

Agriculture by Suzanne Rose

USDA: Farming poisons people

The advocates of "sustainable" agriculture are on the war path, to shut down high-technology farming.

Policies that were once the exclusive concern of health faddists and co-prophages are now becoming mainstream agriculture policy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture itself has sponsored three national conferences on "sustainable" (low input or subsistence) agriculture since Jan. 1, and participated in countless more on the state level.

During the week of March 12, Washington, D.C. was a three-ring circus of meetings and congressional briefings on the topic of how modern agriculture is poisoning people. Meryl Streep, Barry Commoner, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, and various congressmen all got into the act.

On March 8, the USDA's Patrick Madden keynoted a conference on sustainable agriculture in Omaha, Nebraska, offering it as a cure-all for whatever ails you. Madden said it will reduce our dependence on imported oil and solve the unemployment problem, by creating jobs on the farm for "workers skilled in weed control" whose labor will replace herbicides.

A week later, Madden sponsored another sustainable agriculture conference in Washington, D.C. with Ralph Nader's Center for Science and the Public Interest. Addressing this conference were Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (R-Vt.), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Both told participants that the time was ripe for the federal government to fund sustainable agriculture, as opposed to traditional agriculture, through the 1990 farm bill and through the Wyche Fow-

ler bill, which mandates unprecedented regulations and penalties against the family farmer.

Participation at the March 16 meeting included the food cartel-controlled American Farmland Trust and Conservation Foundation, the Land Stewardship Project, and the grassroots eco-fascist movement, led by the Texas, Minnesota, and North Dakota Departments of Agriculture and including Dan Levitas's Prairiefire movement, which is backed by the Department of Justice.

The philosophy of the movement can best be expressed through the speech of the representative from Winrock Institute (Winthrop Rockefeller), Fee Busby, at the Omaha meeting. He attacked the American farmer for "imperialism," and called on man to accept subjugation by nature. "The attitude that nature must be conquered carried over to the 20th century and helped farmers become overly dependent on pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers. We are moving toward a recognition that nature dominates man."

The dirty underbelly of the movement was represented by another registrant at the conference, Serena Dossenkos, the vice president of an organic farming business in North Dakota called FUTURE Organics, Inc. (Farmers Utilizing Techniques Ultimately Restoring Ecology).

FUTURE advertises itself as part of a national network of organic growers and distributors. They hold conferences in North Dakota to promote organic farming. Serena and her husband Barry, the president of FU-

TURE, were raided by police and charged with manufacturing and selling illegal drugs, including LSD, in December 1987. Besides finding quantities of drugs on their farm, also found were, according to press accounts, uncut diamonds and cash. The Dossenkos publish a New Age newsletter called FUTURE (Forming Unity Toward Ultimate Regenerative Evolution), which promotes prophecy, ecology, and "the psychology of world unity." Barry Dossenkos is reputed to be the man upon whom the Satanic figure "the Wiz" was modeled in Maurie Terry's book, *The Ultimate Evil*.

A number of states have been funding sustainable agriculture, including Iowa, where the legislature just passed a bill to fund it through a tax on pesticide use. In Minnesota, the state Department of Agriculture has given out \$300,000 in grants for sustainable agriculture.

Several farmers attacked the policy at a "grassroots" meeting sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project in western Minnesota on March 13. One farmer challenged the chairman: "These experiments you are funding have already been conducted and farmers have been operating on their results for decades. Tell the nun you are giving \$30,000 to experiment with the rotary hoe that it is a far more labor-intensive way to deal with weeds than herbicides; it exposes the ground to wind erosion, and you can't use it when the land is wet. We should be defending our right to use the latest technologies to feed a starving world. Your method is totally unscientific. You are starting with a bias—to prove we don't need chemicals. The Land Stewardship Project was founded by the social engineers at the World Council of Churches. The cartels sit on its board. It is nothing but a tool of the environmentalist lobby. What you are saying is an outrage."