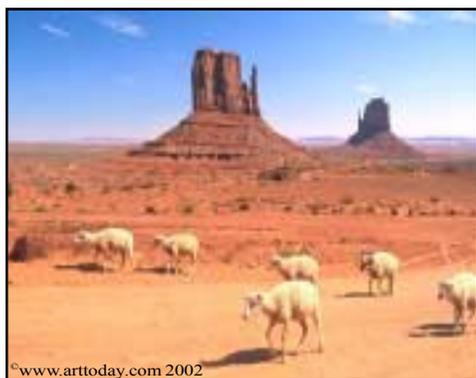




## NCAT's Four Corners Project wins Kellogg Foundation support

Thanks to support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Four Corners Office of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), in Durango, Colorado, is leading a wide-ranging project to increase the number of locally owned and environmentally sound farms, ranches, and food enterprises in the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah.

This three-year project's initial funding comes from a \$497,574 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan.



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The Kellogg Foundation sponsored a 1995 survey of the needs of small farms and ranches in the Four Corners region, as well as a 1999 Wallace Institute visioning session that addressed marketing challenges throughout the Four Corners. The participants in the study included Jim Dyer, NCAT's Four Corners Coordinator, who is also the Director for the current project. What the group found was an acute need for information on several topics, but especially about networking, value-added enterprises, and direct marketing.

Farms and ranches in the Four Corners are often scattered in remote areas, with poor telecommunications, and difficult access to agricultural information and resources. What the small farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners need, the study concluded, is sustainable access to more markets and more information about sustainable agriculture.

Building upon existing marketing alliances and initiatives, the Four Corners Project aims to create a regional marketing network designed to increase the incomes and ensure the viability of small farms and ranches in the region. Among the things this network will provide are technical and financial assistance, business and marketing training, and demonstration projects that illustrate how the network can help enhance the lives and livelihoods of small farmers and ranchers.

NCAT's Four Corners Project will bring to the problems that area farmers and ranchers face a "systems perspective" on the total food network — produc-

*Continued on page 2*

### Events

**May 8-11.** The Organic Trade Association's 2002 All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show. Austin Convention Center. Austin, TX. Information available on the web at <<http://www.ota.com>> or by e-mailing <[AllThingsOrganic@home.com](mailto:AllThingsOrganic@home.com)>.

*During the Conference, NCAT/ATTRA Agricultural Specialists [Holly Born](#) and [George Kuepper](#) will be fielding questions about the new USDA standards for organic producers and certifiers.*

*The Trade Show will be open Friday, 10 May, and Saturday, 11 May, with exhibitors from across the country and around the world.*

## New and Updated ATTRA Publications

- Nutrient Cycling in Pastures (new)
- Organic Small Grain Production (new)
- Sources of "Spraying Prohibited" signs for Organic Farms (new)
- Organic Asparagus Production (update)
- Organic Field Corn Production (update)
- Bison Production (update)
- Rotational Grazing (update)
- Specialty Lettuce and Greens: Organic Production (update)

*Also available from ATTRA are two new publications from the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN):*

- Profitable Poultry: Raising Birds on Pasture
- Profitable Pork: Strategies for Hog Producers

See our website at <<http://www.attra.ncat.org>> for a complete list of ATTRA publications.

**Call 1-800-346-9140 today to receive your copy**

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## Staff Spotlight: George Kuepper

Officially, George Kuepper is a Program Specialist and leader of both the ATTRA Horticulture/Agronomy Team and the Organic Task Force. But we should probably just call him Mr. Organic. Since joining the NCAT/ATTRA team in 1995, George has authored dozens of ATTRA publications about organic farming, everything from production practices to pest control to fertilizers. Currently, under a contract with the National Organic Program and National SARE, George is developing sustainability and compliance check sheets for the new USDA organic standards. These check sheets will be invaluable to both producers and certifiers.

In addition to his prolific writing on organics and other topics, George regularly fields queries that come in to our 800-number, develops and coordinates new projects, participates in conferences and workshops, and reviews his colleagues' publications. (It's rumored he also has some spare time, but no one really believes it.)

