

Coming Soon: GrazeFest Minnesota!

by Mary Jo Forbord

A big circle is drawn around the second Saturday in August on our calendar at Prairie Horizons Farm. ***Saturday, August 13th 2005 marks the first-ever GrazeFest Minnesota, an educational, eating and musical extravaganza celebrating one of the most up-and-coming conservation practices, known as rotational grazing, management intensive grazing, or prescribed grazing.*** The titles all signify a method of grazing where pastures are divided into smaller areas (paddocks) and grazed to a desired length. The livestock is then moved to graze the next paddock, while the first and subsequent paddocks are “rested” to grow and rejuvenate for the next grazing cycle. Many benefits are documented for this method of grazing (see “What Makes Grass-based Foods Better” on page 13). The practice sounds simple enough, but to do it right, and profitably, there’s more than meets the eye!



Fortunately, Minnesota has many excellent resources to assist farmers in starting or improving a grazing system. To augment our rich knowledge base of experienced graziers, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of Minnesota has four grazing specialists to assist farmers with customized pasture plans, and a Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) grazing consultant also provides technical assistance to farmers. Cost share programs for implementing or improving grazing systems are available, and market demand for grass-based products far exceeds the current supply. SFA, NRCS, MDA, Minnesota Farmers Union, University of Minnesota, Ag Resource Consulting, Organic Land Management and others are teaming up to sponsor GrazeFest Minnesota.

It’s a great time for grazing, and it’s a great time for organizations supporting grazing to do our best work together.

Keynoter Jim Gerrish will speak on “Improving Pasture Nutrition and Your Bottom Line”. Jim is an independent consultant specializing in grazing land management on private and public lands across the nation. His 22+ years on the faculty of the University of Missouri, his renowned grazing schools, and 20 years of commercial cattle and sheep production give Jim a depth and breadth of experience well known and respected by many. His research provided the foundation for many of the principles of Management-Intensive Grazing. He is the author of the Grassroots of Grazing, a regular column in The Stockman GrassFarmer magazine. You won’t want to miss Jim Gerrish, or any of the events of the day!

A locally produced Grazier’s Lunch and a Pride of the Prairie Grazing Grill-Off Supper will treat your taste’buds to the many great flavors of grass-fed. GrazeFest Minnesota is a proud participant in GrazeFest America, a national campaign to promote the multiple benefits of grass-fed

(GrazeFest continued on page 15)

Become a CornerPost Sponsor!

Are you interested in strengthening the development of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota? Supporting the Sustainable Farming Association's quarterly newsletter is a way for you, your business or organization to become active in the cause. We will acknowledge your sponsorship in the CornerPost by providing description and contact information, unless you prefer that your sponsorship remain anonymous - we will honor your wishes. Please call Mary Jo Forbord at 320-760-8732 to discuss your sponsorship opportunities. Thank you!

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More Mileage per CornerPost

Before recycling the CornerPost, please leave your copy at your church, in a doctor's waiting room, your workplace, your co-op, a place or business, or with a friend or relative. Be a part of spreading the good news about sustainable agriculture while helping to conserve our resources. Thank you!

Do You Need to Renew?

Membership in the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota entitles you to receive the CornerPost Newsletter. Use the form on Page 5, and join or renew your membership today!

The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook

The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook is the first-ever guide to finding, preparing, and enjoying pasture-raised meat and dairy products. Written by pasture-based farmer and epicurean Shannon Hayes, The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook explores the unique flavors and distinct characteristics of foods that come from animals raised on pasture. It features more than 120 recipes from pasture-based farmers in the United States and Canada along with farmer profiles and explanations of the health, environmental, animal and human-welfare benefits of grass-fed and pasture-raised foods.

Copies of The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook are \$22.95 each plus \$3.95 s/h. Copies can be purchased from the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (with proceeds benefiting SFA) or directly from Eating Fresh Publications at http://eatingfresh.com/ef_gfg.html.

Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Chapters...there's one near you!

Chapters are active in many interesting events year round. Call the chapter contact for more information, or visit our website at www.sfa-mn.org.

