

## Peasants, Pitchforks and a Perfect Food Supply

By Kimberly Hartke | Published on <http://hartkeisonline.com>: April 22, 2009

Yesterday, the National Independent Consumers and Farmers Association held its third annual Farm Food Voices lobby day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Farmers and Consumers spent the day lobbying their respective elected officials, the emphasis was anti-NAIS, Pro-Food Freedom, and Pro-Sustainable Agriculture.

At the end of a tiring day of meetings with legislative aids, Congressmen and Senators, the citizen lobbyists invited Congress to a lavish Farm Food Feast, held in the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Room (at least our U.S. Senate makes the connection between agriculture and nutrition!)

The reception was catered by Jerry Hollinger of Dish Caterers, and he was assisted by Monica Corrado, of Simply Being Well, Eric Johnson, of Krishon Chocolates, Carla Hall of Alchemy Catering, and Camille Dierksheide, of The Beehive catering. All the food at the event was sourced or donated from sustainable, traditional small farms.

Many of the farmers who supplied the food were in attendance and personally introduced, by Liz Reitzig, President of the Maryland Independent Consumers and Farmers Association, who coordinated the donations.

Emcee for the event was Joel Salatin, gentleman farmer and self confessed farm food radical. He opened the reception by saying, "Illegal food has descended on Washington!" He went on to talk about how our current industrial agricultural system was falling apart, and that a myriad of large scale food borne illness outbreaks were the strongest indication of that fact. "And now, we are here, the peasants with the pitchforks, to clean up the mess and offer the solution!"

Congressman Ron Paul was unable to attend at the last minute, but he did send his legislative aid, Paul-Martin Foss, who thanked the crowd for making their voices heard on the Hill. He spoke of Ron Paul's commitment to limited government, personal liberty and freedom to access the food of one's own choice. He gave as an example, Congressman Paul's sponsorship of HR 778, which would allow the interstate sale of raw milk to resume (Interstate sales of raw milk were banned in 1986 by the FDA [*Editor's note: the request for the ban came from Ralph Nader, who got the FDA to pressure a judge to issue an edict from the bench*]).

Joel then introduced Virginia 5<sup>th</sup> District Congressman Tom Perriello, who told the crowd, "We will never begin to

### VICFA Annual Meeting Sunday June 14, 2009

The VICFA Annual Meeting, with election of officers and board members, will be Sunday June 14, 2009 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Polyface Farm in Swoope, Virginia. Directions to the meeting will be published in the June issue of VICFA Voice.

address the American health care crisis, unless we look at what we are putting in our bodies. And, we will never solve our environmental crisis unless we look at the carbon footprint issues. How we produce food and where it comes from are at the core of these bigger issues."

The next speaker, Sally Fallon Morell, President of the Weston A. Price Foundation, was introduced by Salatin as the person who was doing more to stimulate the re-connections between local farmers and consumers, than anyone else in America.

Sally's remarks rebutted the common misperception that only industrial agriculture can feed the world. She cited numerous disease outbreaks in confinement farms as proof that large scale farms create large scale disasters. She also brought out the fact that, "the genetic pool of livestock breed for factory farms is very narrow which makes our food supply vulnerable to being wiped out completely by disease, creating an animal "dust bowl." She echoed Salatin's sentiment, that our only hope for restoring a health-giving food supply is the mixed use, small family farm, which would not only feed the nation safely, but bring our U.S. economy back to vibrant health.

Alexis Baden-Mayer, who represented the Organic Consumers Association at the event, said that the Farm Food Voices was the most exciting event she ever attended in Washington. She said the speeches were tremendously inspiring, and she couldn't wait to tell her colleagues and friends all about it. OCA has 240,000 people who subscribe to their email list, let's hope next year OCA joins their many voices with ours for Farm Food Voices 2010. We could sure raise a ruckus!

William Bradford, an activist from Pennsylvania credits  
(Continued on page 2)

# Notes from April 2009 VICFA Meeting

by Anne Buteau and Deborah Stockton

VICFA held the April 2009 meeting at Anne Buteau's home in Shipman. The March minutes were approved and the Treasurer's report given.