If you contact ATTRA about matters organic, you will probably end up with one of George's publications. He is one of the reasons that ATTRA is America's comprehensive source for information about sustainable agriculture and alternative farming. But, to be fair, he can't sing worth a hoot.

*Continued from page 1*

tion, processing, distribution, and consumption. A primary goal of the Project is to foster self-sustaining food systems for the Four Corners region.

According to Dyer, "What this project is all about is getting the best marketing information, skills, and resources to the producers who need it most, and linking farmers, ranchers, and producers' groups, so they can learn effectively from one another."

Based on income, more than 90 percent of all farms and ranches in the Four Corners fit the definition of "small" farms established by the USDA. It is these small farmers and ranchers, and especially those in the traditionally underserved Hispanic and Native American communities, who will benefit most directly from the project, as will producers employing organic and other low-impact agricultural alternatives.

Bringing together existing education and marketing efforts in the region and building on their combined strength, the project will improve communication among farmers and ranchers, agricultural information providers, and educators, by organizing annual Small Farm and Ranch Marketing Conferences, publishing a quarterly newsletter, and launching a website to direct farmers and ranchers to area-specific resources.

In addition, the project will focus vigorous outreach efforts on the traditionally underserved communities and compile databases, available on-line and in other forms, that will include agricultural organizations, local food projects, and resources for successful marketing.

The project will also encourage Four Corners farmers and ranchers to be aware of legislation and policy that might affect them. Along with that initiative, the project will work to gain greater access to Farmers' Markets for people receiving public assistance, such as those in the WIC and Electronic Benefit Transfer (food stamp) programs.

Project Director Jim Dyer is long familiar with the challenges and opportunities of the region. Teresa Maurer, ATTRA Project Manager, will link this project with other NCAT resources and personnel, including those available through ATTRA.

By this summer, the project will conclude its initial survey of participating farms and ranches, identify the first model projects, and begin the first marketing training for small farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners region.

*For information about the Four Corners Project, contact Jim Dyer, Project Director, 2727 CR 134, Hesperus, CO 81326, 970-588-2292, <[jadyer@frontier.net](mailto:jadyer@frontier.net)>.*

## Opportunities

### Grazing Essay Contest for Youth

The American Forage and Grassland Council is soliciting entries for its Youth in Grazing Management Essay Contest, funded by R.L. and Pat Dalrymple of Ardmore, Oklahoma. There are three age groups for contestants. The essays must be original compositions, either typed or legibly hand written, about anything to do with grazing management, including personal experiences, grazing practices, livestock management, fencing and equipment, etc. The deadline is May 1, 2002. Send entries to: AFGC, P.O. Box 94, Georgetown, TX 78627. Complete details are available on the web at: <<http://www.afgc.org/copyg001.html>>.

### USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service Announces Grant Opportunities

In February, the USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service announced that \$2.1-million is available for Rural Business Opportunity Grants to provide technical assistance for business development and economic development planning in rural communities. To ensure that a broad range of communities can benefit from the funds, the Service expects no grants to exceed \$50,000, unless they are multi-state projects, which may be funded up to \$150,000.

Additionally, the Service has earmarked \$3-million for Native Americans, the Mississippi Delta, Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Rural Economic Area Partnerships. There is no dollar-limit for projects using these earmarked funds.

Additional information about the application process and review criteria for these grants is available at:

<<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/buspr/rbog.htm>>.

## Interview: James E. Horne

James E. (Jim) Horne, Ph.D., is the President and CEO of the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was born and raised in southwestern Oklahoma and attended Cameron State Agricultural College and Oklahoma State University. He has been associated with the Kerr Center since 1972. Horne has served as Chairman of the Southern Regional Administrative Council for the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program; as a member of the Scoping Task Force on Sustainable Agriculture for the President's Council on Sustainable Development; and as Chairman of the USDA's National Sustainable Agricultural Advisory Council. His book *The Next Green Revolution*, written with Maura McDermott, Communications Director at the Kerr Center, lays out Horne's indictment of "industrial agriculture" and eight concrete steps toward sustainable agriculture and revitalized rural areas. Horne recently visited the NCAT offices in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where he spoke with staff who work on the ATTRA project. The following are excerpts from those conversations.



