



EDITOR'S COLUMN

"We couldn't have come this far with the farm if it were not for all the people in the community that have been so helpful." - Tamara Hicks, Toluma Farms

The face of farming in Marin is definitely changing. As some of the long-established farms and ranches are sold, many times we are fortunate to have new neighbors who are continuing to farm and ranch, keeping the traditions going, people like Tamara Hicks and Dave Jablons, who have restored the Gobbi Ranch in Tomales. They are milking goats and making cheese. Marcia Barinaga and Cory Goodwin in Marshall have bought a ranch and are in the throes of birthing a sheep dairy and farmstead cheese operation. Both of these family operations only add to our farm diversity and sustainable agriculture.

Taste of Marin is returning for the seventh year, this time in an awesome team effort with Marin Organic, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and the Marin County Farmers Market Association. This fundraiser showcases Marin farmers and local chefs. The team effort by the organizations above will surely yield a spectacular event.

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Toluma Goat Dairy in Tomales



Tamara Hicks, Bekah Waters, & Gina Kindlespire of Toluma Farms

At nine o'clock each morning and evening, either one or all of the women to the left will milk a growing herd of dairy goats just west of the village of Tomales. This milking string is a rowdy group of does just getting used to their full-time jobs of providing fresh milk for Toluma Farms, Marin's newest farmstead milk and cheese operation, owned and operated by Tamara Hicks and her husband, Dave Jablons. The San Francisco couple purchased the Gobbi Ranch in 2002. "We wanted to find something to do with the ranch that would give us a living, be healthy and positive for the land, and provide some kind of an educational resource for city kids," Tamara explains. "We looked at what to do at the farm, and decided on goats and eventually, farmstead cheese," she says.

Toluma Farms is just one of the new farming enterprises popping up in northwest Marin County these days. Right down the road in Marshall, Marcia Barinaga and Cory Goodwin are constructing a brand new farmstead sheep dairy and cheese plant. John Williams and Ted Hall from Napa have purchased the Cerini Ranch in Tomales and have begun the long haul of renovating the home ranch to produce world-class farmstead organic aged cheeses. Just across the street from Williams, Jan and Louis Lee are putting in two acres of organic apples and are planning on opening a small cider operation.

Toluma Farms is managed by Gina Kindlespire, a local dairywoman who started working with goats at the Pacheco dairy. She is joined by her daughter, Bekah Waters, a sophomore at Tomales High School, milking and taking care of the growing herd of 150 goats. They are building a brand new milking string and both women are wrestling the wily does at every milking getting them adjusted to regular milking. *"They're not like cows," says Gina, "These animals go with the weather. If it's warm and comfortable they want to be milked. If it's cool and wet, they want to stay in bed."*

Currently all the milk is going to Redwood Hill Farms in Sebastopol to be made into soft cheeses and yogurt, but Tamara plans to make her own cheese soon. She is working with Eric Patterson from Cowgirl Creamery on a soft cheese that "fits in

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Bill Jensen, rancher, is interviewed and videotaped by Rick Tucker, center and cameraman Dave Fix, both from Novato Public Access Television

Production beginning for UCCE's "Hidden Bounty of Marin" documentary

With funding from the Marin Community Foundation and the County of Marin, UCCE has begun filming a documentary about West Marin agriculture to bring the lives and work of our farmers and ranchers "over the hill" to the eaters of that food in the greater Bay Area. Cooperative Extension has joined with Novato Public Access Television (NPAT) to produce the video piece; which is being recorded in high definition.

Rick Tucker, Executive Director of NPAT, is the executive producer, with Dave Fix as videographer. Dave has shot video for KRON for twenty-five years. Both Rick and Dave are enthusiastic about the project. "We would like to produce a timeless piece that will bring this story to a wide audience," noted Rick. "Shooting the documentary in high definition is the way to go," said Dave. "This technology will do justice to the subject and farmers that we film."

Ellie Rilla and Steve Quirt are the creative directors. "Being so familiar with the farmers and ranchers is a strong point for us. We aren't interviewing strangers. We are talking to people who we work with on a daily basis. These are our friends and partners," emphasizes Ellie Rilla.

The documentary will air on local public television stations in the late fall, and will be available for schools, libraries, and the public in DVD format.

