Anne Fanatico and Holly Born are among a group of five Americans who have received a small grant from the USDA Scientific Cooperation Research Program to make two trips to farms and research organizations around Le Mans, France. Their host and guide for the initial trip from May 16-25 is Dr. Bertil Sylvander of the French National Agricultural Research Institute.

Sylvander is an agricultural economist and expert in Label Rouge production.

'Red Label'

"Label Rouge, which means 'Red Label', began as a grassroots movement in France forty years ago," Fanatico explains. "Under this national certification program, French farmers make use of specialty poultry genetics, processing and marketing techniques to command thirty percent of the poultry market at a one-hundred-percent premium price."

The U.S. group hopes to use the information on Label Rouge to draft standards for a national certification program here. Such a system could greatly expand markets for U.S. pastured-poultry producers who are limited by the number of birds they can realistically grow and market on the farm.

Fanatico has over the past two years has participated in two SARE-funded projects in partnership with Heifer Project International on pastured-poultry research in the U.S. She is the author of the popular handbook, *Pastured Poultry: A Heifer Project International Case Study Booklet*, and is working on a doctorate in poultry science at the University of Arkansas.

◆ (See Label Rouge page 4)

President suggests level sus ag funding in FY2002

The Bush Administration is recommending level funding for most sustainable agriculture programs in FY2002. However, the presidential budget provides no funds for the Wetlands Reserve Program or Conservation Security Payments. FY2002 federal budget recommendations by the U.S. Senate and House have not been issued. Markup in the house is

expected in early June.

The 2002 budget provides that \$30 million for the Fund for Rural America be allocated after the enactment of the FY2002 Appropriations Act, within the discretion granted by Congress to the Secretary of Agriculture.

President Bush has recommended the same funding levels as FY2001 for:

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), \$2 million
Community Food Security Act, \$2.5 million
Environmental Quality Incentives Program, \$174 million
Implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act, \$1.6 million
Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems, \$120 million
SARE (Chapter 3) Professional Development Program, \$3.8 million
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, \$9.3 million

News briefs

Eco-labels article available

Eco-labeled Foods: Profit or Problems?, an article by ATTRA technical specialists Al Kurki and Nancy Matheson, explores a new palette of options for farmers and ranchers who want to move away from raising conventional, undifferentiated crops or livestock to something more highly valued by consumers.

According to studies conducted by market researchers in the last five years, about half of U.S. food consumers are motivated to varying degrees to buy "green" or "earth-sustainable" foods.

In addition, European and Asian consumers are buying increasing amounts of food labeled organically grown or raised using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approaches that minimize pesticide use. But how does anybody begin to make sense of these "green" markets, and what is their potential for profit or problems? The article focuses on some possible answers.

For a free copy of *Eco-labeled Foods: Profit or Problems?*, contact ATTRA at 1-800-346-9140.

New Ikerd papers

Well-known sustainable agriculture proponent and speaker John Ikerd has made available abstracts of 19 new papers which include two series — "The New American Farm" and "Sustaining People through Agriculture." They are available at: www.ssu.missouri.edu/faculty/jikerd.

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Multispecies grazing: Better use of pastures, increased productivity

By Linda Coffey

ATTRA Program Specialist

Multispecies grazing—grazing more than one livestock species on the same land—is the type of grazing evident in nature. It deserves to be more widely used in agriculture, as well. This article will offer a brief look at why multispecies grazing is beneficial for animals, land, and producers.

Cattle prefer to eat grass rather than other types of plants, and are less selective than sheep or goats when grazing. Sheep prefer forbs (broad-leaved plants) to grass, and goats have a preference for browsing on brush and shrubs, and then eating broad-leaved weeds. Therefore, grazing cattle, sheep, and goats together on a diverse pasture should result in all types of plants being eaten, thus controlling weeds and brush, while yielding more pounds of gain per acre compared to single-species grazing.

Greater use of pastures

Multispecies grazing may also benefit pastures that are less diverse, by encouraging more even grazing. Cattle will tend to graze taller grasses that sheep may reject. It has been shown that sheep graze near manure deposits, which cattle avoid; this too results in more even use of the pasture. Carrying capacity and pasture productivity are improved, and animal gains are also increased.

The addition of goats to cattle pastures has been shown to benefit the cattle by reducing browse plants and broad-leaved weeds, thus permitting more grass growth. Goats will control blackberry brambles, multiflora rose, honeysuckle, and many other troublesome plants. With time the weedy species will be controlled so that total carrying capacity is improved. While sheep are less likely to clean up woody plants, they are quite effective in controlling leafy spurge and other weeds, with proper stocking pressure and grazing control. Other benefits of multispecies grazing include reduced problems with poisonous plants, parasites, and predators. Sheep may graze leafy spurge and larkspur, for example, and eliminate them from a pasture. By controlling these plants, which cattle cannot safely consume, sheep encourage growth of better forage plants for the cattle.



Cattle graze with goats in a South Carolina pasture.

