



# SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE (SRI) HIGHLIGHTS

## USDA Sustainable Sciences Fellow Update

In 2006, the SRI was awarded funding to train fellows in the sustainable sciences through the USDA's Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Program. Through this newsletter, we seek to share with you their progress and also to introduce new fellows as they embark on the training program.

### **Julia Barton**

The newest USDA fellow to enter the rural sociology program is Julia Barton. Julia is a graduate of Dickinson College, where



*Julia Barton*

she studied Environmental Sciences and German. Julia is interested in urban livestock and land tenure for urban community gardens and farms. Prior to becoming a fellow, Julia was employed by OSU Extension in Cuyahoga County, where she worked with community gardeners and urban farmers. Julia most recently presented a poster on urban livestock at the 2009 Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Annual Conference.

### **Danielle Deemer**

In the second year of her USDA training program in rural sociology, Danielle Deemer co-authored with Justin Schupp and Leah Smith an article for the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association's Summer 2008 newsletter entitled, "Questioning Local for Local's Sake." She has recently helped to establish a new campus student

organization seeking the creation of a student-supported farm at Ohio State. The farm would serve to raise awareness about food and agricultural issues and would seek involvement of students across campus. Danielle was also recently quoted in the Ohio State Alumni Magazine's article on farming and the future.

### **Leah Smith**

A graduate student in the rural sociology program and a USDA Sustainable Sciences fellow, Leah Smith is finishing up her coursework and completing her master's thesis. She recently presented, "Exploring Sustainability Through the Food System" at Our New Opportunities-New Responsibilities: Family and Consumer Sciences Education Program Cooperating Teacher and Student Teacher Annual Meeting. Leah also continues to volunteer for the Horn of Africa Community Garden.



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

With this latest newsletter, I am pleased to share with you some of what we have been up to over the past several months and some of our plans for the future. I hope you might also notice some of the focused work in the areas of local food systems development, watershed management, and rural poverty. We have a sustained commitment to developing all of this work even further. The future looks bright as we continue to provide social responsibility-focused research and outreach in these areas as well as other areas such as leadership development.

As for the near future, we are very excited to welcome Dr. Rich Pirog, associate director for the Leopold Center. In May 2009, Dr. Pirog will be sharing his work on developing Iowa's local food system as part of our new Brown Bag series. We are also looking forward to the upcoming rural sociological society meetings in Madison, Wisconsin, this August. We are sure the program will represent the finest in social science research on climate change and other social responsibility-focused research.



## Robert Birkenholz Honored as Fellow of Food Systems Leadership Institute

Robert Birkenholz, professor of agricultural education and chair of Ohio State's Department of Human and Community Resource Development, was one of 20 fellows of the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) honored at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges in Chicago. Birkenholz and the other fellows were recognized for completing the FSLI Leadership Development Program and for contributions they have made to their individual organizations and to higher education and food systems.

The FSLI is a two-year program designed for experienced leaders in academia, government, and industry. The FSLI is a program of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. It was created with financial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and is operated in a partnership between North Carolina State University, The Ohio State University, and The University of Vermont. More information on the FSLI is available at <http://www.fsli.org>.



Robert Birkenholz

## Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture's Associate Director Joins SRI for a Day

On May 11, the SRI will host Dr. Rich Pirog, associate director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture as part of its 2009 Brown Bag Series. This endeavor is supported by the Center for Farmland Policy and Innovation and the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Program.

Dr. Pirog is the program leader and associate director for the Center's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative. Pirog directs the Value Chain Partnerships (VCP) project, a multi-

organizational effort that provides technical assistance to farmer-led food businesses in Iowa. Through VCP, Pirog leads the Regional Food Systems Working Group, which focuses on making the case for investment in local and regional food businesses.

Pirog's research and collaborations on food miles, food value chains, local and place-based foods, and eco-labels has been publicized in magazines and media outlets across the globe, used by local food practitioners, and is often cited in books and college courses. In 2003, he received the Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award from Practical Farmers of Iowa, and in 2004, he received the Iowa State University College of Agriculture Award for Outstanding Achievement and Service.

Dr. Pirog will share with us Iowa's journey in developing a more resilient local and regional food system. Don't miss this opportunity to learn!