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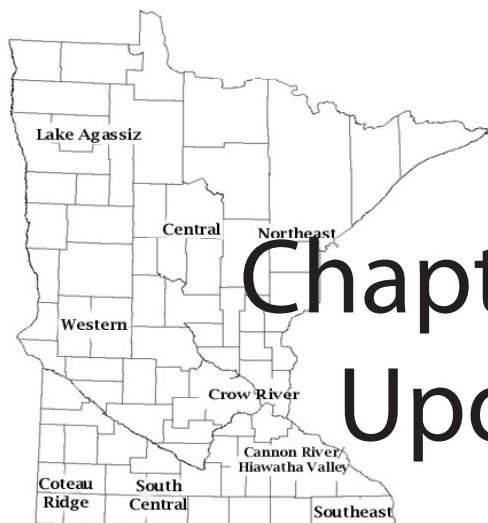
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Chapter Updates

Crow River Chapter

by Greg Reynolds

We all have been busy trying to get things planted and cultivated. The recent rains and warm weather have been quite welcome. However, sometimes the wet weather has made it hard to keep on schedule with planting, transplanting, and cultivating. Around here at Riverbend Farm, the cultivation situation is looking a little desperate, but not totally out of control.

Jerry Ford, Crow River Chapter President, has put together a great looking brochure for our chapter and had a table cover/banner made for shows and conferences. Plans are also in the works to revisit our tabletop display.

We are struggling with transition, going from having people like Connie and Pat Lahr doing everything to having more people gets involved on the board level. For example, an activity committee needs more than one person. On a positive note, it looks like Mary has made some good connections with the local 4H and FFA groups, and one of the people who works for me at Riverbend this year, is willing to speak to those groups about her experiences and interests in farming.

The Crow River Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of MN is hosting a farm tour at Home Place Beef, an organic beef farm owned and run by Marvin & Laura Bihl. The event starts at 5:00 pm. It also includes a potluck dinner, so bring a dish to share. For directions call the Bihls at 320-558-6392.

Northeast Chapter

by Jean Sramek

The Northeast Chapter of SFA of MN is gearing up for our 12th Annual Harvest Festival, which will be held on Saturday, September 10th at Bayfront Festival Park in downtown Duluth, MN. Last year, the Harvest Festival moved back to the Bayfront location after several successful years in Leif Ericson Park. Bayfront turned out to be a great location for our event, so we're staying for another year. Check out our website: www.harvestfest.cjb.net for updates and information about this year's event. Admission is free, and we would love to see any and all SFA members at Harvest Festival, so drive up (or over, or down), stop by the SFA information booth and say hello.

On Saturday, May 7th, our chapter held a workshop called, "Regaining Control of Our Seed Supply," which was open to farmers, consumers, producers, and gardeners. Botanist Julie Etterson's presentation focused on seed production and plant reproduction and was followed with a lively discussion. Biologist Joanne Itami talked about the process of making genetically engineered plants and their potential effects. At this meeting, tentative plans were made to have follow-up workshops on these topics next season. Our board felt this topic needed to be addressed, in view of the "Monsanto-izing" of seed production and the potential loss of heirloom and unique varieties.

This summer, we have a farm tour planned at Commonplace Farm (http://www.livethislifeonpurpose.com/commonplace_farm.html), where proprietor Paula Williams runs a "Flower CSA" which provides its shareholders with 10 weeks of fresh flowers. The tour will take place the afternoon of Sunday, August 14th. Call our chapter at 218-393-3276 as we get closer to the event, and we'll give you more details. Dates have not been finalized yet, but we also have tentative plans for an "Urban Orchard Tour" of some of Duluth's finest fruit trees and vines, all located within the city.

South Central Chapter

by Mark Ackland

The South Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association is going to have their annual potluck dinner at the Dale Grotsun farm on Saturday, September 24, 2005. The event starts at 2:00 pm with a field day. We will see different conservation practices used on the Grotsun farm, such as: terraces, waterways, and water control basins. Another highlight will be seeing an example of wetland restoration. The potluck dinner will be at 5:00 pm, after the farm tour. Anyone interested in joining this organization is welcome to come to the potluck dinner and field day.

Directions to Grotsun Farm: The Grotsun farm is located at 26520 675th Avenue. To get there, drive five miles west of Manchester on Freeborn County Road 25, and then go north about one mile on 675th Ave. They are the third building site on the right.

Also in our area, the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) in Waseca will be having an open house on Sunday, September 11, 2005, from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The theme of the open house will be "Enhancing the Values of the Rural Landscape." They will also be having a free pig roast supper 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. SROC is located on Waseca County Road 57, just south of MN State Hwy 14.

