Students from diverse backgrounds met each other and learned how to solve environmental sustainability issues in their communities through youth workshops geared toward empowering young people to take action where they live. Workshops included “Youth Role in Sustainability,” “Assessing Community Needs and Your Strengths,” and “Strategies for Change: Developing Your Action Plan.” Ohio State University students also shared their experiences related to organizing for environmental change at their schools with the high school students.

Youth continued on next page
Many of the high school students became inspired to create environmental organizations at their schools. They plan to work on projects to combat global warming, recycle in their schools, and make biking more popular in their neighborhoods. Two female juniors from Northland High School will be promoting bicycling in their communities to improve the environment, reduce congestion, and encourage healthy activities. A sophomore male from Dublin Scioto High School plans to start an environmental club and advocate for compact fluorescent light bulbs. Finally, some participants from the Youth Summit are preparing to organize and facilitate future mini-summits for youth on the environment in the Columbus area.

**SROP Student Joins SRI for Summer**

The SRI is hosting Jannety Mosley, a senior at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University majoring in Agri-Business, as part of the Summer Research Opportunities Program. Jannety is interested in rural community development and is considering graduate school in rural sociology. She is planning to graduate in spring 2009. As part of her summer internship with SRI, she will be using the 2008 Ohio Survey of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Issues to look at patronage of local foods in Ohio. She is being advised by SRI faculty affiliate, Jeff Sharp.

**Professor Kristi Lekies**, a faculty member in the Department of Human and Community Resource Development, spearheaded the conference with financial support from the Social Responsibility Initiative and the assistance of Jane Harrison, a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics; Emily Ellis, a senior in Geography and Sociology; Mattie Reitman, a community organizer with the Energy Justice Network; and Tejas Kataria, a student in Electrical and Computer Engineering. For more information on this initiative or to get involved in the future, please contact Professor Lekies at lekies.1@osu.edu or (614) 688-3537.

**Graduate Student Awarded Top SARE Award**

Shoshanah Inwood, a graduate research associate with the Rural Sociology Program and Social Responsibility Initiative is this year’s recipient of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) 2008 New Voices Award. SARE is a program funded by USDA that supports and promotes sustainable farming and ranching. Shoshanah shared her vision of sustainable agriculture for the next 20 years at SARE’s 20th Anniversary New American Farm Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri, in March to a diverse audience of over 700 farmers, ranchers, policymakers, extension agents, agriculture professionals, academics, and community organizers. Congratulations, Shoshanah!

**SRI Gives Back**

The Social Responsibility Initiative sponsored several events during winter and spring 2008. In April, the SRI sponsored the 4th Annual Human and Community Resource Development Graduate Research Conference, “Creating a Responsible Future Through Scholarship.” This annual professional development event led by students convened approximately 50 students, faculty, and staff. The SRI also sponsored the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association’s 29th annual conference held in Granville, Ohio, which brought together nearly 700 food and farming stakeholders.
In 2006, the SRI was awarded funding to train fellows in the sustainable sciences through the USDA’s Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program. As part of our effort to share with you their progress, this update will be periodically featured in our newsletter. Keep posted as we welcome new fellows in the coming year.

Danielle Deemer, a graduate student in the rural sociology program and a USDA fellow in the sustainable sciences, is making significant progress toward the completion of her master’s degree. Her research focuses on the association between a number of sociological variables and degree of concern for farm animal well-being. Data for her thesis is from an Ohio sample and from a national sample. Danielle has also taken a leadership role in the graduate student organization associated with the Department of Human and Community Resource Development serving as the vice-chair of the 2008 conference committee and was recently elected as assistant treasurer for the 2008–2009 academic year. Danielle is interning with the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association (OEFFA) as part of her fellowship training program and will assist in the development of a publication documenting OEFFA’s organizational history and will write an ethnography of OEFFA-affiliated farmers transitioning to organic production.

Leah Smith, a graduate student in the rural sociology program and a USDA fellow in the sustainable sciences, is fulfilling the internship component of her program with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) this summer. She will be assisting in the development of a central Ohio regional food policy working group and will be taking a leadership role in the upcoming MORPC Summit on Sustainability and the environment and local foods track. Leah presented workshops on “Seed Saving Basics” at several different conferences this year and she has volunteered with Horn of Africa Community Garden (see photo) and Community Refugee and Immigrant Services. Leah’s master’s thesis will focus on agricultural change at the rural-urban interface.

On June 8, 2008, Ohio State University President Gordon Gee (right) visits Alpine Cheese Company, which is buying nutrient credits from local farmers created though the farmers’ conservation efforts. Alpine is using the credits to meet Ohio’s new water quality standards, which will permit plant expansion and create additional demand for farmers’ milk. This win-win pollution trading arrangement was developed by Robert Ramseyer (second from right), Alpine CEO, and Richard Moore (second from left), Alpine project director. Also pictured is Bobby Moser (left), Dean of CFAES and creator of the SRI Initiative.
SRI Welcomes Laura Anglim

Laura Anglim, a recent spring 2008 graduate in International Development Studies and Spanish from Ohio State, has joined the SRI for the summer. She will be assisting SRI with a community food assessment. She is leaving for Argentina in the fall to work on an organic farm as a participant in World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. She hopes to use the farming experience as a background for involvement in urban agriculture initiatives in the future.

SRI Faculty Affiliates Update

Richard Moore, professor in the Department of Human and Community Resource Development and SRI affiliate, was recently elected to the board of the culture and agriculture section of the American Anthropological Association.

Bill Flinn, director of the SRI was recently quoted in The Columbus Monthly’s article on dairy expansion in the Darby watershed.

The Sierra Club sponsored a public forum downtown on April 8 on global climate and energy efficiency. The event featured a green architect, a green building supplier, a city council member from Upper Arlington, and Tom Koontz, professor in the School of Environment and Natural Resources and SRI affiliate. Koontz spoke about the increasing interest in public policies at the state and local levels to address climate change and opportunities for citizen engagement in policy making. The forum included discussion of the business case for green industries, including opportunities for shifting “blue collar” jobs to “green collar” manufacturing jobs for the production and installation of alternative energy systems such as solar and wind.

SRI Outreach and Engagement

OUTREACH REPORTS

Molly Bean Smith compiled a resource bibliography on Contemporary Food System Issues. The bibliography is published on the web site for the Social Responsibility Initiative and is helpful for those conducting research in the area of local and organic foods.

Mark Partridge and Linda Lobao* have been working with the Appalachian Regional Commission to evaluate alternative measures for determining economic distress in the region. They produced a report entitled An Assessment of Alternative Measures for Determining Economically Distressed Counties and Areas in the Appalachian Region (authors Mark Partridge, Linda Lobao, Wilner Jeanty, Lionel Beaulieu, and Stephan Goetz).

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