## Old Business:

**Tom Perriello Meeting:** Kathryn Russell reported on the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Town Hall meeting about local food with Congressman Tom Perriello that she, Rowena Morrell, John Coles, Ed Pearson, Debbie Stockton, Kathy Rash and other members attended in Charlottesville on April 8. More than 50 attendees with about 30 different agendas, all related in some way to local food, shared their perspectives. A few topics were NAIS, the subsidizing of processed foods, and providing local food to the poor. VICFA members assured Perriello that independent small producers are not looking for a financial handout, just freedom to trade without the government intruding.

**Food-Based Businesses Workshop in Charlottesville (3/6/09 and 4/15/09):** (see article this issue)

**NAIS Roundtable Discussion with Ag Sec. Vilsack in DC (4/15/09)** Kathryn Russell reported that twenty-nine speakers from mostly national agricultural organizations were given up to five minutes to present their respective cases for or against NAIS. Kathryn had a copy of the statement Liz Reitzig presented on behalf of NICFA, a useful document to copy and pass out to friends and neighbors. There was a lot of unexpected opposition to NAIS. Support is wavering. Farm Bureau and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, among others, opposed mandatory NAIS.

**Farm Food Voices DC 2009:** (see article this issue)

## NEW BUSINESS:

**Farm Food Voices Virginia at PVCC:** FFVV will be Sunday 2nd August from 3:00 -6:00 p.m. at Piedmont Virginia Community College, off I-64 just south of Charlottesville. The theme will be "Local Food Promoting Local Economic Health." We need

- a) Advertisers for the program
- b) Silent Auction Prize Donations
- c) MORE FOOD than last year, and members need to be there earlier to get the food on the tables!

[There was no legislative brunch in Richmond this year SPECIFICALLY so food providers would not get "burned

out" and could be generous at our own Farm Food Voices event. We anticipate that a Sunday afternoon is a more family friendly time, and we don't want to run out of food too soon]. Rowena Morrell volunteered to naje sign up sheets for silent auction items but needs the complete list by mid July.

**County Fairs:** Willard Lutz has investigated the cost of displaying at Shenandoah and Rockingham County fairs. They are pretty expensive and as they last 9 and 10 days it would be very hard to get volunteers to man a booth that long. It is a challenge every year to staff the booth at The State Fair. Newbies are very welcome, you get free admission and a chance to educate many. It can be very rewarding!

**Garlic Festival:** Dick Stevens reported that we have been invited by Richard Hanson of Rebec Vineyard in Amherst County to have a free booth at their Garlic Festival the 2nd weekend in October. It is attended by thousands of people. These two days sounded like a great opportunity, so we voted to attend the festival.

## Other news:

- Nelson County Farmers Market Co-op has a Wednesday market from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. in Lovingsston at the Nelson Center. In May a farmers and producers market starts in Schuyler at "Walton's Mtn Museum" on Saturdays.
- Christine Solem reported she is awaiting developments in Kathryn Russell's scrapie court case.
- Dick Stevens reports he has been sending VA Poultry Breeders Association articles on NAIS from various sources and some have been published.
- Wayne Bolton reports that at his Farm Bureau Resolution Meeting he put in No NAIS, Raw Milk, and Butchering On the Farm resolutions. No one else put in any similar ones. He also met with Tom Perriello at a 5th district constituents Town Hall meeting.
- Ed Pearson reported he had written to Tom Perriello asking why he is not supporting industrial hemp production. Ed feels that oil/petroleum/pulpwood industries are lobbying against it.

Dick moved to adjourn the meeting. Christine seconded and the motion passed.

(From page 1) his diet of farm fresh foods with helping him turn aournd life-threatening digestive issues. He also was very enthusiastic about the event, "I wish we could bring these foods more often to Capitol Hill, to help educate those who are in a position to change our nation's food policies. I overheard some Congressional staffer say that they had never tasted raw cream before and that it was amazing. To

learn more about the National Independent Consumers and Farmers Association, please visit their website, NICFA.org. Please consider contributing to NICFA and attending next year's event. Meanwhile, keep those cards, letters and phone lines buzzing. Congress needs to know that people like you want real food!