Southeast Chapter

by Lonny Dietz

The Southeast Chapter hosted a dairy forum in April with great speakers and good participation. Vance Haugen from the Wisconsin Extension Service spoke about low cost swing parlors and using existing barns. Haugen likes to use the parabone design, which needs a shorter pit area, but explained that almost every decision with a retrofit project is personal preference.

Les Hansen, a professor of Dairy Genetics at the University of Minnesota, spoke about the growing interest in crossbreeding. Hansen is currently conducting research on large dairies in California.

(Southeast continued on page 5)

(Southeast continued from page 4)

However, he explained that the information gained will benefit farms of all sizes. Hansen also spoke about how using the same bloodlines in the A.I. (artificial insemination) system are leading to inbreeding concerns. He stressed that producers view crossbreeding as a genetic improvement program that can result in 6.5% increase in milk production and 10% increase in fertility, health, and survival rates.

Neil Broadwater from the Minnesota Extension Service spoke about a three-year project that Extension has been working on with the MPCA to test various designs of treating milk house wastewater. There are currently four systems being tested in Winona and Goodhue Counties, with cost ranging from \$7000 to \$17,000. Broadwater explained that helping farms remain economically viable while meeting environmental regulations was one of their primary reasons for the project.

We are also co-sponsoring a set of grazing schools in the Southeast Region that are being conducted by Howard Moechnig. Topics include forage identity, watering systems, fencing systems, and forage improvement. See the SFA of MN website calendar (www.sfa-mn.org/calendar) for workshop dates.

Our board has been meeting and brainstorming on what sustainable farming is and what our members want from the organization. We are also looking at the differences between growing food and growing crops for the commodity market. In the future we will be working on a membership drive and a civic engagement project. If you would like to get involved and help us with the brainstorming, please contact Edgar Hansgen at 507-932-4219.

Western Chapter

by Kelly Lanctot

Warm summer greetings! Western Chapter is sponsoring a TREE GRAFTING workshop and FARM TOUR on Friday, July 22nd. Amy Bacigalupo and Paul Wymar will be hosting the event. The workshop will begin at 5:00pm followed by the farm tour and then we will enjoy a POTLUCK DINNER. Amy and Paul have had many rich experiences. They bring energy and heart to their many sustainable endeavors. It is sure to be worth your time to come

and be a part of this, even if you don't graft trees! To R.S.V.P. or for directions, please contact Kelly Lanctot.

Also, looking ahead to autumn, Jim & LeeAnn VanDerPol will be hosting an event at their farm. It will be another great time of interchange. Hope to

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YOU CAN ALSO BECOME A MEMBER AND/OR GIVE A SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTION ONLINE AT THE SFA OF MN WEBSITE: WWW.SFA-MN.ORG.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

SUMMER 2005 EVENTS CALENDAR

For more detail on events visit: www.sfa-mn.org/calendar

If you would like to add an event to the SFA of MN calendar email Anne @ communications@sfa-mn.org.

JULY 2005

July 25 *Grazing Workshops in Southeastern Minnesota: Strategies for Maximizing Forage Production*, From 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm; Featuring Howard Moechnig, state grazing specialist for the NRCS. Pre-registration two weeks prior to each session is required because space is limited. For locations and to register, call Diana Strain, Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development, at 507-281-1959, ext. 4. For other info, contact Caroline van Schaik in Land Stewardship Project's at 507-523-3366 or caroline@landstewardshipproject.org.

July 27-30 *2005 Windy River Renewable Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Fair*, Leading experts in Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living will be putting on fun and educational presentations. For information on how you can participate as an exhibitor, sponsor, or vendor, visit www.windyriver.us. Location: Morrison County Fair Grounds, Little Falls, MN.

July 28 *Horticulture Night - West Central Research and Outreach Center*, Location: West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN;

Time: 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm. For more information call (320) 589-1711.

July 28-29 *Minnesota Rural Summit: The Great Reconnect – Bridging Rural & Urban Resources for Community & Economic Success*, For more info contact Jane: jleonard@minnesotaruralpartners.org
Location: St. John's College, Collegeville, MN

July 31 *Minnesota Meat Goat Producers - Meat Goat Confirmation Clinic*, Location: Wright County Fair grounds @ 1:00 pm.