Parasites are less of a problem under this system because concentration of sheep or goats on a pasture is lower when they are grazed with cattle, and cattle do not share parasites with sheep or goats. The cattle function as “vacuum cleaners”, consuming parasite eggs and preventing them from infecting the sheep or goats. (Note that sheep and goats do share parasites, and so do not help each other.) Cattle may help discourage predation, if the sheep or goats are bonded to the cattle.

Increased productivity

Because multispecies grazing helps reduce weeds, brush, poisonous plants, parasite problems, and possibly predation, producers will notice increased productivity of animals and land. Diversification of animals results in diversification of income sources, and is a way to hedge against price cycles.

In conclusion, multispecies grazing offers many advantages to the livestock producer, as a method of improving pastures and increasing weight gains, managing problems with poisonous plants and parasites, and diversifying income sources. For more information, request the ATTRA publication *Multispecies Grazing* and our other publications on grazing management and livestock production by calling 1-800-346-9140.

Trends In Agriculture poll takes a look at "big picture" areas of U.S. farming

Eighty-nine percent of large-scale farmers think that employing sustainable agriculture practices on their farms will lead to lower productivity and income. Thirty-six percent say they know about sustainable agriculture but don't know how to use it. And 15% say they wouldn't use it even if they knew how because of what the neighbors might think about them.

Those are some of the findings of “Trends in Agriculture,” a new Gallup Poll which was co-sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Alpha Zeta Founda-

tion. The poll surveyed 1,218 large-scale farmers and ranchers about current “big picture” areas of U.S. agriculture — such topics as the general mood of agriculture, technology they use on the farm, sources they use for obtaining information and their opinions of sustainable agriculture.

Sixty percent of producers in the poll said they are aware of sustainable ag practices, but only 23% use them. Thirty-six percent don't know how to use them. Sixty-six percent said they

Survey results are available at www.agmedia.org

exclusively use conventional practices, and 11% use a combination of conventional and sustainable practices. Most producers (89%) said perceptions of lower productivity is the main reason they don't use sustainable agriculture practices. Sixty-one percent cited “economic reasons” for not employing sustainable agriculture on their farms. Seventeen percent said their landlords won't allow the use of sustainable farming practices, while 15% said they are concerned what the neighbors will think if they employ the practices.

NCAT/ATTRA opening office this spring at Davis, California

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), which operates the ATTRA project, will open an office this spring at Davis, CA. NCAT has been invited to share offices with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) in a historic house on the T.S. Glide Ranch. The new office will be coordinated by Rex Dufour, who has held a variety of positions with NCAT since 1994.

Expanding NCAT work

"California is a leading player in U.S. sustainable agriculture and organic farming," Dufour says. "Our new office will allow NCAT to become more responsive to regional differences in sustainable agriculture and gather cutting-edge information on a more firsthand basis on behalf of the farmers we serve nationwide. Through this office we also hope to expand NCAT's work in our sustainable communities and sustainable energy programs."

Dufour has been involved with many NCAT sustainable agriculture projects. In the ATTRA project, he has served as Associate Project Manager as well as technical specialist and written several publications in the field of integrated pest management. From 1995—97, he helped to lead an NCAT project for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop IPM options for use on Service lands leased to farmers on the Tule Lake/Lower Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge on the California/Oregon border. Dufour is a native of Colorado and attended The Colorado College, San Jose State University, and U.C. Riverside.

Meeting the neighbors

This spring, Dufour has been visiting some of NCAT's new neighbors in the Davis area. He presented a poster show on NCAT programs in March at the Partnerships for Sustaining California Agriculture Conference at the University of California — Davis. The conference drew hundreds of farmers, scientists, farm advisors, industry personnel and officials from government agencies involved in sustainable agriculture and methods of implementing biologically-integrated farming systems.

Other visits were made to the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and California Certified Organic



Dufour (above) will share offices with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) in this beautiful house on the T.S. Glide Ranch.



Farmers (CCOF), both located in Santa Cruz. At the Rural Development Center in Salinas, Dufour observed projects aimed at teaching Hispanic growers about organic production. He was able to observe the Food Systems Project of Berkeley in action while visiting Malcolm X Elementary School there. Under the "Farm to School" project, fresh local produce is being served to students in the school cafeteria as a way to boost local farm income and teach students about healthful eating.

Opening In June

"My travels have left me with an even greater appreciation for the rich diversity of California agriculture, its farmers and the organizations that serve them," Dufour says.

NCAT Executive Director Kathy Hadley says NCAT hopes to open the office by June, initially with one staffer and quickly expanding to two people.

"We will be one of the new kids on the block, but NCAT and its ATTRA project are not really new faces in California," Hadley notes. "From 1999 to 2000 alone, more than 300 California farmers called the ATTRA toll-free

number with about 1,500 requests for information about sustainable and organic farming topics. Our agriculture specialists also attend and make presentations at many farm conferences in the state each year."

Founded in 1976, NCAT is a non-profit organization that currently operates about 25 regional and national projects in the areas of sustainable agriculture, sustainable community development and sustainable energy. Its mission is to help people help themselves by providing sustainable technology information, applications and services. NCAT has a staff of about 70 employees with main offices in Fayetteville, AR, and Butte, MT.

