



2nd Annual Stinner Summit

Promoting Healthy Agroecosystems
and Sustainable Communities
September 19, 2008, Malabar Farm, Lucas Ohio

With no power in the Main Barn at Malabar Farm, along with many communities throughout Ohio due to Hurricane Ike winds, the Pugh Cabin was a perfect plan “B” for the location of the 2nd Annual Stinner Summit on September 19, 2008. The rustic cabin is tucked in the woods in the Malabar Farm State Park and has a different power provider than Louis Bromfield’s big house and barn.

With the help of the Malabar staff, the Summit was set up and ready to go when the first guests arrived Friday Morning. Over 80 people from across the state and new partners from Michigan and Pennsylvania joined in, more than doubling last year’s attendance.

The Stinner Summit honors the memory of Ben Stinner whose work in promoting healthy agroecosystems and building sustainable communities continues on through an endowment established after his untimely death.



Leah Miller helps with registration duties in front of the historic Pugh Cabin at Malabar Farm

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The Stinner Endowment creates the opportunity for people and organizations to network together throughout the year, then select and fund a project at the annual summit to promote sustainability of agriculture and rural communities in Ohio.

The day’s agenda was to present the accomplishments of the past year and for the Summit participants to select a new project for 2009.

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AVI, the institutional food provider for such colleges and universities as Kenyon College, sponsored a welcoming buffet featuring locally grown sweet watermelon, Ohio artisan cheeses, organic coffee, just-picked Ohio apples and cider and still warm from the oven gourmet breads. AVI has shown real leadership in promoting Ohio's locally grown food to their many customers and have been participants in previous Stinner Summit meetings.



Allen Zimmerman, Kurt Knebusch and Steve Fortenberry check out the morning coffee break

Introductions began at 10am. Casey Hoy, the Kellogg Endowed Chair in Agricultural Ecosystems Management at the OARDC, recounted his Argentinean ant story from the previous Summit - how the ants work together for the survival of their species and comparing it to an idea presented in Paul Hawkins book, *Blessed Unrest*.

Hawkins concludes that the phenomenon of many organizations each doing their own thing to promote important causes like social justice or environmental issues, with no specific encompassing leadership, is possibly the result of an inner drive to sustain the species and take care of the planet. The act itself may be driven by instinct – just like the ants.

But Casey also talked about choice and its importance in selecting and defining the work we do. Last year the group chose a project to sponsor a workshop focusing on the issues and roadblocks affecting the distribution infrastructure for Ohio growers. A committee then organized the Leap into Local Foods Workshop, held this past February.

Multiple workgroups were formed at the workshop based on areas of interest. Each group identified the opportunities and the issues they felt needed to be discussed in order to increase the production, distribution and consumption of foods grown in Ohio. The group then decided to stay in communication, meet when necessary and take the initiative to make things happen.

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Another important outcome of last years Stinner Summit was the development of an innovative networking website – the Ohio Local Foods System Collaborative.

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The OLFSC has become the “go-to” site for networking, posting, sharing and discussing news and issues affecting local food production and consumption in Ohio. As a result, the working groups and the number of site subscribers have doubled since the workshop. A \$1.1 million proposal based on this work has now been recommended for funding by the USDA!

www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/amp/olfsc

All this activity meant that the morning of the 2nd Summit was filled with updating by working groups formed during the past year. Key members of each group reported on their progress and upcoming plans.

The working groups include:

- Urban Healthy Food Access
- Meat Processing
- Consumer Education
- Greener Acres
- NEO Food Congress
- Regional and National Partners
- Value-Added (all foods)
- Logistics & Transportation for Local Foods
- Marketing Local
- Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council
- Institutional Food Service—Buying Local
- Small Grains Information Clearing House
- Value-Added Dairy
- Local Food System Modeling & Data Mining



Networking and catching up prior to the start of the Summit

Lunch was catered by the Malabar Farm Restaurant. Featuring all local food, the delicious buffet offered pulled pork sandwiches, vegetable lasagna, local greens, polenta and a stir fry of garden fresh squash and peppers. Dessert was apple tart tatin in puff pastry with caramel sauce.

The pork was supplied by the J.B. King Family Farm in Albany. Chef Daniel from the Malabar Farm Restaurant created the incredible menu and a memorable luncheon for the Summit.

The meeting convened after lunch by creating new groups to brainstorm new project ideas. The group was encouraged to consider all possibilities and go in any direction they wanted. It wasn't necessary to continue on with last year's theme.

After several sessions of describing and refining possibilities, two similar project ideas evolved and won the majority of votes as top priorities.

The two ideas will be coalesced into one project to purchase a small-scale piece of equipment to be used for on-farm processing and possibly production as well.

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An advisory committee will now be self-selected to research and purchase the equipment, using the endowment funds.

The equipment will most likely be housed at the Mellinger Farm of OARDC, where its use can be demonstrated, and will be mobile so that it can be loaned to startup enterprises throughout the state and region.

The day ended with recognizing the hospitality of the beautiful Malabar Farm facilities, the generous contribution by AVI for the coffee break buffet and, of course, for all the enthusiasm and work done by the Summit participants. Plans are now being made to host the 3rd Annual Stinner Summit in the Main Barn next year. Ben Stinner would be proud to know that his work lives on.

The Agroecosystems Management Program

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Contact the AMP office
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interested in serving on the
advisory committee.

Steps toward completion of
the project are:

1. Research the availability of mobile and appropriate scale technology.
2. Engage engineers and food scientists in design of the system.
3. Determine funding needed to purchase/construct the equipment.
4. Design a management strategy for the equipment that makes it available to producers and keeps it self-supporting.



Excellent Brainstorming at the Stinner Summit