AUGUST 2005

August 1 *Grazing Workshops in Southeastern Minnesota: Fencing for Livestock/ Sensitive Area Identification and Management*, From 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm; Featuring Howard Moechnig, state grazing specialist for the NRCS. Pre-registration two weeks prior to each session is required because space is limited. For locations and to register, call Diana Strain, Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development, at 507-281-1959, ext. 4. For other information, contact Caroline van Schaik in Land Stewardship Project's at 507-523-3366 or caroline@landstewardshipproject.org.

August 2-4 *Farm Fest*, Farmfest is an annual outdoor farm show that takes place on the historic Gilfillan Estate in Redwood County, Minnesota.

August 2-4 *The Upper Midwest Grazing Conference*, This summer's grazing conference will feature speakers from the Upper Midwest and will include farm tours, a trade show and an abundance of networking opportunities. Registration is due July 21st. Brochures can be downloaded from the website at www.wisc.edu/cias/uppermidwest.

August 3 *Field Day - Grass Fed Beef*, An introduction to grass-fed beef production by Allen Williams, Marketing by Ray Kirsch and Todd Churchill. For info contact Tom & Kristi German 712-365-4433; tagerman@netllc.net or Ray Kirsch 651-653-0618; rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org. Time: 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

August 3 *USDA Farm Bill Forum – Minnesota*, Time: 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Where: Farm Forum Tent, Farm Fest – Redwood Falls, MN. The USDA will host a Farm Bill Forum at Minnesota Farmfest as part of its nationwide listening tour. Additional info about the topics can be found at: www.usda.gov/farmbill.

August 8 *Grazing Workshops in Southeastern Minnesota: Fencing for Livestock/ Sensitive Area Identification and Management*, From 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm; Featuring Howard Moechnig, state grazing specialist for the NRCS. Pre-registration two weeks prior to each session is required because space is limited. For locations and to register, call Diana Strain, Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development, at 507-281-1959, ext. 4. For other information, contact Caroline van Schaik in Land Stewardship Project's at 507-523-3366 or caroline@landstewardshipproject.org.

August 11-14 *The American Community Gardening Association's 26th National Conference Gardening In the Heartland: At the Water's Edge*, See website for rates, workshops, and on-line registration: www.communitygarden.org. Information is also available by calling Betsy Johnson, ACGA Interim Executive Director, at 877-275-2242.

August 11 *Horticulture Day at Central Lakes College*, A number of gardening sessions will be available. Events run from 2:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Call 218-894-5161 for details. The cost will be \$10.00. Location: Central Lakes College Ag Center, Staples, MN

August 13 *GrazeFest Minnesota 2005*, The keynote speaker will be Jim Gerrish. Other presenters include Howard Moechnig, and Luverne and Mary Jo Forbord. The day also features a pasture walk and small group discussions with grazing specialists. Lunch and Supper are included in price of registration. Musical entertainment will be provided. Location: Prairie Horizons Farm, 10 miles north of Benson, MN; Time: 9:30am – 6:30pm, Music/Dance starts at 6:30pm. For more info contact Anne at (320) 226-6318 or communications@sfa-mn.org or visit www.sfa-mn.org.

August 14 *Northeast Chapter Tour – Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Flowers*, The

Chapter of the SFA of MN is hosting a farm tour at Farm(www.livethislifeonpurpose.com/commonplace_farm.html). The tour will take place in the afternoon. Call the Northeast Chapter at 218-393-3276 for more details as the event approaches. Commonplace

August 20 *Gale Woods - Local Foods Meal, Breakfast on the Farm* — a celebration of local food and farmers at Gale Woods Farm, Minnetrista, MN. Please RSVP at 763-694-2001.

August 23-25 *The Midwest Specialty Grains Conference & Trade Show*, will be held in Minneapolis, MN. Contact www.mnshippers.com or 612-252-1453 to register.

August 30 *The Third Annual Minnesota Cooks! Event*, It will be held from 11:00 am - 5:00 pm at the Minnesota State Fair Ground's Carousel Park (near the Grandstand). This event will showcase local farmers and feature Twin Cities chefs preparing Food Alliance-certified products. For more information, contact the Food Alliance at 651-265-3684.