**ATTRA:** What do you see as the greatest threat to sustainable agriculture in America today?

**HORNE:** Industrial agriculture, as it is currently practiced, and the institutions, policies, and programs that support it.

**ATTRA:** Why?

**HORNE:** As we argue in *The Next Green Revolution*, industrial agriculture endangers the essential natural resources that support agriculture — soil, water, and the beneficial life forms associated with them. The industrial model has hooked farmers on fossil fuels and the herbicides and pesticides made from petrochemicals, with little regard for their long-term consequences. And, finally, industrial agriculture has devastated rural America, bankrupting farmers and leaving them and their communities vulnerable to exploitation.

**ATTRA:** What are the threats to soil, water, and life forms that you see as stemming from industrial agriculture?

**HORNE:** Erosion of the soil, pollution of the water, and the extinguishing of biodiversity.

**ATTRA:** Erosion and pollution are problems any of us can see or smell. Can you say a little more about problems associated with biodiversity?

**HORNE:** For example, on a small scale, I'm talking about organisms that live in the soil — micro-organisms, fungi, earthworms — things that live in healthy balance in healthy soil. Agricultural chemicals destroy many of these organisms, by altering the environment in which they live. They kill the soil when they kill the beneficial organisms in it. And on a larger scale, I'm talking about monoculture farming and the trend toward uniformity in crops and livestock. Diversity makes our agriculture productive by achieving a favorable environment for the web of life. You can't have a sustainable, geographically diverse agriculture if everybody is raising the same plants and animals. I have tried to cover these issues in *The Next Green Revolution*.

**ATTRA:** You also spoke of the "devastation" of farms and rural communities. What is the connection between sustainable agriculture and the social fabric?

**HORNE:** Simply put, sustainable agriculture will yield healthy rural communities and towns, which I believe are key to the overall health of our nation. Communities need farmers and farmers need their communities. To destroy one destroys the other.

**ATTRA:** How do you define sustainable agriculture?

**HORNE:** What it's not is a universally prescribed set of farming practices. This is one thing that sets sustainable agriculture apart from conventional, industrial agriculture, which claims to be appropriate for every region, every farm. Local conditions and the crops and livestock best fitted for them will largely determine what sustainable practices a farmer should use. But always, sustainable agriculture includes stewardship of both natural and human resources. And in whatever form, sustainable agriculture must incorporate ecology, social goals, and economic viability. Sustainability is farmer driven and it takes a very long view in time.

**ATTRA:** How do we get there?

**HORNE:** Little by little. In *The Next Green Revolution*, we outline eight steps necessary to bring to America a fully sustainable food system. Only farmers can take these steps, but they can't do it alone. It will take the support of governments — both state and federal — of universities, Cooperative Extension, and perhaps most importantly, of consumers. Consumers and farmers are, or ought to be, natural allies. After all, in the end, it's all about food. Policies should be examined to determine whether they contribute to a more sustainable agriculture or if they are an impediment.

**ATTRA:** What projects do you currently have on the front burner at the Kerr Center?

**HORNE:** There are several we're excited about. Our Producer Grant Program is funding farmers who want to develop sustainable systems; we have about thirty of those grants out now. Of course, we have our own 4000-acre Stewardship Ranch, where we try to showcase the best management practices. We're also involved in a lot of public-policy issues, such as contract-growers' rights, environmental concerns about confined-feeding operations, and financial policies that may affect sustainable agriculture. In May, we'll be conducting a Conservation Easement School at the Center, to educate farmers in ways to protect their land from commercial development.

**ATTRA:** Sounds like you've got a lot on your plate.

**HORNE:** Well, we've all got to eat.

**The Next Green Revolution** is available through the Kerr Center website <<http://www.kerrcenter.com>> or by contacting the Haworth Press at <<http://www.haworthpress.com>>, tel. 1-800-HAWORTH.



Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas  
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A project of the National Center for Appropriate Technology

## What a Difference a Year Makes

Last year at this time, we were told of huge federal budget surpluses as far as the eye could see. Congress responded with significantly increased spending in the annual appropriations bills, including large gains for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, the ATTRA program, rural coop development grants, and organic research, among others. Since then, a recession, huge tax cuts, terrorism, and war have intervened, and now the near term federal financial situation is back in deficit with, yes, no end in sight in the immediate future.

