

AGRARIAN ADVOCATE



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WITH FAMILY FARMERS

The Future of Cotton Tour, 2007

BY JOY NOELLE PALOUTZIAN

Nearly 100 participants—mainly from the apparel and design industries—piled into two buses to participate in the Sustainable Cotton Project's (SCP) 2007 Cotton Tour on Thursday, October 18.

Every fall SCP hosts this event to highlight the realities of cotton production in California. This year's tour was sponsored by Gap and the California College of the Arts.

Windfall Farms' growers Frank Williams and Mark Fickett greeted the guests and talked about their experiences with the *Biological Agriculture Systems in Cotton* program (BASIC). They have been in the BASIC program—which helps growers reduce their pesticide use—for five years, and started growing organic cotton two years ago. SCP field scout Luis Gallegos explained the importance of beneficial insects, and gave out cloth bags of lady bugs and lacewings for participants to release into the organic cotton field to combat crop-damaging aphids (see photo).

The tour then moved down the road so participants could see the naturally colored green and brown cotton grown at Windfall Farms. As they approached the field, it became immediately apparent that colored cotton is anything but average. In fact, at first glance it did not appear to be cotton at all. Dark purple plants with bright pink blossoms produced brown fiber, in startling contrast to the green plants nearby with their moss-colored fibers.

Participants got a chance to look around the field, examining the cotton and speaking with the growers, the field scout, and Dr. Pete Goodell, Interim Director and Integrated Pest Management Advisor, UC Statewide IPM Program.

The tour then headed to the field of another BASIC grower new to the program. He talked about BASIC growing practices and then explained how a cotton harvester works and the process of making cotton modules. As he spoke, visitors were able to examine the cotton harvester in the field. Due to the prior day's rain, the BASIC grower was unable to run his cotton harvester, but sent the tour to a neighboring grower who ran similar machinery in his field. Tour participants got to see how a module is made from start to finish, and were amazed at the idea that harvested cotton bricks can weigh as much as 25,000 pounds.

Next the tour drove into the city of Firebaugh for lunch at Dunkle Park. Participants feasted on burritos, rice, beans, chips, and salsa from local favorite Don Pepe's Taqueria, and fresh heirloom tomatoes from BASIC grower John Teixeira. After lunch, they heard from Jose Antonio Ramirez, Firebaugh City Manager, and Dr. Marcia Sablan,



SCP field scout Luis Gallegos releases ladybugs with *Your TV 20* reporter Lesley Nagy at Windfall Farms in Firebaugh.

a local physician. Each spoke about the challenges faced by Central Valley residents, and their hopes for economic and health improvements for their town.

The last stop on the tour was the Panoche Gin, run by Ed Wanzell. At the gin, tour participants learned how cotton is processed. The crop must be cleaned of dirt and leaf trash, deseeded, and finally formed into bales. Participants then walked through the gin to see the process firsthand.

At the end of the day, everyone climbed back into the buses, their heads buzzing with what they had learned. Hopefully, the apparel and design industries will benefit from this inside look at California's cotton production, and will begin using BASIC cotton in their products. 



*Cultivating healthy farms,
food & communities*

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Agrarian: 1. Relating to land or to the ownership or division of land. 2. Of agriculture or farmers generally. [From the Latin *ager*: a field or country]

CAFF is a nonprofit membership organization. Members are part of an active, effective voice for CAFF's mission. Benefits of membership: subscription to this newsletter, voting privileges and timely updates on CAFF activities. Membership levels are: \$20 Student, \$50 Basic, \$250 Gardener, \$500 Tiller, \$1,000 Steward.

CAFF encourages contributions of any size to support our work. Contributions to CAFF are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

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Cleaner Cotton™ is Coming

BY DAVE RUNSTEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have gone on our Sustainable Cotton Tour for each of the past two years. We take busloads of bright young garment designers and clothes marketers out to the fields west of Fresno to see cotton being harvested and ginned (see *The Future of Cotton Tour, 2007*, page 1). They get to pick bolls of BASIC and organic cotton and imagine their clothes being made from it. Over the past decade we

have toured thousands of people around California's cotton fields and contributed to a movement toward the use of sustainably grown fibers in the garment industry.

CAFF's Sustainable Cotton Project has three components: (1) the Biological Agricultural Systems in Cotton (BASIC) program, which uses farmer-to-farmer information sharing to support growers who want to adopt bio-intensive, integrated pest management-based cotton growing systems, thereby eliminating the top 10 most toxic chemicals in cotton; (2) an experimental organic program; and (3) the Cleaner Cotton™ Campaign, which encourages large consumers of cotton, especially apparel companies, to use California-grown BASIC or organic cotton by sharing strategies for incorporating environmentally beneficial fibers into clothing lines.

Since 1998, worldwide organic cotton use has grown 22 percent per year. However, less and less of the total amount of organic cotton is grown in California or the United States. As a result of high U.S. production costs and comparatively low labor costs in developing countries, organic cotton acreage in California rapidly decreased from its high of 15,000 acres in 1994 to 248 acres in 2007. CAFF is helping to finance part of this organic production, as we continue to experiment with biological methods that are also useful in the BASIC program.

Our marketing staff observed this trend and began to focus on developing a market for BASIC cotton as a value-added, locally grown, ecologically sound cotton fiber. The Cleaner Cotton™ Campaign sells cotton at a small premium over conventional cotton prices, thereby providing the growers with some compensation for the risk taken when they grow BASIC cotton with fewer chemicals, while keeping the price competitive with foreign-grown organic. For more or less the same money, a garment firm can use organic cotton from developing countries or Cleaner Cotton10 pt from California. Through this approach, the Sustainable Cotton Program provides market incentives for farmers to use integrated pest management practices and maintains its original goal of reducing chemical use in California cotton.

In the past year we have demonstrated that BASIC growers will be able to produce a consistent quantity of high quality Cleaner Cotton™ fiber, and it is finally entering the marketplace. We sold 40,000 pounds of BASIC cotton from the 2006 harvest, and in 2007 we are working on a larger sale of over 200,000 pounds of Cleaner Cotton™. Prana, an outdoor retailer, will be launching the first item made with BASIC cotton fiber in the spring of 2008, and five additional retailers are actively working with the Sustainable Cotton Program to include Cleaner Cotton™ and the BASIC story in future products.