SEPTEMBER 2005

September 8-9 *“Creating Opportunity through Joint Producer Initiatives” - the 3rd Annual Workshop on State and Local Food Policy*, Please see our web site: <http://www.statefoodpolicy.org/natwkshp05.htm> to register and for further details. Location: Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa

September 8 *Field Day on Conservation Security Program, Stewardship Practices and Performance*, near Audubon, Iowa from 2:00 pm – 7:30 pm; highlights stewardship practices and performance. Includes a light supper. Contact Caroline van Schaik, LSP, for details 507-523-3366.

September 10 *12th Annual Duluth Harvest Festival*, Location: Bayfront Festival Park, Duluth, MN. For more information contact Jean Sramek, with the NE Chapter of the SFA of MN at: farming@charter.net
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SFA in Norway: Sustainable Farming Abroad

In June, SFA's Executive Director, Mary Jo Forbord, and husband Luverne toured Norway. They talked with a number of Norwegian farmers and researchers, looked at many farming operations, and stayed with farm families. Although a farm in Norway is most often much smaller than the average American farm, the Forbords noted numerous similarities:

- ⇒ In Norway, the farming population is growing older.
- ⇒ Young people are not entering farming in sufficient numbers.
- ⇒ The number of farms is declining.
- ⇒ Recent global trade agreements have not been favorable for farmers.
- ⇒ Loyalty and pride in Norwegian farm products is very evident in discussions with many Norwegian farmers and consumers.
- ⇒ Maintaining sound farm profitability is a major challenge. To meet the challenge, Some farms are cooperating with neighbors to form larger farm units. Other farmers are becoming innovators in value-added products and markets



Despite a language barrier, Mary Jo's Norwegian sheep farming relative receives excellent hoof trimming assistance from Luverne Forbord.

A highlight of the Forbord's trip was a joint seminar with researchers at the Centre for Rural Research, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, to compare and contrast sustainable farming in Minnesota with organic or ecological farming in Norway.



Slow Food is winning the race, evidenced by the popularity of this display booth at the fish market in Bergen, Norway.

Some of the Norwegian farmers thought it was strange for American farmers to be looking at and learning from their Norwegian farm. After all, isn't the USA way far ahead?

Remember that the Norwegians have been farming the land for over one thousand years, often on amazingly steep slopes, yet the land remains very productive and well protected from erosion. Sustainability must stand the test of time, and for this reason, many farms in Norway have more of a sustainable track record than USA farmers have been able to accumulate in our relatively brief farming history. SFA members have always kept the long-term view in mind, and are respected pioneers in the growing Your Executive Director was proud and honored to take experience across the Atlantic.

Windy River Fair 2005

by Kristin Blann

Looking for a way to invest wisely, improve environmental health, produce healthier food, make a difference in your community and the world, and/or improve national security? Come to this year's Windy River Renewable Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Fair at the Morrison County Fair, July 27-30, 2005, hosted by Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's Central Chapter. Share your ideas with many, many others about how we can all be a bigger part of the solutions. There is still space left for exhibitors, sponsors, and even workshops, so please contact Kristen Blann via email at kblann@umn.edu or by phone 218-330-9612 for information on how you can participate.

The Windy River Fair (www.windyriver.us) is designed to showcase a range of real world, readily available, financially viable, and innovative solutions in agriculture and energy that simultaneously address environmental, social, and economic problems. The fair is designed to help people make the link between sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, food security, and energy independence, creating a healthier food system and supporting independent livelihoods for producers. Reducing the use of nonrenewable carbon-based fuels also helps address climate change as well as lowering the mercury emissions that pollute Minnesota's lakes, waters, and fish.

This year's fair - the 5th annual - will feature many returning exhibitors and sponsors from previous years, including the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy, the Minnesota Project, and Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. It will feature workshops on wind and solar energy, local foods, sustainable livestock management, and the pros and cons for a range of alternative fuels. Major contributors and sponsors for the 2005 fair include the Initiative of Commerce's Energy Information Center, the WATER

Foundation, Hunt Utilities Group, Minnesota Power, Crow Wing Power Community Trust, Foundation of Little Falls, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Nash Foundation, and Lowry Hill Foundation.

The 2005 fair will also feature a permanent, fully operational 20-kilowatt Jacobs wind turbine at the fairgrounds. The Morrison County Agricultural Society is financing the wind turbine, with a \$20,000 grant from Minnesota Power obtained with the assistance of the WATER Foundation and the Windy River Fair.

