

Natural farming grows fast in Northwest

By JOHN MILLS
Of the Emerald

Japanese method shuns pesticides

A revolution in farming will take place in the Northwest over the next 10 years, predicts author and scientist Larry Korn.

Speaking to an audience of mostly organic farmers at the University Wednesday, Korn said "natural farming" is ideally suited to the Northwest. This is because of this area's ecological diversity — from eastern Oregon deserts to coast tidelands — and its similarity to Japan, where natural farming originated.

Natural farming — a process of farming without using most man-made aids — already has progressed faster in the Northwest than in any part of the country, he added.

Korn, who is currently a soil scientist in Sacramento, spent four years on the Fukuoka Farm in Shikoku, located south of Osaka on the inland sea. The Fukuoka family has been growing rice on the farm for the past 1,300 years.

Masanobu Fukuoka has spent the last 30 years developing a system of "responsible agriculture" that imitates closely natural processes. He doesn't

plow or till his fields, uses no chemical fertilizers or pesticides and does "virtually all the work by hand," Korn said.

Fukuoka was known first in Japan as a spiritual leader who believes nature and a person's fate are most fertile when left alone, and efforts to plan or manipulate either are misguided. Farming, like any other task, is a reflection of a person's self, Fukuoka believes.

When farming is more closely in tune with nature, the farmer's self changes as well, Korn said.

Fukuoka's methods largely were unknown until the 1973 oil crisis panicked Japanese farmers who were heavily dependent on petroleum.

"They began to look around for alternatives, and there he was," Korn said. "He kept traditional Japanese efficiency in the use of space and tremendous inputs of labor and compost to keep up high productivity, but he wasn't going backward."

Korn pictured Fukuoka's methods in slides. Several crops are grown in the same field — rice in the summer and barley in

the winter. The crops grow through a continuous crop of white clover that chokes out weeds and provides fertilizer after it's been cut. Seeds are scattered on top of the soil instead of being planted in rows.

"Fukuoka doesn't get concerned if a corner of a field is devastated (by insects) because he knows that it won't get out of control like it would in a single-

crop field," Korn said.

Korn said Fukuoka scatters vegetable seeds between trees in his orchard. The plants revert to a heartier and woodier vegetable that requires little care.

Fukuoka's methods are as productive as conventional techniques and "accentuate the land" instead of depleting it, Korn added. Fukuoka's orchards are more productive

than modern Japanese orchards, but not all the citrus is marketable because of a scale that affects the skin.

Korn said Fukuoka's methods are spreading throughout the Northwest largely through the efforts of TILTH, an organization promoting organic farming. Korn currently is editing a book on natural farming with TILTH entitled "Permaculture for the Northwest." Korn also has authored a book about Fukuoka called "One Straw Revolution."

ask the sexpert

I heard that women who take birth control pills are more susceptible to yeast infections. Are there any other conditions that encourage yeast infection?

Yeast-like organisms are normally found in harmless quantities in the vagina and rectum of healthy women. When the vagina's naturally acidic environment is altered, as it is with birth control pills, these organisms may grow profusely. This results in vaginal irritation and discharge. Taking antibiotics such as tetracycline can also allow yeast-like organisms to grow unchecked by reducing the amount of natural bacteria found in the vagina.

Other women complain of yeast infections following their menstrual period. The alkaline pH of menstrual flow provides a favorable environment for such infection. Women with this problem might try douching with vinegar (two tablespoons vinegar to one quart water) the week following menstruation.

Pregnant women and women with diabetes are more susceptible to yeast infections. In both of these conditions the vaginal cells tend to store a greater amount of sugar. These women may find it helpful to cut down on the amount of sugar and refined carbohydrate in their diet. However, once a yeast infection has started these measures

won't cure it, and a doctor should be consulted for treatment.

Are there any sexually transmittable diseases that can be caught from a hot tub or hot springs?

Sexually transmittable diseases are caused by organisms whose ideal environment is the human body. Most of these organisms would not survive in a hot tub or hot springs.

However, Trichomonad, a single-celled parasite that infects both men and women, can survive for several hours at room temperature on a moist object such as a towel or toilet seat. It also may be able to survive in water. But in a hot tub the chlorine would often kill the Trichomonad. Also, the larger the volume of water, the less likely it is that a person would come in contact with enough organisms to cause an infection.

The chance of catching a sexually transmittable disease in a hot tub or hot springs is probably not great enough to warrant giving up such a pleasurable activity, but the precautionary measure of bringing your own towel is a good idea.

This column is written by Planned Parenthood, 134 E. 13th Ave. 344-1611. Please send questions to Suite 300 EMU or to Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is a private, non-profit, United Way agency.

Forum to debate Reagan cuts

The effects Pres. Ronald Reagan's budget cuts will have on Lane County citizens and merchants will be the topic of a public forum Saturday, May 9 at 11:30 a.m. at Harris Hall.

Similar gatherings are being held throughout the country on that day.

The forum is sponsored by the Action for a Fair Budget Committee, a local and national coalition of more than 100 citizen groups. Information will be presented and public testimony heard to show the effect of the proposed budget cuts on the community.

Guest speakers will be state Sen. Ted Kulonogski, D-Junction City, and Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene.

Vice Admiral John Lee will discuss the impact of military spending on human services. Lane County Labor Council president Irv Fletcher will outline the effect of budget cuts on the local workforce. Also speaking will be representatives of various Lane County agencies.

Public testimony will be solicited in an open forum attended by representatives of local, state and federal governments.

For more information contact Rick Hart of Legal Aid at 342-6056, Felice Nirenstein of Client's Council at 689-0299 or Julia Fallansbee of the Oregon Women's Political Caucus at 686-8517.

Rubbish cleanup begins today

Several Eugene neighborhoods will make it easier for residents to clean up their rubbish beginning today as part of Spring Clean Up Week.

Sani-Pac dumpsters and BRING recycling barrels will be placed in the West University, Whiteaker, Far West and Fairmount neighborhoods for residents use.

Dumpsters in the West University Neighborhood will be located in front of the West University Center at 1458 Ferry St., at the corner of 16th Avenue and Patterson Street, and in the alley of 14th Street between Mill and High streets.

The West University Center also will be

opened May 9 at 8:30 a.m. for seniors, handicapped and people with large loads to call for assistance to move their rubbish.

Also included in the cleanup will be historic preservation tours of the East Skinner Butte Landmark area and the West University Neighborhood.

May also is fire prevention month, and the Eugene Fire Department will offer fire safety checklists to neighborhood residents.

Spring Clean Up week will run through May 15.

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