Policy News

Farm Bill Standstill Finally Ends

By: Wes King

Greetings from Washington, DC. As some of you probably have already heard after several impasses the Farm Bill Conference Committee finalized a deal paving the way for final passage on Monday, January 27th. The House voted to
pass the bill on Wednesday and the Senate will vote for passage by the end of the week. While the final deal is a mixed bag with important advances, as well some major disappointments, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (which is why I am here in DC) met and voted to cautiously support passage of the final deal.

Overall this is exciting news, considering the fact that work on this new 5 year farm bill began back in 2011. However, the work is not over. One of the extremely important and often overlooked aspects of policy development and advocacy is implementation. Many of the local food and sustainable agriculture victories in the Farm Bill are new programs or major changes to existing programs with a lot of remaining questions and work regarding how those programs and policies will be designed and implemented.

Read More

All across Illinois and the U.S. lawmakers are beginning to take notice of the growing demand for local food systems. Illinois lawmakers are beginning to pay attention and the 2009 passage of the IL Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act; the 2011 Cottage Food Law; and the 2012 Senate Resolution urging congress to adopt a farm bill that supports local food systems show just that. However this is not something that happened on its own. The great success of the local food movement is the result of Illinois farmers and citizens speaking up and letting their voices be heard!

One way you can help build legislative support for local food and promote positive policy changes is to meet with your legislators and tell them what
issues are important to you. Sound interesting? Illinois Stewardship Alliance has the perfect opportunity for you to join us in advocating for environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially just local food systems. **Join us for our 5th Annual Local Food Awareness Day at the Capitol!**

**On Wednesday, March 26th,** local food advocates, farmers, and citizens from across the state will come together in Springfield for Local Food Awareness Day to encourage their legislators to support local food and farms. The cost for registration is free to ISA members and $15 for non-members. The event is tentatively scheduled to run from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
[Register Now](#) and make a difference.

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**ISA welcomes new Outreach Coordinator**

Molly is the newest member of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance (ISA), joining as Outreach Coordinator in January 2014. As Outreach Coordinator, Molly works to promote ISA, local foods, and conservation through both local and social media while also serving as an editor and contributor for the website and e-newsletter.  
[Read More](#)

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**Grassroots Policy Committee**

Calling all policy wonks, farmers and advocates interested in legislation and policy that supports local food and sustainable agriculture. Join ISA's **Grassroots Policy Committee**, learn more [here](#) or email Wes King at wes@ilstewards.org for more information.

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**Local Food News**

**Grow your Garden: What to do in February**

Oh February, the month of hearts and flowers and gushy greeting cards professing undying love. Well this February, in addition to your loved ones, spread some of that care and kindness to your garden too. What with the cold weather and whipping winds, its hard to muster up the gumption to head outdoors, but lucky you, February is the perfect month for some cozy indoor planning and planting. Check out the following tips and tricks to get your garden ready for Spring.

- Plan vegetable/fruit garden with special care to rotating crops, especially
tomatoes and other crops that are susceptible to leaf diseases.

- Test leftover seeds for germination. Place ten seeds between moist paper toweling or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If fewer than six seeds germinate, buy fresh seed.

- Start seeds indoors. Cool season crops can be started early in the month and warm-season crops can be started toward the end of the month.
  - Cool season vegetables include: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and head lettuce
  - Warm season vegetables include: tomatoes, beans, squash, melons, eggplant, cucumbers, peppers

- Sow onion seeds in late February or March indoors. When they germinate, keep the seedlings in a sunny, south-facing window or a few inches below fluorescent lights. Transplant the seedlings outdoors as soon as the soil is dry enough to work.

- Prune grape vines for shape and to promote new growth

- Work the soil as it dries. Structure can be damaged if you dig while the soil is too wet to work. Work in compost or other organic matter to enrich the soil.

- Direct sow radish and lettuce seeds late in the month.