The Jacobs system will produce enough electricity to power a small farm (approximately 15,000 to 20,000 kilowatt hours per year).

With proper maintenance, the project will pay for itself and produce that power/income for The Morrison County Agricultural Society for many decades.

The web site at www.windyriver.us is being updated regularly to showcase sponsors, workshop presenters, and exhibitors. This will include a discussion of energy and agricultural policy solutions on Saturday, July 30th from 11:00am to 3:00pm, and a legislative forum at 3:00pm in the forum tent. SFA members will provide much of the musical entertainment as well, with Living Song and Corridor being the featured acts on Thursday evening, and an open musical jam on Friday evening that will hopefully help ferret out the rest of our organization's talents.

The Windy River Fair has its origins in 2001 with the Long Prairie River Stewardship Project. Created by Greg Nolan and Tim King of Todd County, MN, the Fair was inspired by the Wisconsin Midwest Renewable Energy Fair as a local forum where central Minnesotans could learn about renewable energy, rather than having to drive to Wisconsin (and emit all those greenhouse gases). The name Windy River Fair was based on a skit Tim King had written and produced on the banks of the Long Prairie River in Long Prairie and Browerville. Greg and Tim worked on the fair with assistance from John Weber and food from Whole

(Windy River continued on page 10)



The groundbreaking for Jacobs the wind turbine at the Morrison County Fairgrounds.

Why Your Membership Matters: It's More than Dollars and Cents

by Anne Borgendale

What can you get for \$30? Perhaps you could buy two CDs, nine lattes, one tank of gas, or one membership to the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. When you spend \$30 to become a member of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota what are you buying? Are you actually purchasing something or are you investing in something – education, cleaner air and water, safe and healthy local foods, neighbors – the future, the future of farming.

The SFA of MN is a chapter-based organization. Because of this 83% of your membership dollars are returned to the chapter of your choice. The chapters are then able to spend this money on education and activities specific to the needs of their members. This spending could be in the form of field days, workshops, speakers, research, etc. Several well-established events are Harvest Fest, sponsored by the Northeast Chapter, held in Duluth, MN and the Windy River Fair hosted by the Central Chapter.

How do we use your investment at the state level and what are the benefits to you? First of all, we provide you with the CornerPost newsletter. This is a quarterly publication that keeps you up-to-date about SFA activities, reviews books relevant to our sustainable vision, and provides information on agricultural and environmental legislation and policy at the state and national level. The SFA of MN website (www.sfa-mn.org) is a recent communications update. This exciting addition provides an accessible connection to daily happenings. It has several notable and easy to use features. The discussion board

is a forum for members to ask questions, advise others, and to let their opinion be known. The trading post features online classified ads specific to sustainable agriculture products, services, and needs. The calendar of events means you are never more than a couple of clicks away from knowing about the many sustainable ag happenings across Minnesota and the upper mid-west.

The Minnesota Dairy Initiative is a project designed to help Minnesota dairy farms continue to be successful and sustainable in the 21st century. The SFA of MN's role in this project is to assist dairy farms that are interested in moving towards more sustainable production practices such as grazing and organic dairying and on-farm dairy processing.

The SFA of MN is one of several farming and environmental organizations that composed and champions the "Citizens Task Force on Livestock and Rural Communities". This report provides a set of guiding principles and recommendations that will benefit beginning and existing livestock farmers, promote environmentally friendly and socially responsible farming systems, and help move profits in livestock to farm families and rural communities. Some of these recommendations have helped to shape Minnesota legislation. You can read this report at www.sfa-mn.org under "publications". We also organize statewide educational and celebratory events such as the Statewide Annual Meeting and Graze Fest. These allow members from across the state to share ideas and re-connect. At these gatherings the SFA of
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Farm Co-op the first year. The SFA of MN Central Chapter was invited to serve as the financial host and to assist in planning the 2002 fair, and Lynda Converse became the fair coordinator. David Butcher coordinated the fair the following 2 years in Verndale and Wadena. In 2004, as a way of reaching beyond the "choir", the fair moved to Morrison County fairgrounds in association with the Morrison County

Fair. Central Chapter of SFA of MN partnered with the Water Foundation to assist with administration and marketing of the fair, with much assistance of Ken Pentel, former Green Party gubernatorial candidate and current state party chair, and Dave Winkelman of the Water Foundation. This year the fair has renewed its partnership with the Morrison County Agricultural Society and the Morrison County Fair.