## NICFA Meets With USDA Officials at FFVDC 2009

by Kathryn Russell

At Farm Food Voices DC 2008, NICFA representatives met with Bruce Knight, then USDA Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Affairs, who was in charge of attempting to implement NAIS. This year NICFA representatives from New Jersey to Colorado met with Knight's pro tem replacement. Cindy Smith, along with Neil Hammerschmidt, Coordinator National Animal Identification Systems USDA APHIS Veterinary Services. Hammerschmidt is one of the original architects of NAIS. Cindy Smith principal job is Administrator of the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) which oversees NAIS.

NICFA folks offered their differing views on why the food safety bills were not about food safety and why NAIS is not an option that many farmers and ranchers throughout the country will accept. The resounding message was that We Will NOT Comply. The meeting began with Cindy Smith asking general questions of Greg Niewendorp, who explained succinctly that using disease eradication programs as vehicles for implementing NAIS was inappropriate. From around the table those comments were expanded upon. Sally Fallon Morrell, president of the Weston A. Price foundation, gave input as to the disasters that similar programs have been in other countries and actually have not improved the export market. At that point Cindy Smith asked for evidence, and Jonas Stolfus of Pennsylvania presented a Wise Traditions magazine with the data, telling Ms. Smith that he had promised it to someone else but would make sure she got a copy. From that point there was little input from either Cindy Smith or Neil Hammerschmidt. They were taking notes, in the manner of good bureaucrats wanting you to know they are listening,

but offered little in the way of their thoughts.

Blane Friest of New Jersey presented the view of a consumer from the most densely populated Congressional district in the country. He contended that consumer demand was going to support the farmer on this issue, as consumers become aware of the struggle their farmer producers are facing. Liz Reitzig, President of Maryland ICFA, and her 8 month old son Duncan, concurred with Friest on the consumers desire to support local farmers, and she emphasized that demand for fresh local food was not going away. In fact it is growing, and consumers are behind their local producers 100%.

Wade Wilson from Colorado spoke for the ranchers in his area. He explained how effective and inexpensive branding laws have been in place for generations out west and that NAIS would do nothing more than the current branding system does for traceback and disease concerns. He also repeated the statement of non-compliance.

John Esh, an Amish farmer from Pennsylvania, added to the non-compliance voice, pointing out that many of the Amish believe that NAIS represents the Mark of the Beast, and they will not participate.

Expanding on non-compliance, the other issues brought up can be gathered into one basket—the USDA is presenting a program that will not do what it claims to do, is not supported by data or factual information, and is, in fact, being unethically and untruthfully implemented without statutory authority. Cindy Smith extended our meeting time several minutes over, was polite and non-confrontational, and agreed to pass our concerns on to Secretary Vilsack. We hope to have a follow up meeting with the Secretary to continue to voice opposition to the NAIS plan.

## VDACS Tries to Undermine Home Kitchen Bill

by Deborah Stockton

Good ol' VDACS. They just can't stand it that the Home Kitchen Bill has re-legalized some of our inalienable rights to do what people have done as a normal practice since the beginning of humanity: Feed their neighbors with food they produce themselves. Does VDACS not recognize that our ancestors somehow survived without them? And that every, single day we feed ourselves and each other food they declare dangerous?

My favorite example of VDACS-think is when Carlton Courter, in his former capacity of VA Commissioner of Agriculture, testified against a raw milk bill at the VA Senate Ag Committee by saying very heatedly, "I grew up drinking raw milk, but I *stopped* when I went to college and found out how dangerous it was!" Now there's logic for you. Are you still driving a car Carlton?

Back to the present.

In February, Christine Solem heard from an individual who had made the mistake of calling VDACS to *ask* what she could bake and sell according to the new Home Kitchen Bill. She was told that recipes for jams and jellies had to be submitted to VDACS for approval (false) and that baked goods could not be sold if they contained any potentially hazardous ingredients such as dairy products and eggs (false). She had the good sense to call Christine who immediately contacted VDACS, taking issue with their statements and asking for a response in writing. Finally, after she sent them a reminder, Tod Haymore, current Commissioner, responded, citing the law and essentially rescinding their earlier statements contrary to the law.