Tips courtesy of Chicagoland Gardening Magazine

Feature Farmer
Meet Denise Kilgus of Living Water Farms.

By: Molly Gleason

Baby it's cold outside. And with the sub-zero temps and weekly snows we've been experiencing in Illinois, you might be wondering how anything green could survive in this winter wonderland. Well meet Denise Kilgus, mother of eight, co-owner of Living Water Farms Inc., and green-thumb extraordinaire. Even in the dead of winter she's supplying garden-fresh greens and produce not only for her family, but to supermarkets and restaurants across Illinois. I caught up with Denise last week to find out just how she does it.

**How long have you been farming?**

Ever since Kevin and I have been married (31 years) we have had some sort of garden. It grew and changed as our family grew and was the Saturday family activity, in which all were involved!

**How did you get started in the farming field?**

After moving back to the Central Illinois area we became involved with a few other local gardeners growing produce for our local grocery store and some Chicago chefs. Ultimately we, along with a few other gardeners, formed the Stewards of the
Land, LLC which flourishes as a group of farmers growing sustainably and taking their products to upscale restaurants in Chicago. This was the springboard for Living Water Farms' beginning in 2008.

**What crops/livestock do you raise? Can you tell me a little about them?**

Our first products raised in the greenhouses were tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans and a few varieties of lettuce. Our product line has changed over the years as we've also raised edible flowers, herbs and spinach. Our current product line consists of a variety of lettuces, Asian greens, dandelion greens, upland cress, arugula, mizuna, choi, escarole, endive, pea tendrils and shoots, wheatgrass, basil and a number of micro-greens.

[Read More.](#)

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**Recipe of the Month: Pasta alla Carbonara**

*By: Molly Gleason*

Bbbbbrrrrrrrr. Temperatures in the teens and I do not get along. So when I was making dinner last night, I wanted something that was going to warm me right down to my toes, and something that wouldn't require a trip out in the snow to get groceries. Sitting in my fridge were some locally raised eggs and bacon which I purchased at [Food](#).
 Fantasies here in Springfield last week, and there's only one thing you can do with eggs and bacon. Make breakfast. But I didn't do that. I did the only second thing that you can and must do at some point in your life with eggs and bacon, make pasta alla carbonara. Being snowed in isn't such a bad thing if you get to wrap yourself in a cozy sweater and tuck into this steamy little bowl of goodness.

The most brilliant part of pasta alla carbonara is that the ingredient list is short and you can whip it up in less than 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs (Mine were from PrairiErth Farms)
- 3 ounces parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves (or a tablespoon of dried)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more for garnish
- 1/4 lb. thick cut bacon (Mine was from Triple S. Farms)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (or chicken stock, or heavy whipping cream)
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 lb whole wheat spaghetti (or your noodle of choice)

1. Crack eggs into a large bowl and beat lightly. Finely shred or grate cheese, add 1/2 cup to eggs, and set the rest aside. Finely chop fresh parsley and add to eggs. Add pepper and whisk to combine well. Set aside.
2. Cut bacon into 1/4-in.-thick slices. Peel and chop garlic and set aside. Heat olive oil in a small frying pan over medium-high heat. Add bacon. While bacon is cooking put a large pot of water on a second burner and bring to a boil.
3. Once the water is boiling add in the salt and pasta noodles. Cook the pasta until it al dente (not quite done), which takes about 8 minutes or so.
4. Keep an eye on the bacon, stirring occasionally, until it is nice and toasty brown. Add garlic to the bacon and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1
minute. Drain off all but about 1 tablespoon of the bacon fat (or leave it in there if you want to be bad...but oh so good) Add wine and cook until liquid is reduced by about half. If you can find local white wine, even better! I used a Riesling in my dish and loved the very subtle sweetness. Once it is reduced, remove from heat and set aside.