Comments welcome

People with suggestions on how ATTRA work done from NCAT's California base can be most helpful to regional farmers and grassroots farmer organizations are invited to contact Hadley at: NCAT, 3040 Continental Drive, Butte, MT 59702, phone (406)494-4572, fax (406)494-2905, email kathyh@ncat.org, or Dufour at: NCAT, P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702, phone (501)442-9824, fax (501)442-9842, email rex@ncat.org. For more information about NCAT and its projects, please visit the website: www.ncat.org.

New ATTRA pub describes kaolin sprays to control Pierce's disease

Organic California grape producers facing the new threat of Pierce's disease being carried to their vineyards via the glassy-winged sharpshooter are encouraged to order ATTRA's new publication: *Kaolin Clay for Management of Glassy-winged Sharpshooter in Grapes*.

Written by specialists Rex Dufour and

Richard Earles, the publication describes the use of kaolin sprays to combat the winged sharpshooters. Pierce's disease is a xylem-clogging bacteria which will kill a vine within two years of infection.

To order the new publication and a sister publication called *Insect IPM in Apples: Kaolin Clay*, call 1-800-346-9140.



Label Rouge: 'Vividly distinguishable' from industrial poultry

(Continued from page 1)

Born works on projects and client cases at ATTRA involving applied agricultural economics and marketing in sustainable agriculture. She earned a masters in agricultural economics in 1996 from Washington State University and a masters in business administration in 2000 from the University of Arkansas.

Other members of the U.S. delegation include Diane Kaufmann of the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association, Steve Stevenson, a rural sociologist at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and Keith Richards, coordinator of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

Gathering the data

During this first trip to France, the group will gather technical data by visiting agencies, farms, a slaughter facility, a certification body called "Quali Ouest," Syvol, a poultry cooperative, and other sites. Their focus will run the gamut of the Label Rouge system, from breeds, feeds, and raising birds, to processing, distribution and food safety. This information will be used to draft U.S. Label Rouge-type standards, develop strategies for outreach and coordination, and disseminate information to U.S. small farmers and other agri professionals. The group plans a follow-up trip to France sometime in 2002.

"Pastured and free-range poultry production has been growing in the U.S. as consumers look for alternatives to conventional poultry products," Born says. "Small-scale poultry producers who process and market birds on-farm report more demand than supply, but market penetration is not deep - many consumers do not have direct contact with farmers. There are very few independent government-inspected processing plants where these producers can take their birds. Many states limit the number of birds a producer can process on the farm to 1,000 per year."

U.S. producers need access to better processing and marketing channels, the two specialists say. These producers also typically use poultry breeds designed for large-scale confinement systems. Using broiler genetics designed for pasture rearing

would benefit not only production but also help to differentiate the product in the marketplace.

Public recoil of the 1960s

The Label Rouge poultry system was born in France during the 1960s as poultry production became more industrialized. Supported by the government, Label Rouge operates under a nationwide structure that ties together regional groups of producers with feedmills, hatcheries, breeding firms, processors and distributors. This complex network delivers poultry products that are said to be "vividly distinguishable" from standard poultry products in the areas of quality, product

image and environmentally-sound production practices.

Label Rouge is labeled by the French National Commission for Labels and Certification (CNLC).

SYNALAF, a national

syndicate of poultry labels, collects a check-off fee from the sale of each bird to fund national consumer education and publicity campaigns for Label Rouge products.

Product and process quality standards are set by the CNLC. Standards include access by birds to the outdoors and natural feed rations with no animal byproducts. Flock size and the number of flocks per farm are strictly limited. The grow-out period for Label Rouge broilers is 81 days, compared to 45 days for standard chicken.

Air chilled birds

Label Rouge birds are processed by air chilling, instead of immersion or water chilling as in the U.S. In Europe, air chilling is said to reduce microbial cross-contamination, as well as water uptake from the chill tank. Processed poultry in the U.S. is allowed to contain from 8-12% water weight. Salmonella occurrence in Label Rouge poultry averages 3%, compared to 69% for standard chicken.

"Quality labels such as Label Rouge are a growing trend in other countries," Fanatico says. "We believe the commercial potential in the U.S. is high with the rapid growth of the natural and organic food sectors. Our central goal in this project is to find yet another way to increase financial stability for small farms and rural communities."

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New & revised
ATTRA Materials
Call 1-800-346-9140
and ask for :

- ✓ **Deer Farming**
- ✓ **Elk (Wapiti) Farming**
- ✓ **Sustainable Goat Production Overview**
- ✓ **Multispecies Grazing**
- ✓ **Sustainable Agriculture Organizations & Publications**

ATTRAnews

Teresa Maurer, ATTRA Project Manager
David Zodrow, ATTRAnews Editor
May, 2001

ATTRAnews, a quarterly publication of Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, is mailed free of charge to ATTRA friends and users. ATTRA disseminates information about sustainable agriculture to U.S. farmers, agribusiness, Extension agents and other interested people. ATTRA is funded through the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and is administered by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), a nonprofit organization. Since 1976, NCAT has worked to champion sustainable technologies and community based approaches that protect natural resources and assist people, especially the economically disadvantaged, in becoming self-reliant.



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