Then again at the food-based businesses workshop (see article this issue) a professor from Virginia Tech, an “authority” in such matters, told would-be pickle makers that they had to take a Tech sponsored course in order to sell pickles (false). Fortunately, Christine was there and requested they look at the regulation right then, which they found on the internet, and she showed where the course requirement applied only to someone *supervising* pickle-making at a plant.

Sadly, this is not unusual behaviour for VDACS or Tech. In fact, it is their stock in trade.

Some people who do not deal with this on a regular basis, as we do, think of us as curmudgeonly when it comes to government, or at least agricultural regulations. Well, these are not isolated examples. This is what they do all day every day. And you and I pay for it.

Where is the benefit? There isn't one, except to those whose job security is to our detriment.

## Food Based Business Workshop

by John Coles

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USDA/SARE [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education], Virginia Cooperative Extension, and others (some of whom are in agreement with the purpose of VICFA) sponsored an agricultural and food entrepreneurship workshop for food-based businesses at the Albemarle County Office Building. Most of the March 30<sup>th</sup> session was devoted to Health and Ag Departments' regulatory requirements. A Virginia Tech food microbiologist spoke of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Though voluntary at this time, GAP sounds like NAIS for fruits and vegetables! (See VICFA Voice April 2009 lead article on the “Food Safety” bills for details).

As one would expect from bureaucrats, most of their

presentations were oriented for agribusiness. Even when farmers markets were mentioned there was no mention of direct sale farmers markets. During the panel Q and A session, Christine Solem was able to straighten out various bureaucratic misconceptions, i.e. (1) a permit is not required for on-farm slaughter of 20,000 chickens or fewer per year (2) regarding the 2008 Kitchen Bill, milk and eggs can be used for baked goods; recipes for jams and jellies do *not* have to be state approved (3) a course is not required for making pickles if the person making them is selling at a farmers' market (4) the difficulty of small farmers obtaining regulatory exemptions at the VA General Assembly due to various agribusiness lobbying interests. She also established through Barry Jones, Office of Meat and Poultry Services, that meat can legally be given away.

The April 6<sup>th</sup> workshop was focused on business planning, liability, and marketing opportunities. To me, most of it was overkill for a small direct marketing business. A bright spot of this session was Andy Hankins of Virginia State University who had a slide of VICFA Vice President Wayne Bolton with a couple of hogs. He also gave VICFA a good plug. It was unexpected, and I thanked him.

The Extension person moderating the workshop was very anti VICFA (partly because we were not a sponsor). He gave no opinion on NAIS except to say it was controversial. A Warrenton Extension agent (one of the panelists) gave me his opinion of NAIS: Mandatory and apply to all farm animals, even for one chicken, one goat, etc... He had to admit that the chances of disease transmission were very slim, but...

Those who controlled the subject matter at the workshop wanted me not to display or formally say anything about the National Animal Identification System. The reason: My information was not educational but advocacy. They do not want to face that a fully implemented NAIS will adversely affect small farms and farm based businesses.

# Wisconsin's War Against Agriculture: Fines, Imprisonment and Property Seizure

by Marti Oakley

**"The first thing they did when they got the authority to write rules ... was to grant themselves the authority to conduct warrant-less searches." --Paul Griepentrog**

In the course of researching various topics, running down leads on information and ferreting out the plans behind the public propaganda used to infringe on one right after another, I sometimes stumble across someone who has so much verifiable information, I am left astounded. This was the case when I happened across a gentleman farmer named Paul Griepentrog while researching the laws or bills about Premises ID and the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

I already knew the mandatory law had been bought and paid for in Wisconsin through the use of a USDA "cooperative agreement" to the tune of 35 million dollars.

In a recent interview I asked Paul to answer a few questions about what is really happening to Wisconsin residents who are being forced onto these illegal programs:

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**Q:** Does the Animal Health Protection Act of 2003 actually authorize the Animal Identification System or Premises ID?

**A:** There is nothing in that bill giving them authority to create or establish the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). That law has been misquoted saying that it is the authority for NAIS. We have repeatedly sent letters to USDA and Tom Vilsack asking him to show the section of that law that gives the authority but he refuses to answer or acknowledge the letters.