5. Once the pasta is cooked, drain well and immediately pour pasta into bowl with egg mixture. Toss to thoroughly coat pasta with egg mixture (the heat from the pasta will partly cook the egg and melt the cheese). Pour bacon mixture on top of pasta and toss to combine thoroughly. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

The other wonderful thing about this recipe is that you can add in tons of variations. Throw in some fresh spinach with the bacon at the last minute or some frozen peas or green beans that you saved from your garden in the summer (you clever thing). Add a dash of red chili flakes to spice it up or substitute fresh basil leaves for the parsley. And there you have it, the perfect comfort food for a chilly evening. Dress it up by serving it with a green salad and a glass of wine and you've got an impressive dish for date night...Valentine's day is coming up you know! Don't worry, I'm looking out for you ;)

Also don't leave yourself alone with this dish, it just might mysteriously disappear. And then you'll have to explain to your sister that you accidentally ate the half that you were saving for her. Just saying...it's that good.

For the full article and pictures, visit www.thefarmerdaughter.weebly.com

**Conservation News**

**Conservation Stewardship Program Deadline Extended: You Still Have Time to Apply!**

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service has extended the deadline for new enrollments in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for the fiscal year of 2014. Producers interested in participating in the program can submit applications to their local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) through February 7, 2014.

Eligible landowners and operators can also enroll in CSP through February 7th to be eligible during the fiscal year 2014. While local NRCS offices accept CSP applications year round NRCS only evaluates the applications during the announced ranking periods. Therefore, you need to have your application submitted by February 7th to be ranked for the fiscal year of 2014.
We are fairly sure that the budget for Conservation programming and service will be seeing budget cuts in the upcoming Farm Bill. The most certain acceptance into the Conservation Stewardship Program will be right now. So if you are interested in this program, please do not delay in signing up. Acceptance for future rankings could be more difficult. Please visit ISA's website for more CSP information.

**Bring Cover Crops to Your Area!**

If you are an Agricultural Service Provider that is starting to work with cover crops and would like to learn more for your staff and your patrons about the uses of cover crops, please contact the Illinois Stewardship Alliance to speak with Woody, our cover crop specialist.

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**Small Farm Sustainability Project Grants**

**Call for Applicants:**
The FruitGuys Community Fund, established in 2012 as a non-profit project of Community Initiatives, is pleased to announce funding to support sustainability projects for small to mid-size farms. This new fund grew out of the sustainable farming grants of The Farm Steward Program of The FruitGuys, a national fruit distribution company based in South San Francisco. A primary goal of the FruitGuys Community Fund is to help farms and orchards operate more sustainably and to promote advocacy that, over the long term, creates a more sustainable food system and healthier planet.

[Read More.](#)

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**Upcoming Events**

**Jan 31st Winter Wine Festival:**
The Winter Wine Festival features a Friday evening wine tasting with more than 10 vintners pouring their award-winning, hand-crafted, local wines. Nibble on some artisan cheeses while listening to the calming vibe provided by the instrumental musicians.

Ticket price is $15 per person which includes a commemorative wine glass and 5 tasting tickets. Buy online now and receive 2 bonus tickets!

A discounted block of rooms have been reserved at the Crowne Plaza Springfield for your convenience. To reserve, please call (217) 529-7777 and reference the IL Grape Growers block.

[Learn More.](#)
Feb 1 Sheep and Goat Workshop
9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. at Kankakee Community College. A pre-registration fee of $20 (includes lunch) for the workshop is required by January 24.
Learn More.

Feb 1 Approaches to Small-Scale Farm Composting Webinar
There is no charge to attend, but you need to register for the webinar.
Learn More.

Feb 6 Organic Pest Management: Insects Webinar
There is no charge to attend, but you need to register for the webinar.
Learn More.

Feb 7-8 Pioneers in Ecological Medical Training
The two-day Pioneers in Ecological Medicine training will provide you with the knowledge needed to grow East Asian traditional medicinal plants. Topics will include: 1) Selecting crops appropriate for your ecological setting; 2) Germination, propagation, and seed-saving; 3) Harvesting and processing; 4) Assessing and managing production risks; 4) Tools and equipment needed; 5) Records and calculations of production costs; 6) Quality control; 7) Marketing, legal and regulatory issues.
Learn More.