Dr. Rich Pirog

## Outreach Update: Impact of Central Ohio Youth Summit

Nearly 20 high school students attended the Youth Summit on the Environment, held last May as part of a conference hosted and supported by the Social Responsibility Initiative, Simply Living, and Columbus Green Building Forum. A number of the participants have since created environmental clubs at their schools and have begun to make progress on addressing environmental sustainability. One participant, Kristen Arnold, recently became the new Youth Summit coordinator. She is working with Kristi Lekies, a faculty member in the Department of Human and Community Resource Development who spearheaded the Youth Summit. In order to make a lasting impact, a series of school and neighborhood youth summits will be organized to reach additional youth and to work on issues with which established groups may need assistance.

## SRI Launches Brown Bag Series

In January 2009, the Social Responsibility Initiative launched its inaugural Brown Bag Lecture by welcoming Dr. Lois Wright Morton, a rural sociologist from Iowa State University, who gave a presentation entitled, "Iowa Food Deserts: Access Patterns to Household Food." Nearly 25 people attended the presentation. Dr. Morton's areas of research examine the intersections of civic structure with rural communities, rural quality of life, food deserts, food insecurity, and water quality. We thank her for sharing this important research.

## Welcome Sarah Lenkay

Over the years, the SRI has been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a number of very talented undergraduate students. Sarah

Lenkay, a third-year undergraduate in Environmental Education and Interpretation at Ohio State, is currently working with us. Sarah hopes to gain knowledge on how to build stronger and more viable communities from her SRI position and is working on a number of projects that we hope will help her make these connections. Sarah plans on graduating in 2010 and then possibly pursuing a career as a naturalist or an environmental educator.

## New Voice Goes to Washington

Shoshanah Inwood, a recent graduate of the rural sociology doctoral program and an SRI-focused researcher on farm succession at the rural urban interface, was invited to present at USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Forum. She was part of a panel presentation to speak as a New Voice of Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

and was the North Central Region's representative on the panel. Inwood shared her experience and research with a distinguished audience of policy-makers and interest groups. She also partook in a very small group meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Here, Inwood shared insights related to sustainable agriculture, small- and medium-scale farming, and opportunities for the future, all of which were informed by her research and dissertation work.



L to R: Shoshanah Inwood, Jude Boucher, Karl Kupers, Tom Vilsack, Claud Evans

## Awards and Notable Mentions

### Richard Moore

In November 2008, the Holmes County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) presented Richard Moore with the Friend of Conservation award for his team's work on the Alpine Nutrient Trading Program, Ohio's first water quality trading program. The program is known for creating synergy at the local level. The Holmes County SWCD is the broker in the trading program, and the funds generated through the program will ensure sustainability both for the county agency as well as for continued conservation. As a result of the trading program, many Amish are engaging in the activities of the Holmes County SWCD.

The plan is based on a partnership between the Alpine Cheese Company (Robert Ramseyer, President), the Holmes County SWCD, and Ohio State University Sugar Creek Project. The project captures the spirit of SRI

because it helped Robert Ramseyer, who wanted to solve his pollution problem by benefitting the whole community in a socially responsible way. The plan is unique because, rather than being created for cheap pollution credits, it is based on local partnerships and the improvement of the economic and ecological sustainability of communities and farms. Interest in the Alpine water quality trading program is growing. The program has a waiting list of farmers who wish to participate, and it is well ahead of schedule. It is also on target fiscally and is significantly improving the quality of water in the watershed more so than if the factory had tried to do so by itself. Professor Moore discussed the merits of the program as a keynote speaker at an environmental economics symposium at Tohoku University in October.

In February 2009 the Sugar Creek Project, led by Richard Moore, was recognized for community outreach

efforts and community engaged curricula by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

### Jeff Sharp

Associate professor of rural sociology and SRI affiliate, Jeff Sharp is the program chair for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society. The theme for the meeting is "Climate Change and Societal Response: Livelihoods, Communities, and the Environment" and will take place in Madison, Wisconsin, this summer. More than 350 rural social scientists attend this meeting every year, and the Social Responsibility Initiative is proud to be a sponsor of this year's conference.

### Scott Hardy

Former SRI fellowship recipient Scott Hardy, Ph.D. 2007, has just accepted a position as assistant professor in environmental studies at McDaniel College in Maryland. We wish him well.

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**SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS**

Koehler, B., and T. M. Koontz. 2008. "Citizen Participation in Collaborative Watershed Partnerships." *Environmental Management* 41(2):143–154.