Total cotton acreage in California has fallen from 1.5 million acres a few years ago to 450,000 acres in 2007 and perhaps as little as 200,000 acres in 2008. Other crops, such as nuts and fruits or silage corn have had higher returns, and water for irrigation on the Westside of the San Joaquin Valley has become scarce and expensive. However, the desert environment of the southern San Joaquin is a favorable place to grow high-quality cotton, and we believe the industry will endure. CAFF continues to work to ensure that in the future California cotton will be grown in as environmentally benign a manner as possible. To find out more about the Sustainable Cotton Program, or to purchase Cleaner Cotton™ see www.sustainablecotton.org.



Our Man in Sacramento

Pete Price has been CAFF's legislative representative in Sacramento since 1998 and a CAFF board member and chair of the board's Policy Committee since 2000. We thought we would tell you some more about him since he plays a key role in CAFF's affairs.

Pete Price's father was in the Air Force, and Pete was born at Cape Canaveral, in Coco Beach, Florida. By the time he was in high school they had moved to Riverside in California. He ended up in graduate school at UC Davis, studying English. A friend's husband worked for the legislature and got him a job in Sacramento. In 1980 he became a speechwriter for Willie Brown, the speaker of the Assembly. "I got no sleep for six months," he says.

He went on to work for the Assembly Office of Research, where he did a report on small farms, arguing that the state should link retiring farmers with people who wanted to farm. Although that initiative failed, Steve Schwartz later created an organization, *California Farm Link*, which does just that. In any case, this was the beginning of Pete's interest in California agricultural policy.

In 1988, Pete began working again on policy for the Speaker of the Assembly, where he focused on environmental issues, including pesticides and other agricultural topics. He continued with the Speaker until 1995, when he started his own lobbying practice. He says he had learned that lobbyists were not really bad guys, that in fact they conveyed to legislators how their proposals would impact different interest groups. He had found himself working more and more on things he didn't care about and he wanted to run his own business.

His first client was the California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) and they are still his main client. CLCV works to elect environmentally oriented legislators and Pete holds them accountable. He now has a dozen clients, including CAFF and a number of private businesses. Pete notes that while most people in Sacramento associate him with CLCV, the agricultural and environmental lobbyists associate him with CAFF and sustainable agriculture.

In 1998, he met Adrienne Alvord, then CAFF's policy director, at a meeting in Sacramento on pesticides. He had worked on pesticides at the Assembly Office of Research and over the years he had become disenchanted with the extreme and negative approach of environmentalists to the subject. He and Adrienne started talking about sustainable agriculture and a more positive approach to environmental change in agriculture. CAFF subsequently retained Pete as our legislative representative.

In the last 10 years, Pete has worked on a number of issues important to CAFF:

- Saved funding for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) at the University of California;
- Established the Biologically Integrated Farming Systems program within SAREP, an approach that CAFF pioneered in almonds and walnuts;
- Created an on-farm drainage program for irrigation water on the

Westside of the San Joaquin Valley, an approach that uses tailwater on a series of increasingly salt-tolerant crops;

- Passed legislation allowing farmers and ranchers to host agri-tourism in their homes without having to comply with commercial kitchen requirements;
- Secured \$100,000 for CAFF's work from specialty crop block grant funds;
- Passed a water quality bond measure with National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) that has funded much of CAFF's recent biological farming efforts;
- Defended northern California apple growers' interests when large apple growers attempted to impose pest control requirements on all California apple growers, even though the pests were not present in the north;
- Worked to prevent misguided food safety legisla-



tion in the Senate after the leafy green E. coli incidents in 2006.

Pete was an important participant in the effort to pass AB 32, the global warming bill that governor Schwarzenegger touted in 2006. If implemented in a serious and rigorous way, Pete believes that AB 32 will change just about everything in the state, including agriculture. We think that this policy direction provides an opportunity for CAFF to promote local agriculture—such as our *Buy Fresh Buy Local* program—as one element in an effort to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Pete is working this year on a bill, SB 375, which would change local General Plans to reduce vehicle miles traveled by creating more requirements for jobs-housing balance, leading to more compact development and less sprawl onto farm lands and ranch lands.

Pete has also been leading the effort to pass AB 541, a bill to establish protections for farmers from contamination by genetically engineered crops. CAFF is a member of the Genetic Engineering Coalition, which sponsored this bill. After long negotiations with the Farm Bureau, some agreement has been reached on a limited set of protections for farmers, and we expect this bill to move forward in the legislature.

How Sacramento Works

In reflecting on his time in Sacramento, Pete contrasts today's political situation to the era before the 2000 reapportionment gave everyone safe seats and before term limits eliminated long-term legislators. In the earlier period, many seats were contested and it was important to create prominent and powerful legislators who could win those seats. The Speaker of the Assembly doled out bills to make the members look good. The Assembly and the Senate were co-equal.

Now, with term limits, the Senate is full of ex-Assembly members and so has more experience. The Assembly has a number of committees chaired by newcomers. Bureaucrats and lobbyists have gained power because they are the only ones with long-term institutional memory. Senior staffers are given the power to decide what the members will

See **Pete Price** continued on page 10

Helping Sacramento Valley Farmers Protect Water Quality

BY MARK CADY, DEPUTY PROGRAM DIRECTOR, BIOLOGICAL FARMING

What a funny and unexpected déjà vu. Twenty-five years ago I was in the Peace Corps working with farmers in West Africa. Despite my good intentions, I often understood very little of what was happening around me. On a cool morning last fall I found myself in a Sutter County walnut orchard trying to attach a seed spreader to the back of a tractor. I was assisting Mr. Johal and Mr. Hundal, who were energetically discussing possible solutions to the mismatch of the three-point hitch and the seeder. I understand no Punjabi and my companions spoke only a little English. While I watched, the farm workers devised an ingenious solution to our problem and we moved on to planting a cover crop between the long rows of walnut trees.

