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## INSTITUTE NEWS

### **Institute urges Congress to increase low-input funding in '89**

Increased funding for the new USDA low-input farming systems research is "critical to the viability and potential of this program," the Institute for Alternative Agriculture told Congress on April 18. The impacts of the modest \$3.9 million 1988 low-input program have already been "overwhelmingly positive," IAA Executive Director Youngberg said in his statement to the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, but "it is highly unlikely that these unique and innovative approaches can succeed without substantial new monies." The Institute joined other national groups in urging that \$15 million be allocated for the program in FY1989.

Despite widespread support of the program, the Reagan Administration proposals for FY1989 eliminated the low-input farm systems research. Citing an overall figure of \$175 million spent on "alternative farming systems," USDA Deputy Secretary Peter Myers has argued in other committee hearings that USDA has an adequate budget to stimulate research in the low-input area.

Both House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have acted to restore funding for the program. On May 18, the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee voted to extend the \$3.9 million funding level for 1989. On June 9, the Senate Appropriations

Subcommittee recommended \$5 million funding.

Support for the program has been forceful and unanimous in a broad series of Congressional hearings related to agricultural needs. Because the program emphasizes interdisciplinary research involving a systems-approach to problems and direct interaction with farmers, it is unique among USDA-supported programs, supporters say. According to program coordinator Patrick Madden, the quality of proposals put forth for 1988 funding is very high. Regional selection of proposals to be funded was completed in June.

### **IAA Board elects officers, selects '89 symposium topic**

James R. Lukens, agronomist and farm manager at the Meadowcreek Project in Fox, Arkansas, was re-elected president of the Institute for Alternative Agriculture at the March 2 meeting of its Board of Directors. Jay Harris of Berwyn, Pennsylvania, long active in resource-related organizations, was elected vice president; Earl Lawrence, an experienced farmer presently involved in ginseng production near Martinsville, Virginia, was elected secretary; and Maureen Hinkle, Director of Agricultural Policy at the National Audubon Society in Washington, DC, was elected treasurer. Officers serve for a term of one year. Jay Harris was also elected to a continuing

three-year term on the board.

New members joining the IAA board at this meeting were Robert Blake, Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development; Katherine L. Clancy, Associate Professor of Human Nutrition, Syracuse University; and Jerry De Witt, Associate Director of the Iowa Cooperative Extension Service.

The board selected a topic for the 1989 IAA Symposium of "Integrated Farming Systems and Agricultural Diversification." As well, the board approved a plan for broader promotion of the *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, and voted to continue publishing the *Alternative Agriculture Resources Report*, the newsletter targeted primarily to county-level Extension agents.

### **Kansas organic farmers, NFO sign marketing agreement**

The Kansas Organic Producers and the National Farmers Organization have just signed a first-of-its-kind marketing agreement in Manhattan, Kansas, says Joe Vogelsberg of the Kansas organic group. NFO will act as a bargaining agent for producers who can then take advantage of pooling sales with other organic producers. NFO has an 18-year track record in marketing Kansas farm products. For more information, contact Vogelsberg at RR 1, Home, KS 66438.