**Q:** Has the USDA in collusion with the Wisconsin AG department threatened any farms that you know of?

**A:** Dwayne Brander on behalf of Dr. McGraw, Assistant State Veterinarian, goes out to farms telling them that if they don't renew or register their premises in the State of Wisconsin they will file suit against them for failing to comply, using the county DA and calling it a civil forfeiture.

Wisconsin is in the process of coercing farmers and backyard producers in an effort to force them into NAIS and the accompanying Premises ID program by threatening to withhold any of the licenses they control and would refuse to give the license unless you signed up.

**Q:** Is there a part of the law in Wisconsin that allows for fines and imprisonment based on the sole allegations of these agencies or representative personnel from USDA or DATCP in Wisconsin?

**A:** Here is section 95 from the Wisconsin bill implementing the "voluntary" NAIS/Premises ID law:

## **CHAPTER 95 ANIMAL HEALTH**

### **95.23 Disease investigation and enforcement.**

(1) Authorized inspectors and agents of the department may enter at reasonable times any premises, building or place to investigate the existence of animal diseases or to investigate violations of or otherwise enforce the laws relating to animal health. Any animals or materials suspected of being infected may be examined or tested. No person shall obstruct or interfere with such investigation or enforcement work, or attempt to do so, in any manner, by threat or otherwise.

(2) Upon request of an authorized inspector or agent of the department, sheriffs and police officers shall assist in the enforcement of the laws relating to animal health.

### **95.99 Penalties.**

(1) Any person who violates this chapter, or an order issued or a rule adopted under this chapter, for which a specific penalty is not prescribed shall, for the first offense, be fined not more than \$1,000; and for any subsequent offense fined not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than 6 months or both.////

(2) The department may seek an injunction restraining any person from violating this chapter or any rule promulgated under this chapter.

(3) A person who violates this chapter or any rule promulgated or order issued under this chapter, for which a

specific penalty is not prescribed, may be required to forfeit not less than \$200 nor more than \$5,000 for the first offense and may be required to forfeit not less than \$400 nor more than \$5,000 for the 2nd or subsequent offense committed within 5 years of an offense for which a penalty has been assessed under this section. A forfeiture under this subsection is in lieu of a criminal penalty undersub.

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**Q:** Do citizens have the right to demand a full disclosure of the exact laws and basis under which USDA and Wisconsin have charged them? Is there any defense against these attacks?

**A:** There seems to be none. In the cooperative agreement it states all applicable federal laws shall apply. There are certain major State and Federal Constitutional issues that these laws are in conflict with.

**Q:** Who exactly is asking for this information?

**A:** The Department of Agriculture, State of Wisconsin administered by Assistant State Veterinarian, Dr. Paul McGraw; both knowing this has nothing to do with livestock or food safety. This comes from The World Trade Organization and their trade program OIE, World Organization Animal Health.

**Q:** Where is the information stored? For what purpose?

**A:** Initially intake is at state level, and then it moves through forms records management plan. There are different steps on how they process this information. From everything I read a disease outbreak would give state, federal and international interest's access.

**Q:** Who is storing the information?

**A:** Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and then to Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium with (WLIC) as final repository in Canada. The WLIC is comprised of various agriculture groups, breed associations and companies selling RFID tags.

Rep. Obey & Sen. Kohl helped to get WLIC started and moved the data base to Canada. The head of WLIC initially was Gary Tauchen who is now a Wisconsin representative and sitting on the house AG committee.

In my own case I have been registered twice after the fire number on my property changed. Once under the original number and my name and again under the newly assigned number and my farm name; I did not register for Premises ID on either occasion and was signed up without my knowledge or consent.

**Q:** If the WLIC is listed as the last repository of data mined information, how did files on Wisconsin agricultural properties end up being stored in Canada?

**A:** WLIC with the help of Rep. Obey and Sen. Kohl although I don't know for sure how this was accomplished. The intention was to avoid any Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request or open information requests until they passed the 2008 Farm Bill and included a provision in that

bill saying that these files would not be available to FOIA requests.