Into this new context, the President on February 4th released his budget plan for 2003. It includes a 12 percent increase for the military and a doubling of spending on homeland defense. To pay for all the new spending, the plan holds most domestic programs to a two percent spending increase, which is less than the rate of inflation.

The Administration's budget calls for reversing the increase in SARE, ATTRA, organic research, and rural coop development funding. The President's budget eliminates the Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program. It would also continue the zero-funding status of the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Farmland Protection Program, and Wetlands Reserve Program. It also calls for no funding for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems.

The charts below summarize the USDA budget requests from the Administration for our priority programs and several other programs of interest.

**For information about appropriations, contact Margaret Krome, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, 608-238-1440.**

| Program      | Bush 03 |        |
|--------------|---------|--------|
|              | 2002    | Budget |
| SARE         | 12.5    | 9.2    |
| SARE-PDP     | 4.75    | 3.8    |
| IFS          | 1.25    | ?      |
| ORG RESEARCH | 1.5     | 1      |
| ATTRA        | 2.5     | 2      |
| RCDG         | 0.25    | 4      |
| RBEG         | 46      | 44     |
| CONS OPS     | 779     | 897    |
| RC&D         | 48      | 52     |
| FSMIP        | 1.3     | 1.3    |
| NOP          | 1.6     | 1      |
| FMNP         | 25 / 15 | 0      |
| SR FMNP      | 10      | 0      |
| SDA          | 3.2     | 3.2    |
| SMG          | 3.5     | 4      |
| DFO          | 147     | 100    |
| DOL          | 611.2   | 600    |
| GOL-S        | 505.5   | 300    |
| EQUIP        | 187     | 200    |
| FPP          | 0       | 0      |
| WHIP         | 0       | 0      |
| WRP          | 0       | 0      |
| CFSA         | 2.5     | 0      |
| FRA          | 0       | 0      |
| IFAFS        | 0       | 0      |

### DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| SARE         | Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (CSREES)          |
| SARE-PDP     | SARE (Chapter 3) Professional Development Program (CSREES)       |
| IFS          | Integrated Farming Systems partnerships (ARS)                    |
| Org research | Organic Transition Program (CSREES)                              |
| ATTRA        | Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (RBCS)           |
| RCDG         | Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RBCS)                      |
| RBEG         | Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBCS)                          |
| RE&D         | Resource Conservation & Development (NRCS)                       |
| CONS OPS     | Conservation Operations (Technical Assistance) (NRCS)            |
| FSMIP        | Federal-State Market Improvement Program (AMS)                   |
| NOP          | National Organic Program   |
| OFPA         | Organic Foods Production Act (AMS)                               |
| FMNP         | Farmers Market Nutrition Program (part of the WIC program)       |
| SR FMNP      | Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program                         |
| SDA          | Outreach and Tech. Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers |
| SMG          | State Mediation Grants (FSA)                                     |
| DFO          | Direct Farm Ownership Loans (FSA)                                |
| DOL          | Direct Farm Operating Loans (FSA)                                |
| GOL-S        | Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans - Subsidized (FSA)               |

### MANDATORY PROGRAMS

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| EQUIP | Environmental Quality Incentives Program (NRCS)             |
| FPP   | Farmland Protection Program (NRCS)                          |
| WHIP  | Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (NRCS)                   |
| WRP   | Wetlands Reserve Program (NRCS)                             |
| CFSA  | Community Food Security Act (CSREES)                        |
| FRA   | Fund for Rural America (RD/CSREES/Secretary)                |
| IFAFS | Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (CSREES) |

## USDA FY03 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

April 2002

### ATTRAnews

**Teresa Maurer, ATTRA Project Manager**  
**Paul Williams, ATTRAnews Editor**  
**Gail Hardy, Art and Production**

ATTRAnews is the quarterly newsletter of Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas. It is distributed free throughout the United States to farmers, ranchers, Cooperative Extension agents, educators, and others interested in sustainable agriculture. ATTRA is a primary source of information about sustainable agriculture in America. ATTRA is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service and is a project of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), a private, non-profit corporation that since 1976 has championed sustainable technologies and community development that protect natural resources and assist people, especially the economically disadvantaged, to become self-reliant.