Farm Bill 2007: What it means for Marin - Part I

With plans for the 2007 Farm Bill in the works, we need to look at issues that surround California agriculture, particularly those that will affect agriculture in Marin. The University of California Agriculture Issues Center has prepared a set of Farm Bill briefing papers covering key issues relating to California, and explaining topics such as organic agriculture, nutrition issues, and California dairy issues.

With organic production and consumption rising here in Marin, it is important to understand what the 2007 Farm Bill proposes for organic agriculture. It mentions organic agriculture in the Conservation Title under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, in the Trade Title under the Market Access Program, and in the Research Title.

In the USDA's proposal, the total funding for organic agriculture is \$61 million. A majority of this money (\$50 million and/or \$5 million over a ten-year period) is an increase in the organic program to pay part of the costs of organic certification, with an increased maximum of \$750 per recipient. There is also \$10 million in mandatory research funding in organic agriculture to focus on environmental and conservation impacts of organic agriculture and seed development. The remaining \$1 million will go towards market and production data collection and publication. These areas are not new ideas, but rather continued or expanded upon from the funding of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Seeing as how the organic community was so pleased with the ideas concerning organic agriculture in the 2002 Farm Bill, they are now working to expand the funding in areas introduced in the last Farm Bill. Organic research groups are seeking funding for research specifically on organic agriculture. The Organic Farming Research Foundation has requested an increase in the USDA's Agriculture Research Service's research, an increase in information for organic growers that is to be developed by USDA's Integrated Pest Management Centers, and the formation of a National Research Initiative to study organic plant and animal breeding. The Organic Trade Association also supports the idea of increased funding for organic research, data collection, and incentives payments, as well as the idea that all organic growers be exempted from the commodity program assessments, not just growers who are 100 percent organic.

Another area of the 2007 Farm Bill that is of great concern to Marin agriculture is the dairy portion. With milk being the largest commodity produced here, the policies set forth in the Farm Bill will have an impact on milk and milk producers. The dairy industry has a strong interest in the 2007 Farm Bill in the Nutrition title, with concentra-

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tion in school milk programs, the Women, Infants, and Children programs (WIC), and provisions related to nutrition information and education. These programs play a key role in stimulating the demand for milk and market in the future.

Due to the strict environmental standards that California dairy producers face, the Conservation title has very important potential consequences as well. The Farm Bill conservation programs can help dairy farmers meet the standards using cost sharing and programs that pay for producers to develop environmentally friendly practices. In the Energy title, it explains how California dairy farms are major users of feed grains, oilseeds, silage, and hay. Seeing as how these prices have risen a great deal in 2007 due to the increased ethanol demand, a Farm Bill that focuses on increasing the use of agricultural feedstocks for fuel will make the feed prices climb even higher and severely affect the dairy industry.

This material is available in greater depth at www.aic.ucdavis.edu under the Research section, titled Farm Bill 2007. - *Anne Kehoe*

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with our terroir and coastal climate. A farmstead cheese facility and a great product are goals for Tamara and her husband.

An added-value component to Toluma Farms is an educational program to bring urban kids, mostly from challenged backgrounds, to the ranch for overnight camping trips and farm education activities. *"I realized in my work,"* says Tamara, a school psychologist, *"that many of these children would never be able to see how their food is grown. Our farm can open up a whole new world to them. We are looking forward to programs that will bring them here to live and experience the real pleasures of work and farm life."*

Toluma Farms is the kind of new farming development that is such a perfect fit for the changing landscapes of Marin. It utilizes one of our main assets, the grasslands. Milk is a tradition here, and that is what the farm produces. The owners were financially able to rebuild the ranch as a working, productive dairy, not just as a second home. They are committed to land conservation and have already worked with the Marin Resource Conservation District on creek restoration and watershed management. They have hired local farmers to help and are already contributing to our *"foodshed."*

Today, the agricultural population of Marin is diversifying. The traditional farmers, the backbone of the community, are being joined by serious and dedicated new entry farmers and small-scale crop farmers, all of which are on the path to sustainability and health for our beautiful and abundant farmlands.

Taste of Marin - 2007 style

In 2007, Marin Organic and Marin Agricultural Land Trust have teamed up with the Marin Farmers Market Association supporting and promoting Marin's agriculture. The celebration on August 26 kicks off at St. Vincent's School for Boys in Marinwood, with bistro tables, wandering accordion players, and Marin's farmers and ranchers on hand to talk about their work and what they are growing, all while offering samples of what they produce prepared by Marin's finest chefs.