Many people are surprised to find that one of California's oldest and best-established immigrant groups is the East Indian community in the Yuba City area, where the highest concentration of Punjabi-speaking Americans is found. Punjab state is the breadbasket of India, so it is natural that many Punjabi Americans are successful farmers and that new immigrants are able to find work in agriculture.

Johal and Hundal work for the Toors, a farming family that grows about 300 acres of prunes and walnuts. Joe Toor established the operation after emigrating from Punjab in 1954. For the last two years Joe's daughter Chandan Toor, and her husband, Pauli Sidhu, have been trying to improve a challenging walnut orchard. Irrigation water is exceedingly slow to penetrate the soil there, making it difficult to tell if the trees are getting enough water or too much. That fall morning I was in the orchard helping plant a cover crop of winter annual plants to improve water infiltration into the soil and keep it from washing away during rainstorms.

Chandan and Pauli have been working with Janine Hasey, a farm advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension, to monitor conditions in the orchard and fine-tune the irrigation system. In turn, Janine is collaborating with CAFF on our Tree Crops Project in the Feather River Basin, where we are installing demonstration sites on farms. At each site, we help farmers implement sustainable agricultural practices through cost sharing and technical support. In the process, we are building the knowledge base of farmers in this region. We are also developing new networks of farmers and agricultural service providers, to ensure the success of local farms while improving the environmental outcomes of farming.

Make no mistake, this is not the Peace Corps. Most of the farmers I work with have college degrees in agricultural sciences. All of them have a shrewd understanding of the biological and economic environment they work in. The technologies available to them are some of the most sophisticated in the world.

Yuba/Sutter Farmers Demonstrate Good Practices

CAFF works with tree crop growers in the Feather River Basin to protect water quality from the unintended environmental consequences of agricultural production. With the support of a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board, we help farmers with farming practices that can improve the environmental performance of their farms and benefit the economic sustainability of their farm-

ing businesses. We are building a network of service providers with expertise in sustainable farming practices, including the University of California farm advisors for Sutter and Yuba counties, the Sutter County Resource Conservation District, and a small group of private agricultural advisors.

Mike Weston, a recently retired physics teacher from the Bay Area, is connecting with his roots by returning to his family's successful farming operation in the Gridley area. The farm produces walnuts, peaches, prunes, and kiwifruit. The Peekema Brothers Ranch is participating in CAFF demonstration projects thanks to Mike's interest in improving the environmental performance of the ranch.

One of the practices demonstrated at Peekema Brothers is a new approach to traditional dormant-season sprays for aphids in prunes. Prune growers tend to spray in the winter, when aphid eggs are on the trees. Winter rains can wash this spray into nearby waterways. Researchers at the University of California have found that a fall spray can provide effective control while avoiding the rainiest part of the season. CAFF is also helping Mike try out least-toxic materials in these sprays to further protect the environment and minimize disruptions to the agricultural ecosystem.

Kris Dhanota remembers how his family farmed when he was a child in Punjab. After corn and sugar cane, his father used winter cover crops to regenerate the soil. When Kris immigrated as a teenager to Sutter County in the 1970s, he started working in peach and prune orchards. Now he farms those crops and walnuts himself. CAFF is helping Kris try out sustainable pest control strategies, such as spraying nontoxic insect growth regulators that will not damage populations of beneficial insects in his peach orchards. He hopes that this option, while more expensive than traditional treatments in the short term, will reduce the need to spray in the long term, saving money and reducing the environmental risks associated with those treatments.

Jack Gilbert's family has been farming in the Wheatland area for 87 years, and though he has tried other crops, Jack now devotes his energies exclusively to growing walnuts. Through a couple of family farm operations, Jack is involved with the farming of over 700 acres. Two years ago he planted a new block of trees next to Grasshopper Slough, a small tributary of the Bear River. This block has some heavy clay soil that presents problems for irrigation. Given the proximity to the waterway, Jack is interested in minimizing the storm water run-off from the orchard. He wants to ensure that any run-off is free of orchard soil sediment. The cover crops we are using in the Gilbert orchard will also supply some of the nitrogen needed by the young orchard.

Gene Bains is another farmer investing in orchard cover crops. Gene's grandfather came to Sutter County from Punjab in the late 1940s. Within a few years he started up his own farming business. Two generations of the Bains family now share in the management of 1,000 acres of prunes, peaches and walnuts. Like most farmers in the Central Valley, Gene has heard about water quality concerns associated with pest control and tillage. He wants to address those

See **Sac Valley** continued on page 7

FARMER^{TO}FARMER

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

WINTER 2008

A Farmer With a Vision

BY JANE PINCKNEY

Walking through the produce department, have you ever stopped to wonder what are those little creamy-white lettuce-like heads? Endive (pronounced ON-DEEV) belongs to the genus *Cichorium* whose members include radicchio, treviso, escarole, frisée, and green “curly” endive. Only one farmer in the United States produces endive and that is Rich Collins, founder of California Vegetable Specialties, Inc. Located in Rio Vista, California Vegetable Specialties is home to three versatile varieties of endive: California Pearl, Belles Rouges and Endigia. California Pearl is the most common, with its creamy-white display. Belles Rouge is a red variety that is a cross between white endive and treviso, and Endigia is deep red variety, a cross between white endive and chioggia chicories from northwestern Italy.

Born in 1960, Rich is a native of Sacramento and has fond childhood memories of the time spent in his garden. In 1978, while attending Jesuit High School, he discovered that no one in the United States grew endive commercially

He began to research endive growing techniques used in Europe while completing his bachelor’s degree at UC Davis in the Agricultural and Managerial Economics Program. After learning the unique cultivation process for budding chicory roots into



heads of endive, Rich began commercial production on five acres in 1983. Today, California Vegetable Specialties, Inc. includes 300 acres of land, a 30,000 square-foot production facility, and a partnership with

FARMER PROFILE



S. C. Darbonne of Milly-la-Forêt, France. Rich oversees the daily operations as endive is being shipped worldwide.

According to Collins, “being good at what we do has enabled us to continue our niche market by staying on top of costs and production.” However, it hasn’t always been easy. Rich originally named his enterprise Rebel Farms in response to the vast number of farmers who saw the production of endive as an impossible task. After adapting to the climate, soils, and market, white vegetables remain quick to show signs of deterioration due to bacteria and fungi, reports Collins.