Loveridge, S., L. Loba, R. Goe, P. Thomas, N. A. Bradshaw, W. T. Brooks, D. J. Hess, J. L. Bokemeier, and M. W. McCurry. "Advances and Declines in the Rural Working Poor: Complementing Traditional Econometric Results with Case Analysis." *Review of Regional Studies* 37(3): 392–410.

Nikolic, S., and T. M. Koontz. 2008. "Nonprofit Organizations in Environmental Management: A Comparative Analysis of Government Impacts." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18:441–463.

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**SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS**

Campbell, J. T., and T. M. Koontz. "Community, Collaboration, and Countryside: Does Collaboration Lead to the Adoption of Agricultural Best Management Practices?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, San Diego, March 20–22, 2008.

Lobao, L. "Privatization, Decentralization, and the Neoliberal Development Model: Local Governments' Responses across the Rural and Urban U.S." Paper presented at the Conference on Rural Property and Inequality, sponsored by the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, the Department of International Development Studies at Roskilde University Denmark, and the Rural Property Network. University of East Anglia, Norwich UK, September 2008.

Smith, M. B., and J. S. Sharp. "Alternative Food System Activists Compared to Non-Activists." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Manchester, July 28–31.

Thomas, J., and T. Koontz. "The Plan's the Thing: Linking Collaborative Watershed Planning Processes to Plan Contents and Implementation." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, San Diego, March 20–22, 2008.

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**OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS**

Sharp, J. S. "Evaluating Knox County's Food System: Opportunities for Development." Invited presentation for Ninth Annual Farmland Preservation Summit, Columbus, OH, October 2008.

Sharp, J. S. "Food Assessments: Knox County Examination." Invited presentation for Knox County Local Food Council, Gambier, OH, September 2008.

Sharp, J. S., J. Clark, M. B. Smith, and J. McCutcheon. "What is the Economic Impact of Local Food: Community Food Assessments." Presentation for OSU Extension Annual Conference, Columbus, OH, December 2008.

Smith, M. B. "Clintonville Farmers' Market Survey Results." Invited presentation for Clintonville Farmers' Market Board, Clintonville, OH, February 2009.

Smith, M. B. "Food and Farming: Ohioans Weigh In." Invited presentation for Miami University's Futures of Farming, Oxford, OH, February 2009.

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**OUTREACH REPORTS**

Campbell, J., and T. M. Koontz. "Farmer Participation in Collaborative Management and Best Management Practice Adoption in Two Ohio Watersheds." Columbus, OH: ECARP Working Group, School of Environment and Natural Resources, OSU. 2008. Available online at <http://ecarp.osu.edu/>

Clark, J., H. Kendall, and W. L. Flinn. "Ohio's Dairy Industry: The Geography and Impact of a Key Sector." Columbus, OH: SRI. 2008.

Partridge, M., L. Loba, W. Jeanty, L. Beaulieu, and S. Goetz. "An Assessment of Alternative Measures for Determining Economically Distressed Counties and Areas in the Appalachian Region." Washington, DC: The Appalachian Regional Commission.

Schupp, J., M. B. Smith, and J. S. Sharp. "Home Gardening in Ohio: Social Responsibility Initiative Topical Report 09-02." Columbus, OH: SRI. 2009.

Smith, M. B., and J. S. Sharp. "A Current and Retrospective Look at Local Food Consumption and Support Among Ohioans: Social Responsibility Initiative Topical Report 08-02." Columbus, OH: SRI. 2008.

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**MASTER'S THESES**

Campbell, Joseph. 2008. "Impacts of Collaborative Watershed Management Policies on the Adoption of Agricultural Best Management Practices." OSU School of Environment and Natural Resources. Thomas Koontz, Advisor.

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**GRANTS**

Moore, Richard, and Brent Sohngen. Co-PIs were awarded a USEPA Targeted Watershed Grant (\$200,000) for a feasibility study to measure the possibility of water quality trading in the Upper Scioto Watershed. The study will examine the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous that might be traded as well as the possible externalities that might occur as a result of water quality trading. The City of Columbus has awarded \$50,000 in matching funds for the research.

Partridge, Mark, Linda Loba, Lionel Beaulieu, and Stephan Goetz. "Developing and Assessing the Potential for Forward-Looking Distress Indicators for the Appalachian Region." Appalachian Regional Commission, 2008–2009, \$75,000.