

according to Daberkow and Gill (1989). This would represent approximately all acres above a ratio of .7 in the Lake States and .76 in the Corn Belt in Figure 2.

### **Implications for research**

There is little doubt that commodity programs influence and constrain the decision to rotate: the data from ASCS indicate potential rotation constraint for a minimum of 1.6 million acres that must be in a continuous corn rotation when participating in the corn program. However, the data also suggest that many acres could have been planted in a diversified rotation at 1988 enrollment and participation levels. Why is the land where the diversified rotation option is available not following such a rotation? Many other economic, agronomic, and institutional variables affect rotation decisions. Fleming (1987) outlines several from the current property rights structure affecting the environment to a lack of adequate information about low-input technology. Dabbert and Madden (1986) define a series of transition costs and issues, including commodity programs. Others include economies of scale in conventional rotations from producing a large quantity of few outputs, the need to maintain adequate cash flow, and agronomic limitations such as weather and soil.

Changes may be necessary in the commodity programs to remove potential constraints that exist with the support programs for some acres. But any changes that just eliminate current programs will not be sufficient for widespread adoption of sustainable rotations. Furthermore, to make better informed policy decisions, we need additional research on the extent of commodity program influence on the decision to rotate, the extent of long-term rotation practices nationally, the long-term value of base acreage to a producer, and the role of the commodity programs during the transition to more diverse rotations.

**Acknowledgments.** Any opinions and errors expressed in this commentary are solely attributable to the author. I would like to thank Margot Anderson, Stan Daberkow, and the editors for their review and advice.

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## **INSTITUTE NEWS**

### **Mrs. Jean Wallace Douglas named Safe Food Trailblazer**

Mrs. Jean Wallace Douglas, former President and Honorary President for Life of the Institute for Alternative Agriculture; Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee; and Dr. Fred Kirschenmann, a large-scale organic farmer in North Dakota, were among those named Safe Food Trailblazers last month by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a national health and nutrition advocacy organization in Washington, DC. Mrs. Douglas was cited as "the first major U.S. funder to recognize and understand the importance and relevance of alternative agriculture." Leahy and Kirschenmann, who are members of IAA's President's Council, were praised, respectively, for leadership on national organic food standards and sustainable agriculture legislation and for demonstrating the "economic viability of organic farming."

Other awardees included: Rep. Peter DeFazio (for leading the House floor fight on national organic standards); "Buddy" Maedgen, Jr. (for his efforts to overturn a Food and Drug Administration ban on use of beneficial insects to control pests in stored grain); Sunset

Foods (for leadership in consumer education information); Jayne MacLean (for leadership in creating the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center at the USDA's National Agricultural Library); Lynn Coody (for developing ways to evaluate organic agriculture inputs); and the Wisconsin Rural Development Center (for obtaining state funding for the new Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin).

### **Institute announces Visiting Scholar Program**

Starting this year, the Institute will offer three- to six-month scholarships to professionals in universities, government, and the private sector to explore issues related to alternative and sustainable agriculture. Eligible projects may deal with national or state policies affecting adoption of sustainable agriculture, conceptual issues, sustainable agriculture curricula for schools and colleges, international dimensions of agricultural sustainability, or institutional change and alternative agriculture. Applications are due March 15, 1991. Interested persons should contact Neill Schaller, Associate Director, for details and instructions on how to apply, (301) 441-8777.