Rich Collins is definitely a farmer with a vision. Now that his

endive operation has demonstrated nearly 25 years of success, he prepares to launch into a new endeavor. The project, Bridgeway Farms, is destined to be an extraordinary agriculture center featuring the finest in agricultural technology and food products. Located at Interstate 80 and Kidwell Road, the 195-acre site has an easement with the Solano County Agriculture Trust.

The plans for the site include 90 acres of cultivation—vegetables, stone fruits, berries, flowers and a vineyard. Pasture land will consist of 100 acres to accommodate a historical herd of dairy cattle. Adopted from the Rowe family who began their dairy operation in 1916, approximately 100 head of Innisfail milking short-horns will find a new home at Bridgeway Farms. This dairy operation is slated to produce artisan cheeses. Pork and poultry will also be produced on site.

Five acres have been strategically planned for a farmstead site. At this farmstead, one will find a complete dairy and cheese making facility along with an 8,500 square-foot farm stand and a bakery which will sell high quality produce, jams, pies, and other scrumptious baked goods. Bridgeway’s own radio station, accessible while driving the Interstate, will inform the consumer what kind of pies are coming out of the oven. The farmstead will also include a winery and an agricultural education center. The second phase of Bridgeway Farms, the education component, will include field trips for school-age children and professional development in the form of workshops, seminars and conferences.

When Collins was asked about the mission statement of Bridgeway Farms, he replied, “Eat with understanding.” According to Rich, ignorance could be the largest stumbling block when it comes to the industry of agriculture. His goal is to combat that ignorance through high quality education.

Ground breaking for Bridgeway Farms is planned for this spring. Best of luck to Rich! ■

UC Berkeley Dinner Highlights New Partnership

BY ALIZA WASSERMAN & JENNY HANSEN

University of California at Berkeley—the largest institutional food buyer in the state—has joined CAFF as an Institutional Partner. This partnership marks CAFF's growing success in building and serving the Farm-to-Institution market. The Growers' Collaborative distribution venture has sold 191 tons of produce over the last two years, and increased sales by 214% between 2006 and 2007. Much of this growth is due to opening an additional hub in the Sacramento Valley/Bay Area in 2007, which now serves 22 customers. The Southern California hub also increased the number of customers by 31% since last year. The Central Coast Growers' Collaborative was launched in September and already has six elementary schools enrolled to receive monthly shipments of produce along with the Harvest of the Month educational materials.

UC Berkeley's new Institutional Partnership with CAFF was highlighted at a Harvest Dinner October 25th, which showcased their new food procurement plan for "fresh, local and fair" food. The smell of roasted pumpkins and coriander mint squash soup filled the air of UC Berkeley's Clark Kerr dining hall, as students, faculty, staff and community members sat down to celebrate. The dinner was produced exclusively from local seasonal produce bought from the Growers' Collaborative. With the help of celebrated chefs Deborah Madison and Mollie Katzen, UC Berkeley executive chefs Ida Shen and Susi Modiano are redesigning menus to meet this plan.

UC Berkeley's partnership with CAFF involves a commitment to source at least 10% of their produce from local source-identifiable farms and increase their commitment by 5% each year. With this commitment, they—and all other institutional partners—are allowed to purchase an array of Buy Fresh Buy Local marketing materials. UC Berkeley decided to provide six of its dining halls with these materials—including Bay Area regional banners, stickers, tote bags, Farmer of the Month posters, and 5,000 Local Food Guides for their students. The UC Berkeley dining website—one of the most popular sites of the whole university—now links to CAFF's online Local Food Guide. This has already resulted in a sizeable increase in traffic for the CAFF site.



UC Berkeley students, and community members celebrated the local, seasonal produce provided by the Growers' Collaborative.

CAFF will have a direct impact on his 200-acre organic farm. Beginning in September 2007, Clark Kerr dining hall placed weekly orders of peppers, potatoes, rice, bok choy, melons, and grapes from the Growers' Collaborative.

The college market has been one of the strongest sectors of growth for the Growers' Collaborative, with an increase in sales of 203% between 2006 and 2007. Over the same time, the hospital sector has increased purchases by more than 200%, primarily due to Kaiser Permanente's commitment to source local fruit for all 19 of its Northern California hospitals. In fact, sales from nearly every type of institution increased purchases from the Growers' Collaborative. Within the Southern California hub alone, sales to private elementary schools increased by 20%, colleges increased by 176%, and corporate dining increased by 19%. Public elementary schools is the one institutional sector where sales decreased—down 29% from 2006 to 2007—reflecting the hard realities of their small budgets and the phase-out of grant funding. Due to the volatile nature of the Farm-

to-School market, we are working hard to keep a diversified client base in the Bay Area and Southern California hubs.

To meet the growing demands of an expanding clientele, we're looking for apple and citrus growers in the Sacramento Valley, and early and late season tomatoes in the Ventura region.

On the Central Coast, the newest of the Growers' Collaborative operations has had success by serving schools. In just a few months of operation, the Central Coast Growers' Collaborative—which exclusively targets school districts with specialized Harvest of the Month packages—has succeeded in bringing on five new school districts and reaching over 25,000 students each month. From apples, pears and persimmons to cherry tomatoes and salad mix, students along the Coast are enjoying delicious local produce while learning about the bounty of family farms in the region. After four years of educational programming that brought kids out to farms, the Growers' Collaborative is consistently delivering local produce into school cafeterias, rounding out our Farm-to-School work.

We're thrilled to report that we've increased the number of farms selling through the collaborative by 106% over the last year. All in all, it's been a tremendous year of growth for the Growers' Collaborative and we look forward to another exciting year of building and serving the Farm-to-Institution market. ■

All photos courtesy of Aliza Wasserman.



Students eat chard!



David Levin, Growers' Collaborative Regional Manager, Sacramento Valley.