**Q:** Who had access to these files when they were outside the country?

**A:** We don't know. Once it was outside US jurisdiction we had no way of knowing.

**Q:** Are you able to get copies of your personal file from the Canadian data bank?

**A:** I was able to obtain the premises information pursuant to the forms records management plan. To my knowledge I am only the second person to do so.

**Q:** We know these programs have nothing to do with tracking animal disease and are actually meant to end competition for industrialized agricultural interests, and to seize control of agricultural lands and livestock....who are the actual players that will benefit from these programs?

**A:** The big corporate industrialized agriculture operators....Cargill, Tyson, Monsanto and others because they would see the end to competition and obtain virtually full control over all agriculture.

**Q:** Are Wisconsin politicians either state or federal willing to speak to you about NAIS, Premises ID or the fake food safety bills?

**A:** On the Federal level, Sen. Kohl and Rep. Obey will not take my calls.

[\*Author's note: I made my own calls to these offices and when I stated what I was calling in reference to, the staffers got really nasty and then hung up].

In fact Sen. Kohl's staffer, Kim Cates' husband is on the Agriculture Consumer Protection Citizen board. He would not even meet with John Kinsman of Family Farm Defenders to discuss the issue.

On the state level are the continuous lies. These people will say Premises ID has nothing to do with NAIS. They say this even though they have been shown the cooperative agreement between USDA and Wisconsin DATCP outlining Premises ID as the first step. They refuse to look at or acknowledge the legal documents.

DATCP had a document on the Wisconsin Legislative information Bureau site saying that the Amish don't have any problem with this. If the Amish don't have a problem with it why are they suing Emmanuel Miller Jr.? An Amish from Clark County.

Steve Kagen would not address our concerns and he's on the US house Ag sub- committee that held a hearing on NAIS and is also involved in the food safety bills and won't address our concerns even there. He is working right now to get funding to move Wisconsin into phase II of NAIS which is the mandatory chipping and tagging of all animals.

I will say that Sen. Feingold has been willing to listen to our concerns both in his Washington office and in the state office.

Although there is a bill in Wisconsin which would restore voluntary participation I feel it is nothing more than an attempt at political redemption by the same people who

passed the mandatory bill to begin with, in that they are fully aware that this bills will be sent to the House Ag committee and never see the light of day. This is merely political posturing.... The house, senate and government are all controlled by Democrats. This may be nothing more than a smoke screen while they make mandatory phase II which is the tagging and chipping, which can't be done unless you have a Premises ID.

In the end, what was billed and sold to Wisconsin farmers and herders as a strictly "voluntary" system turns

out to be a mandatory system operated much like a police state enforcement policy. There can be no doubt, especially in light of the hyped up investigation and enforcement policies that this law in Wisconsin is less about disease and more about property seizure and forfeiture.

Wisconsin is the blueprint for the remaining states: What happens there is going to happen to all independent ranchers, farmers and producers across the country if any of these fake food safety bills, or National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is passed into law.

*Marti Oakley, Wisconsin journalist, Grandmother of five; writer/activist and working artist among other things. Non-partisan and totally disillusioned by the current state of government. Publishes at [www.ppjg.wordpress.com](http://www.ppjg.wordpress.com). Paul Griepentrog, independent farmer, is Vice President of Wisconsin Independent Consumers and Farmers Association.*

## Please Come to VICFA Meetings

*VICFA meetings are open to the public.*

*Please bring a dish and your enthusiasm to share.*

The May, 2009 VICFA meeting will be Sunday, May 10, from 1:00 – 4:00, at Friends of Farmers founder Carroll Anne Friedman's home in Charlottesville.

### DIRECTIONS:

#### From North of Charlottesville

- South on Rt. 29 to the 250 bypass
- West on bypass a few miles to Fontaine Ave.
- At bottom of exit ramp, left on Fontaine Ave.
- About a mile then right on Jefferson Park Ave.
- About a ¼ mile to 2429 on your right

#### From the South

- North on Rt. 29 past I-64 to Fontaine Ave.
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- About a mile then right on Jefferson Park Ave.
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**Information:** Carroll Anne Friedman 434.242.2669  
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### Coming meetings:

- June: Annual Meeting/elections. Joel Salatin's, Polyface Farm, Swoope
- July: Karen Oxford's, Ivy

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