Feb 8 Community Garden and Urban Farming Workshop
University of Illinois Extension, along with other partners, will host a community gardening and urban farming workshop on Feb. 8, from 8:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (registration starting at 8:15 a.m.) at the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Springfield, IL. The event is also sponsored by Illinois Department of Agriculture, genHkids, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, The Neighborhood Gardens, and the Springfield Community Garden Family Fit Center. The workshop will serve as an opportunity for those who already manage or garden at community gardens or urban farms, or those who are interested in learning more, to meet and share best practices. Participants will hear from speakers from Springfield and East St. Louis. The plenary speaker is Vera Garrett, from Springfield Community Garden, Springfield, IL.
Learn More.

Feb 13 Organic Pest Management: Disease Webinar
There is no charge to attend, but you need to register for the webinar.
Learn More.

Feb 14 Fruit Tree Pruning Hands On Workshop
Join professor Mosbah Kushad from the University of Illinois Department of Crop Sciences for a hands-on workshop on how to prune your fruit trees. Please bring pruning sheers. A limited number will be available for those that do not have their own. Workshop will be held at PrairierErth Farm outside of Atlanta.
Learn More.

Feb 19 Central Illinois Composting Symposium
This symposium, held at the Lincoln Land Community College Green Center, brings together composters, educators, and businesses so that everyone can learn about composting organic materials and resources. A Build Your Own Bin (BYOB) workshop will help participants construct their own vermicomposting bin for use at home, work, or school. For more information call: 217-786-4993 or email marnie.record@llcc.edu.
Learn More.

Feb 20 Organic Pest Management: Weeds Webinar
There is no charge to attend, but you need to register for the webinar.
Learn More.

Feb 22 Greater Peoria Food Summit
Join us for a conversation with key leaders from Homegrown Minneapolis, as we explore strategies to strengthening the local foods movement in our region. Fee for the event is $15 which includes a Continental-style breakfast and a light lunch.
Learn More

Feb 20 Chicagoland Farmers Market Workshop
The Illinois Farmers Market Association in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension and the City of Aurora is planning four regional workshops in early 2014. The first will be held on Thursday, February 20th from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. at the North Island Center in Aurora, Illinois. Deadline to register is February 10.
Learn More.

Feb 27- March 1 MOSES Organic Farming Conference
Registration for the 25th annual MOSES Conference has begun! This three day event in Lacross, WI is the country's largest about organic and sustainable farming.
Learn More.

March 1 Mardi Gras party at the Pasfield House.
Tony Leone and Deanna Glosser are planning a menu of New Orleans favorites. Dinner will be at 6:00 p.m.
Watch for details.

March 1-2 Illinois Products Expo
Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield, IL
Over 70 Illinois companies will be providing free food samples and selling their products. A few non-food items, such as soy & herb candles and agricultural-based soaps/lotions will also be available to purchase. The Illinois Wine and Cheese Garden will once again be a featured attraction at the Expo. Illinois wineries will participate; selling wine samples and wine by the glass and the bottle. "Illinois Products" gift baskets will also be given away as door prizes.
Learn More.

For a complete listing of upcoming events, please checkout our Events Calendar on the ISA website.
Have an event that should be included on our event lineup? Email Molly at molly@ilstewards.org.

Get Involved

Donate
ISA is a non-profit organization. Your donations help us to continue our work in promoting local foods, fair policies, and conservation agriculture. 
Donate Now

Become a Member
Be part of an Alliance of consumers, farmers and other local food system stakeholders working to increase production and consumption of local foods in Illinois 
Learn More

Spread the word!
When you send this email to a friend, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or connect with us on LinkedIn, you are helping to increase awareness about local food causes in your community. Be a part of the movement and spread the word!

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