UC Berkeley executives, chefs, student sustainability groups, CAFF employees, and Growers' Collaborative farm partner Brian Boyce of Riverdog Farm, along with the usual group of student diners, attended the celebratory dinner. Upon seeing his farm's gypsy peppers served to students, Brian noted a sense of gratification and excitement. UC Berkeley's partnership with

Bay Area Retailers Rack Up the Local Food

BY TEMRA COSTA

For the past six months in the Bay Area, we have been actively working to engage retailers in our Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign with excellent results. Retailers have always been key partners in presenting people with the information they need to support local farms at the place where they need it most—at the point of purchase. Our retail partners are leaders in the local food movement and are making local food connections in their various departments. It is very exciting to announce that the campaign has brought 19 retailers on board in the Bay Area.

Each of them has agreed to label products accurately in their stores with farm name and origin, to display the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* image, and to work to increase their purchases of local family farmers' products.

The following retailers represent well over \$1 million dollars of purchasing power for fresh and seasonal product per year! We'd like to thank all of our Bay Area retailers who

have signed on to support family farmers and the Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign:

- Berkeley Natural, 1336 Gilman St., Berkeley
- Farmer Joe's, 3501 MacArthur Blvd & 3426 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland
- Monterey Market, 1550 Hopkins St., Berkeley
- Raley's Brentwood, 2400 Sand Creek Rd., Brentwood
- El Cerrito Natural, 10367 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito

- Draeger's Danville, 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville
- Good Earth Natural Foods, 1966 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Fairfax
- Oxbo Public Market, 610 First St., Napa
- Bi-Rite, 3639 18th St., San Francisco
- Farm Fresh to You, 1 Ferry Building Plaza, San Francisco
- The Real Food Company, 3060 Fillmore St.

- & 2140 Polk St., San Francisco
- Capay Valley Farm Shop, 1661 E. Monte Vista Ave., Suite 104, Vacaville
- Santa Rosa Community Market, 1899 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa
- Oliver's Market, 560 E. Cotati Ave., Cotati & 124 Matheson St., Healdsburg
- Sonoma County Market, 500 W. Napa St., Suite 550, Sonoma

In addition to recruiting so many great retailers, we're excited to announce that since the release of our Local Food Guide, our web site—www.buylocalca.org—has

expanded to include over 900 listings that cover retailers, restaurants, farms, institutions, food artisans (bread makers, coffee roasters, jam makers, etc), and others in 32 of the state's 58 counties. Each of our different partners represents unique opportunities to educate and engage people about the origin of their food. Whether it's a person having dinner at a restaurant, shopping for groceries, or eating lunch at a university café at UC Berkeley—*Buy Fresh Buy Local* is helping create more transparency in our food system. ■



Photo courtesy of Bi-Rite Market

Buy Fresh Buy Local banner in San Francisco store.

When Life Hands You Quarantined Tomatoes, Make Tomato Sauce!

BY DAVID LEVIN

Last September in the sleepy town of Dixon, California, the presence of a fly cast a heavy wrench into the spokes of the surrounding agricultural world. Wanting one more taste of vacation, some unknown traveler returned from Hawaii with a mango—a simple (and illegal) act with huge ramifications for the surrounding community. In what has been classified as a “biological emergency” by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the traveler let loose Mediterranean Fruit Fly (Med Fly) larvae. The flies were detected by a year-round trapping system that is maintained due to the serious consequences of an outbreak. CDFA responded swiftly in a number of ways, including the quarantine of many crops that can serve as a host for the Med Fly—tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and stone fruit—the very crops being harvested in the surrounding area.

Eatwell Farm, a certified organic fruit and vegetable CSA located within the 115-square-mile quarantined area, responded in the only positive way possible: a party! If their tons of delectable heirloom tomatoes couldn't move off the farm property, then the CSA members would have to cook or eat them on the farm.

Inviting their members out for a day of cooking, Bloody Mary drinking, and community building, Eatwell Farm chose to make sauce when life gave them quarantined tomatoes. The CSA members

made everything from sauces and ketchup to plum jam to smoked Serrano chilies, plowing through roughly 1,800 pounds of heirloom and Roma tomatoes in a single afternoon.

Nigel Walker, owner of Eatwell, emerged exhilarated from the day. “When I got a few moments to myself,” he said, “I looked upon everyone working hard and having a great time and thought, ‘This is exactly the farm and community that I have always wanted.’” To read about the progress of the Dixon Med Fly quarantine and how it is affecting Eatwell Farm, visit Walker's blog at http://eatwellfarm.typepad.com/my_weblog ■

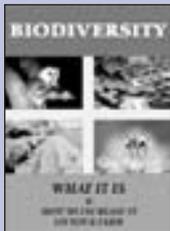
Sac Valley continued from page 4

concerns while improving soil quality in his family orchards. CAFF is helping Gene try out winter annual cover crops in a couple of small orchards, with the hope that he will build on this experience in the rest of his acreage in the coming years.

These demonstration projects are only one facet of the biological farming programs that CAFF carries out across California. By introducing sustainable agricultural practices in settings where they have not yet been adopted, we support a food and farming system that can be sustained by family farmers for generations. 🌱

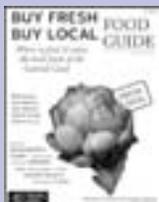
CAFF Publications

Biodiversity: What It Is, and How to Increase It on Your Farm Brochure developed by the Wild Farm Alliance and CAFF defines biodiversity as it relates to agriculture, and describes specific practices that farmers can implement to conserve biodiversity on their farms. On most farms, opportunities exist to accommodate habitat, native species and the larger landscape with few changes. Resources and cost-share opportunities listed.



Hedgerows for California Agriculture This manual will help you choose and care for regionally appropriate plants that attract beneficial insects and prevent erosion. It lists native plant nurseries and consultants/contractors specializing in hedgerow and other restoration projects.

