AGROECOLOGY
NEWSLETTER APRIL 2006 VOL.1 NO.2
MASTER'S OF SCIENCE (UMB)

WHAT IS AGROECOLOGY

The academic field that bridges agriculture, nature and society.

Agroecology links practice and science in describing, analyzing, and managing complex agroecosystems. We focus on integrating ecology, agriculture, socio-economics, and culture with an ultimate goal of sustaining production, food security, community and environmental health.



IN THIS ISSUE:

What is Agroecology?	1
Student Profile: Petra Bakewell-Stone	1
Organic Stakeholders' Forum in Tanzania	1
Creating a Nordic Regional Agroecology Research Network	2
Student Profile: Corinne Kolm	2

STUDENT PROFILE : PETRA BAKEWELL-STONE



Petra Bakewell-Stone

Agroecology Researcher in Tanzania

Research Goal: To assess and enhance organic agriculture's contribution to sustainable livelihoods and food security amongst Complex-Diverse-Risk-prone (CDR) smallholders in Tanzania. The research surrounds the comparison of growing cashew crops for export and vegetables for local markets and the effect on smallholder livelihoods.

ORGANIC STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM IN TANZANIA

Based on prior experience, Petra Bakewell-Stone knew that organic farming in Tanzania had great potential. In March 2006 she organized a workshop at the Sokoine University of Agriculture near Morogoro with 25 people including farmers, marketing groups, academics, and government agencies. Over two days, the group identified the key challenges that were market development, standards and certification, research and education, production, policy, and institutional development. There were several primary questions in each area and the attendees prepared a joint strategy to solve these challenges. The workshop ended with a press conference and announcement of how the various groups would cooperate to meet their goals. This is an excellent example of action education as part of MSc thesis research.

AGROECOLOGY MSC PROGRAM UMB

Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)
P.O Box 5003
N-1432 Ås
Norway

Tel: +47 64 96 50 00
Other: +47 64 96 56 44
Fax: +47 64 96 50 01
E-mail: postmottak@umb.no
www.umb.no

The Student Information Center
Phone: +47 64 96 61 00
Email: opptak@umb.no/studie
www.umb.no/studie

Nordic School of Agroecology/ Ecological Agriculture
Phone: +47 64 96 56 44
Email: geir.lieblein@umb.no
www.agroasis.com

Editor
Andrea Lawseth



AGROECOLOGY MASTER'S OF SCIENCE (UMB)

CREATING A NORDIC REGIONAL AGROECOLOGY NETWORK

Francis, Breland, Lieblein (UMB), Salomonsson, Geber (SLU), Sriskandarajah, Langer, Porter (KVL), and Helenius (UH)



In our Nordic ecoregion with shot growing season and limited land, we highly depend on other places for imported food. To create stronger local food systems and substitute for imports can improve local farm incomes and food security, but it will take a creative use of available resources including graduates in agroecology. In a series of meetings, the regional AGROASIS group has developed a set of working priorities for research that will make a difference in the food system.

Priority research areas address a range of issues across the scale of systems hierarchy from soil fertility and pest management in the field to regional questions such as profitable farming without subsidies, national goals for reaching a certain level of organic food, and structure and function of agricultural universities. Examples of these goals are:

- Design of integrated crop/animal system to reduce chemical fertilizer needs
- Resilience and production stability in complex crop/animal systems
- Compatibility of diverse farms with multifunctional rural landscapes
- Optimum levels of farming system biodiversity for providing ecosystem services
- Contingent valuation of environmental costs and benefits in farming systems
- National priorities for organic food and distribution of benefits
- Systems education in the future university learning landscape

Today's research priorities are often set by individual interests, specific disciplines, and sources of funding. We plan to take a systems approach to setting research priorities for the network and encouraging MSc and PhD students to take on the challenge of moving the agenda forward to help better the economics and sustainability of food systems.

[to be presented in IFSA Conference, May 2006, Wageningen, Netherlands]

STUDENT PROFILE : CORINNE KOLM



Corinne Kolm

Coordinator of the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Nebraska Campaign,
Nebraska, USA

Buy Fresh, Buy Local is a new local food outreach and marketing initiative sponsored by several area non-profit groups. The campaign uses promotional materials, media outreach and public events to increase awareness of the many quality food products grown and raised in Nebraska and to make access to local food outlets more convenient. It is slated for launch in May 2006 and is based on successful campaigns operating in other states in the United States.