Included in the evening's line-up are chefs from well-known restaurants and food purveyors: Insalata's, the Olema Inn and Restaurant, Small Shed Flatbreads, Cork, McEvoy, Cowgirl Cantina, Piatti Mill Valley, Station House Café, Pamela Ferrari Catering, Drakes Beach Café, Indian Peach Food Company, Point Reyes Blue, Three Twins Ice Cream, Comforts, Straus Family Creamery, Pine Cone Diner, Sol Food, Fairfax Scoop, Lark Creek Inn, Drakes Bay Oyster Farm, Hog Island Oyster Company, Priscilla's, Bovine Bakery, Brickmaiden Breads, Good Earth Natural Foods, Marin Sun Farms, Stella Cucina, Table, and more.

The event begins at 4 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres, drinks, silent auction, and an opportunity to meet the farmers and ranchers who grew the food, as well as the chefs who prepared it. At the close of the silent auction, the guests will be led to a sit-down dinner, with each course prepared by a different restaurant. A live auction, speakers, and toasts to the farmers and chefs will serve as the dining entertainment, followed by dancing under the stars to blues and vocals by Maria Muldaur. It is an evening not to be missed.

Tickets are \$150 per person and are selling fast. To order online, visit www.TasteofMarin.org or call the Marin Organic office at (415) 663-9667.



Lindsey from Fresh Run Farm

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Cooperative Extension is teaming up with Novato Public Access Television and the County of Marin to go out into the field and capture the heart and spirit of our farmers and ranchers on videotape for a public television documentary about farming and ranching in West Marin. Production is well under way for the high definition half-hour piece which will show on local public television and also be available for schools and libraries in DVD format. This is a real team effort with UCCE, Novato Public Access Television, and the ranching and farming community of West Marin.

Anne Kehoe, our summer intern, has sifted through the massive document called the "Farm Bill" and found a few areas, namely organic production and areas concerned with dairy operations, that actually relate to us here in Marin. Thanks to Anne, a fourth generation dairy person from the Kehoe Dairy, for finding the relevant items concerning the dairy community.

Next month will cover other key portions of the Farm Bill, such as the Community Food Project and the Healthy Food Enterprise Development Program. More information on the 2007 Farm Bill is available at www.caff.org, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers. - *Steve Quirt, Editor*

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Editors: Steve Quirt & Ellie Rilla
 Production: Frances Healey
 Contributors: Anne Kehoe UCCE



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News from Marin County Farms, Ranches, and Producers

- ☞ **Martin Pozzi**, North Bay livestock rancher, has been chosen as **Sonoma County Fair's Rancher of the Year, 2007**. Martin and wife Sally own and operate a sheep and cattle ranch, a successful hay business, and are active in the Marin County Farm Bureau. Martin was honored at the Farm Day celebration on July 27th at the Sonoma County Fair.
- ☞ Dairy ranchers, **Bob and his father Ron McClure of Inverness**, have been named the **2007 Dairy of the Year by the Sonoma County Fair**. This award recognizes the dairy as exhibiting excellence in milk production, dedication to quality, and a commitment to the local community and agriculture industry. The McClures have operated their dairy ranch in the Point Reyes National Seashore since the 1880s.
- ☞ **Marin Sun Farms** is offering a tour of the **Historic H Ranch** in the **Point Reyes National Seashore** run by the Evans Family on **September 23rd**. Contact cara@marinsunfarms for details.
- ☞ **Steve Quirt**, the **Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator for UC Cooperative Extension**, is a regular contributor on agriculture to the new West Marin weekly newspaper, "**The Citizen**." Steve also contributes weekly to the **Farm Report** on **KWMR**, at 11:45 a.m. on Mondays.
- ☞ **You Pick** for apples and tomatoes will begin **Sundays at Chileno Valley Ranch**, beginning the last **Sunday in August** from **10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Contact: **Mike and Sally Gale** at **(707)765-6664**.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
 COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - MARIN COUNTY
 1682 NOVATO BLVD., SUITE 150B
 NOVATO, CALIFORNIA 94947

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