Central Coast Local Food Guide A free booklet from the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* Campaign, this will tell you where to find seasonal, fresh, locally grown food in the Santa Cruz area, including farmers' markets, CSAs, restaurants, and family farms. Available at various locations. Free. Call (831) 761-8507 for details. Also see www.caff.org/buy local



Bay Area Local Food Guide A free booklet from the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* Campaign, this will tell you where to find seasonal, fresh, locally grown food in the Bay Area, including farmers' markets, CSAs, restaurants, and family farms. Available at various locations. Free. Call (510) 832-4625 for details. Also see www.caff.org/buy local

Solano Conservation & Restoration Manual Do you constantly battle unwanted weeds on your land? Are you tired of watching the stream carry away your land? Worried about that gully that grows larger every year? Find the solutions to these and other resource concerns in this manual. Establishing native grasses, managing rangeland, pond habitat, hedgerows, grassed waterways, riparian practices, prescribed burns, and much more. 145 pages, easy to use, update and share.



BASIC Cotton Manual Practical Lessons Learned from the Sustainable Cotton Project's Biological Agriculture Systems in Cotton (BASIC) Program, San Joaquin Valley, California, 2001 to 2004. This manual describes management and marketing options for cotton production systems that use bio-intensive, integrated pest management to reduce chemical inputs.

Unless otherwise noted, all publications can be downloaded for free at www.caff.org/publications. For a small fee, you may also order bound copies, call (530) 756-8518 to place an order.

Highlight on Alameda County

BY TEMRA COSTA

Alameda County helped revive the local food revolution for California in the 1970s with cooperative food buying clubs, back-to-the-land activism, and restaurants that highlighted locally procured ingredients. Today, the county is an intriguing mix of rural and urban areas, with the majority of its historical farms concentrated on its eastern border with San Joaquin County and in the Livermore Valley. In addition, urban farming and gardening initiatives have been sprouting up over the years, working to reclaim land for food production and security in the densely populated Oakland and Berkeley areas. Many organizations highlight the diversity of these efforts to bring urban residents closer to the land that feeds them.

Walking through West Oakland, you may be surprised to suddenly come across a farm stand with prices ranging from \$0 to \$3 per pound on a chalkboard. This is one of **City Slicker Farms'** six urban farm and garden plots. Led by Willow Rosenthaw, the project is successfully bringing more food security to the people of West Oakland by helping people grow their own food and compost, and by creating access to locally grown foods at their farm stands. They partner with the **Peoples Grocery**—an organization that has a farm and delivers food—as well as the **Alameda County Food Bank**, whose mission is to increase the level of food security for Alameda County residents.

The Berkeley Farmers' Market Association and affiliated **Ecology Center** have been a strong force for local food in Berkeley since their inception in 1969. They run three vibrant Berkeley Farmers' Markets every week as well as the recycling program for the City of Berkeley with their reclaimed veggie oil trucks. **Farm Fresh Choice**, another program of the Ecology Center, has brought affordable organic and sustainable foods to Berkeley's underserved communities for the past five years by buying direct from farmers at the end of markets and redistributing the goods at their weekly farm stands. The **UC Cooperative Extension** agency of Alameda County works on food security and access issues for residents in Oakland, in addition to their traditional outreach activities.

The newly forming **Cooperative Grocery (The CoG)** shows great potential for a new worker-owned grocery store to be located in the East Bay. The previously mentioned People's Grocery is also looking to establish a retail market. The county boasts 28 farmers' markets, many developed in the last five years. The number of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms is also growing. Alameda County is enriched with six **Slow Food Convivia** that actively engage folks in the European tradition of slowing down to appreciate food's gifts of flavor, seasonality, nourishment, tradition, and community.

Last year, **CAFF** joined this exciting movement of organizations in the county by opening our first urban office and launching the Bay Area Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign. The **Growers Collaborative** of CAFF is consolidating Sacramento Valley products and bringing them to such markets as UC Berkeley and Berkeley Unified School District. All of these organizations and businesses are part of a revolutionary approach to connecting people more intimately with their food. For a complete listing of all of

See **Alameda** continued on page 10

Leafy Greens and Food Safety

BY KIRA PASCOE, FAMILY FARM FOOD SAFETY COORDINATOR

During the past few months since our last update, the leafy greens industry has tried to turn the voluntary California Leafy Green Marketing Agreement (LGMA) into a mandatory national program. CAFF has opposed this effort because we do not believe that food safety issues should be approached on a crop-by-crop basis using marketing orders.

It is over a year since the tragic spinach *E. coli* 0157:H7 outbreak. That incident led California's bagged salad industry to create uniform "food safety" growing standards. These rules are enacted through the LGMA, and more than 100 handlers (companies that move fresh produce from growers to retailers) signed the Agreement and are now legally bound to buy only from growers that adhere to the industry's rules. The industry wants to make these rules mandatory for ALL growers that sell leafy greens to stores or restaurants by forcing all handlers to comply. CAFF opposes this effort because these rules, as they are currently written, are inappropriate for many diverse or organic farms that produce leafy greens for California's thriving local food system.

The LGMA model has already spread to other states, such as Arizona. The USDA has been asked to create a federal program that would apply to the entire country, and the agency is currently investigating whether it should enact a federal Marketing Agreement (voluntary) or Marketing Order (mandatory) for food safety in leafy greens.

CAFF alerted organic and family farmers, consumer groups, chefs and others about the USDA's call for comments on this plan, and the USDA received 3,500 comments—an overwhelming response, given that most proposed rules receive only a few comments.

CAFF also became aware that Western Growers Association had worked with Senator Dianne Feinstein's staff to introduce an amendment to the federal Farm Bill to codify the LGMA approach by allowing the Marketing Acts of 1937 to be used for food safety purposes. CAFF contacted Senator Feinstein's office and alerted allies such as the National Farmers Union and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition to speak out against this amendment. The Senate decided to leave the amendment out of their version of the Farm Bill, but it could reappear in conference committee or some other legislation.

CAFF is opposed to this proposed approach to food safety, where a board of handlers would dictate farming practices to every farmer in the country. We fear that approaching the *E. coli* 0157:

H7 problem on a crop-by-crop basis will threaten biological and diverse farming practices.

Many farms produce dozens of crops and this misguided food safety model may

go far beyond leafy greens. Florida and Virginia are pursuing similar regulation of tomatoes; melons and onions have been identified as crops to regulate in the near future.

