

In Minnesota, confined feeding is required for a minimum of 7 months each year. The investments already made in facilities, feeding systems, and harvest equipment for confined feeding, combined with the familiarity of the confined system, may deter many farmers from switching to grazing for part of the year. However, for new farmers, or farmers who want to expand existing facilities but are limited financially, rotational grazing may be a suitable option. Additional research is needed that examines the impact of grazing in a year-round, total farm system.

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INSTITUTE NEWS

Wallace Institute Report Refutes The "Newest Agricultural Myth"

A new report by the Wallace Institute challenges and refutes the "newest agricultural myth" — that chemically-based intensive agriculture will meet all of our production and environmental goals while feeding between 8–10 billion people in the next century. *Intensive Agriculture and Environmental Quality: Examining the Newest Agricultural Myth*, by Tracy Irwin Hewitt and Katherine R. Smith, presents well-documented, scientific evidence that challenges the assumptions and logic used by Dennis Avery, among others, to support this myth. The report argues that:

- The ecological impacts of chemically-based, intensive agricultural systems are serious and costly.
- The human health risks of pesticide-dependent, intensive agricultural systems are decidedly non-trivial.
- Chemically-based, land-intensive agricultural systems do not guarantee high pro-

ductivity. They may not even sustain high yields.

- Sustainable and/or alternative agricultural production techniques often compete with and sometimes outshine their conventional counterparts.

"We challenge the agricultural research and business communities to investigate the full range of all possible pathways towards the goals of producing adequate food supplies for as many as 10 billion people in the next century," said the authors. According to the report, "no one technological paradigm or class of production systems is likely to prove optimal over all locations and circumstances. . . . A failure to pursue all the alternatives, and the possible synergies among them, is tantamount to irresponsibility."

Intensive Agriculture and Environmental Quality: Examining the Newest Agricultural Myth is \$4 from the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture, 9200 Edmonston Road, #117, Greenbelt, MD 20770; (301) 441-8777; e-mail — hawiaa@access.digex.net

Thompson Farm Report Includes New Info On Weeds And Economics

"Alternatives in Agriculture," the 1995 report published by Thompson On-Farm Research and the Wallace Institute, includes new information on fertility, alternative weed management, and economics, and describes "successes and failures" that are meant to be "helpful to both farmers and the research community." Other chapters cover Inspiration, Documentation, and Education; Cover Crops; Crops; Water Quality — Soil Health; Livestock; and Farming for Better Communities. All the farm's experiments are described in table form at the end of each chapter. The publication of the report and the 1995 research is made possible by the financial support of Mrs. Jean Wallace Douglas through the Wallace Institute. Copies of the report are \$10 plus \$2 postage from Thompson On-Farm Research, 2035 190th St., Boone, IA 50036; (515) 432-1560.

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