All of the proposed regulations follow the model that food safety should be treated as a farm problem to be solved with farm-based regulation, inspection and paper trails. This erroneously deflects the "food safety" problem from processors or the general environment onto farmers. The presence of *E. coli* 0157:H7 in the farm environment is not something that the individual farmer can control. Several of the worst outbreaks of this pathogen occurred when it contaminated public drinking water sources. It is a public health problem and should be addressed by public health authorities in an integrated manner.

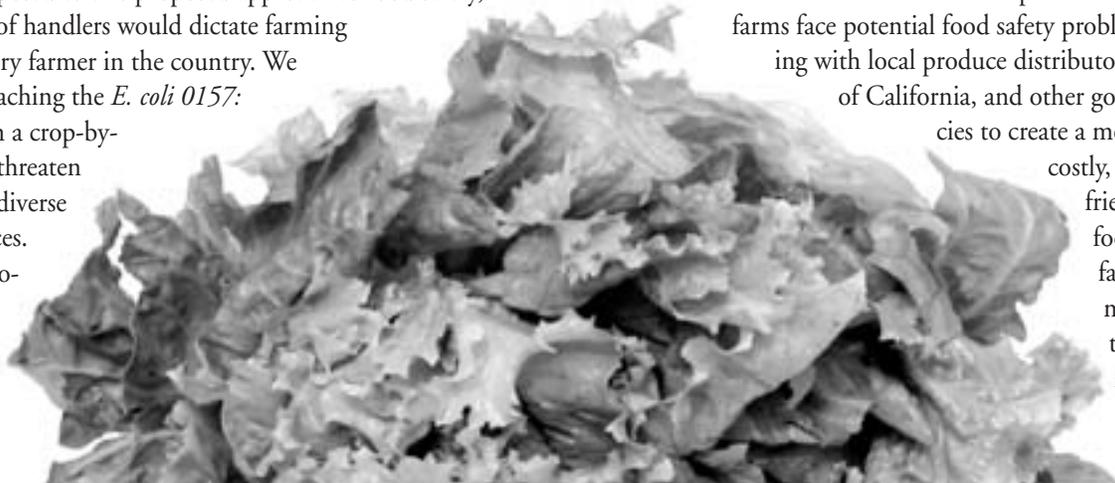
CAFF sees many flaws in the LGMA rules for leafy greens:

- There is no distinction between the fresh-cut product and traditional whole greens. Data provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and analyzed by CAFF show that since 1999, 98.5 percent of *E. coli* 0157:H7 illnesses from leafy greens in California have been traced to "fresh-cut" (processed, bagged) salad.
- The LGMA is controlled by the largest grower-shippers and processors. Small distributors and farmers have no representation.
- The industry rules created for the large farms of the fresh-cut processing industry are deemed appropriate for all producers of leafy greens, even though they are impractical for many small-scale, diverse, or organic farmers.

Farmers are tragically caught between erroneous food safety rules and conservation practices. The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County published *A Growers' Survey: Reconciling Food Safety and Environmental Protection* in August 2007, which documents that 89 percent of the growers who responded to the survey have adopted at least one measure to actively discourage or eliminate wildlife from cropped areas. Salinas-area buyers and processors of leafy greens have been going beyond the LGMA and competing against one another to create the most extreme rules. Ripping out conservation plantings or poisoning frogs will not improve food safety; in fact eliminating vegetation that filters water may have the opposite effect.

CAFF and the farmers we represent acknowledge that all farms face potential food safety problems. We are working with local produce distributors, the University of California, and other government agencies to create a more rational, less

costly, environmentally friendly approach to food safety that small farmers could implement. We invite you to contact us for more information at (530) 574-1901 or kira@caff.org. ■



Humboldt Chapter Update

BY MELANIE PATRICK

CAFF's Humboldt Chapter had a successful fall by launching both a *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign and a program to sell local produce to local institutions. Humboldt State's pilot program included lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, cabbage, peppers, eggplant, apples, watermelons, green beans, squash, and even local grass-fed beef. Sales were more successful than projected and students enthusiastically supported the BFBL campaign at the state university campus in Arcata, California.

CAFF has also helped facilitate farm-to-institution sales for five local charter schools and continues to work with the school district to help them utilize locally grown produce in their newly implemented salad bars. Exciting progress has been made with the newest institutional partner, St. Joseph's Hospital, and we expect direct sales within the next quarter.

To help meet the growing demand for local produce within Humboldt County, CAFF is actively recruiting farms. This will reduce competition within farmers' markets and increase the wholesale demand for one or two specialized crops for institutions and local schools. Working closely with farms, food service directors and principals at local institutions, CAFF has assessed market needs in Humboldt County. We are encouraging local food security by building the market for local seasonal food within our institutions.

CAFF is currently exploring the idea of implementing a gleaning program in conjunction with Food for People in order to work with the low price points demanded by school food service budgets. Every season farmers are tilling significant amounts of food back into the soil because they cannot afford the labor to pick it. Working with Food for People to harvest this B grade produce may enable more schools to access fresh and locally grown fruits and vegetables while working within their budgetary constraints. In the next quarter CAFF will be working to determine the volume of produce this project could yield and if it will be workable for local school districts.

CAFF has worked in collaboration with UC Cooperative Extension, Humboldt Creamery and Pro Pacific Fresh to develop a web-based sales and marketing tool that will facilitate farm sales direct to institutions, restaurants and other online buyers in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties. The website is currently in the design phase, and CAFF hopes that farmers will begin technical training and beta-testing this winter.

Concurrent with CAFF's farm-to-institution activities has been the implementation of a "Buy Fresh Buy Local" branding campaign designed to create demand by giving institutional clients the proper marketing tools to communicate their local purchasing practices. Humboldt State University launched a BFBL campaign in their cafeteria to publicize their efforts, and CAFF supported them with BFBL materials and the development of a PowerPoint show about local food and local farmers to display throughout the campus during Local Food Month in September.

During Local Food Month, CAFF planned and collaborated on a range of community activities, culminating in a "Taste of Place" dinner at the end of the month. This event brought together local producers, project partners, and community members to celebrate local agriculture. Both the BFBL campaign and local food events

have provided valuable opportunities to communicate the wide range of farm-to-institution work that is going on within our local chapter to support Humboldt County farms. ■

Humboldt County Farm to Table Calendar Available Now!

The Humboldt CAFF chapter and the North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) have joined to create the 2008 Farm to Table Calendar. The calendar celebrates 30 years of NCGA's Farmers' Markets and features food and farming artwork from local watercolorist Alan Sanborn. Each month features artwork that Alan has done for the farmers'



market posters over the past 10 years. Calendars cost \$15 and all proceeds go to promote local agriculture. Calendars are available at many Humboldt grocers, bookstores, and nurseries or by contacting the Humboldt CAFF office at (707) 444-3255 or humboldt@caff.org. Visit our chapter web page at www.caff.org for more information. ■

Alameda continued from page 8

the amazing organizations in the county, you can download the Alameda County section of The Local Food Guide at our website, www.buylocalca.org. Contact CAFF's Bay Area office at (510) 832-4625 for your own copy of the 2008 Edition, which is coming out this spring. ■

Pete Price continued from page 3

do, something that would never have happened in the earlier period. The Speaker of the Assembly carries the big bills because the members don't have enough experience to be trusted with them. Pete believes that reapportionment might help by creating more contested seats and hence electing more moderates from both parties.

Pete always takes a moderate approach to the issues, something that has garnered him great respect in Sacramento. Lobbyists, legislative staffers, and legislators all speak highly of him. As one staffer said, "The legislators want to have a meeting with Pete, they want to hear his point of view." After almost 30 years of work in Sacramento, he is one of the people with real knowledge of past legislation. Since CAFF tries to occupy a moderate and sensible position on policy issues that affect agriculture, Pete is an excellent representative for the interests of our members. As he notes, he is the only person in Sacramento representing sustainable agriculture.

Pete's wife, Susan, is a family nurse practitioner in a women's health clinic. They have two daughters, 17 and 22. They live south of downtown Sacramento and Pete rides his bicycle to work, so he is far ahead of most of us in implementing AB 32. In fact, Pete often rides his bike out here to Glide Ranch for CAFF board meetings, a brave and windy feat! 🚲

You can contact Pete at pete@pricecon.com or at (916) 448-1015.

CAFF APPRECIATES THE SUPPORT

*...of these Foundations, Collaborators,
& Major Donors who funded CAFF's work in 2007*

Alisal Nutrition Network Program	Community Foundation of Monterey County	Mid-State Bank Foundation	Star Fund
Alisal Union School District	Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County	National Farmers Union	State Water Resources Control Board
Audubon California	David B Gold Foundation	Natural Resources Defense Council	The California Endowment
Bella Vista Foundation	David L. Klein Jr. Foundation	National Center for Appropriate Technology	The David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust	Davis Farmers Market Foundation	Network for a Healthy California	The James Irvine Foundation
California Certified Organic Farmers	EcoTrust	Pacific Forrest & Watershed Lands Stewardship Council	The Wallace Genetic Fund
California Conservation Innovation Grant	Farm Aid	Pacific National Bank	Thorton S. & Katrina D. Glide Foundation
California Department of Food & Agriculture	Firedoll Foundation	Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust	Tides Foundation
California FarmLink	Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission	Physicians for Social Responsibility	University of California Cooperative Extension
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation Inc	GAIA Fund	Price Consulting	United Way of Santa Cruz County
Californians for GE Free Agriculture	Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund	Randy Repass & Sally Christine Rodgers Fund	University of California—Santa Cruz
Center for Food and Justice	Great Valley Center	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	University of California—Davis
Central Coast Agricultural Water Quality Coalition	Hansen Trust	Rose Foundation	USDA Community Food Projects
Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems	Harden Foundation	Salimbaceous Trust	USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
Center for Ecoliteracy	Headwaters Fund	San Francisco Foundation	USDA—Risk Management Agency
CF3: Capay Valley Goes to Market	Health Care Without Harm	San Francisco Estuary Institute	USDA—Rural Development
CF3: Marin	Hoes Down	Santa Cruz City Schools—Nutrition Network Program	Ventura County Community Foundation
California Food & Fiber Future	Kahn-Abeles Foundation	Second Harvest Food Bank	Ventura County Farm Bureau
California Institute for Rural Studies	Kaiser Community Foundation	Slow Food—Gravenstein	Western Center for Risk Management Education
Catholic Healthcare West	Kaiser Permanente	Slow Food Nation	Western Region SARE
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Colusa Resource Conservation District	Larry Walker Associates		
	McLean Foundation		
	Marisla Foundation		
	Martin Fabert Foundation		

University of California Cooperative Extension, Monterey County and USDA

2008 Irrigation & Nutrient Management Meeting and Cover Crop & Water Quality Field Day Tuesday, February 19

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Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF);
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For more information call Michael Cahn (530) 759-7377,
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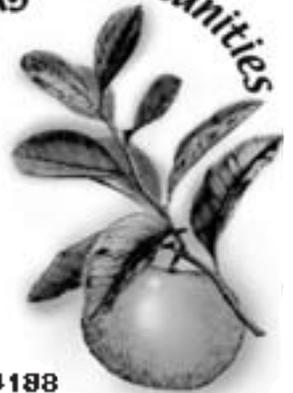
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CAFF's Proud of These 2007 Achievements

Buy Fresh Buy Local



- Published Central Coast and Bay Area Local Food Guides—and distributed 50,000 copies!
- Website developments include online food guide which covers 32 of 58 counties in the state with nearly 1,000 entries. See www.buylocalca.org.
- Opened Oakland Office

Growers' Collaborative



- Began an Institutional Partnership with UC Berkeley
- Began operating in the Sacramento Valley and the Central Coast
- Increased sales by over 200% between 2006 and 2007

Sustainable Cotton Project

- Made first sale of 40,000 pounds of Cleaner Cotton™
- Submitted a logo for trademark
- Hosted two successful Farm Tours to help apparel industry representatives understand the realities of California cotton production
- Developed a workbook to help cotton growers assess and improve their operations

Some Plans For 2008



- Expand Bay Area's Local Food Guide to include 16 counties (up from 9)
- Develop a local food guide in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles
- Develop a Fiber Footprint Calculator