My Side of the Fence: What's Up with Agriculture and the Environment in the Minnesota Legislature

by Rep. Aaron Peterson (DFL-Madison)

Sustainable agriculture has many elected friends in the legislature. And as a member of the Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and the Regulated Industries Committees, I have the opportunity to author legislation that benefits sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and renewable energy. Unfortunately, there are also elected officials who do not place sustainable agriculture on their priority list. And until there is an Administration change at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), programs promoting sustainable agriculture will not be adequately funded or encouraged.

This past legislative session, I authored a bill for increased funding from MDA for the Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program. Since the rules say you have to cut something to fund something, I chose to cut an unfilled MDA Assistant Commissioner position and increase funding from \$80,000 to \$200,000 per year for sustainable agriculture grants. The bill failed in committee and as an amendment on the House floor largely because the MDA and some rural electeds said: “We don’t do it that way anymore. Agriculture has to change.” You know you’re in trouble when “change” is the only counter argument that is made.

We — the elected friends — also tried to prevent the Governor’s Livestock Taskforce recommendations from sailing through uninterrupted to undermine local control and democracy at the Township level. Land Stewardship Project and several other groups worked hard at the Capitol making the arguments against weakening local control. There was good debate, but our amendment failed by five votes.

There was also a legislative effort to pass the Clean Water Legacy bill this year. The bill would have created a fund from taxing water use to raise and spend \$80 million per year on existing state water and land-use programs. The 2003-2004 budget cut \$80 million/year from these programs. The immediate calls to now quickly create this Legacy have not prevailed because of the proposed funding mechanism: a regressive tax on homeowners, rural septics, and small business in favor of letting high-volume wastewater and pollutant dischargers off the hook by paying much less.

For me, the most significant legislative effort this year was trying to get Minnesota to become the 20th state to adopt a Renewable Energy Standard (RES). Our bill proposed that Minnesota get 20% of its power from renewable sources — wind, biomass, solar, etc. — by 2020. 75% of the renewable energy development in the USA has occurred in states that have passed an RES. With the creation of Community Based Energy Development (CBED) in this year’s Energy Bill, I thought an RES would complement the effort to get local investors and land-owners involved in significant economic development across rural Minnesota.

After four hours of floor debate and fierce opposition from the rural electric co-ops and 117 registered utility lobbyists (there were about 10 active pro-RES lobbyists), the RES did not pass. But several entrenched members who promote “change” and then vote against “change” have witnessed what, I believe, was a renewable energy debate that will become law in the near future.

MY SIDE OF THE FENCE is an opinion forum for farmers and others. The SFA values diversity in farming and ideas. We welcome your perspective on agriculture and farm-related issues.

(Membership continued from page 10)

MN is able present nationally known speakers and provide a variety of learning opportunities.

These events, initiatives, and services are where your membership dollars go. If you support these activities and the future they are helping to create,

become a member, renew your membership, or make a sustaining contribution today! We’ll even make it easy for you, send in the membership form on page 5 or join online at www.sfa-mn.org. Your membership matters, it *really* matters and we thank you for your support!

You Can't Eat GNP: Economics as if Ecology Mattered

by Eric A. Davidson, 2000; 247 pages;
\$12.00 (softcover); Perseus Publishing
www.whrc.org

Reviewed by Anne Borgendale

This book caught my attention while traveling in California this past March. I had just enjoyed the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and was perusing its bookstore when my eye stopped on this title “You Can’t Eat GNP.” “I can’t what?” I thought after some consideration and I promptly bought the book — contributing to the GNP in order to find out why. While the GNP enjoyed a boost of about \$10 from my purchase, I think I got the better end of the deal: finding out some of the current flaws and fallacies of modern economics; why they are occurring; and what I could do about it.

Eric A. Davidson is currently a senior scientist at the Woods Hole Research Center in Massachusetts. His background is in nutrient cycling in terrestrial ecosystems, particularly looking at the relationship between agricultural and forested lands. This background aids him as he evaluates and explains economic systems, which have to exist in an ecological world. His explanations of economic and ecological concepts are clear and concise. Most readers, even those with minimal experience in economics and/or ecology, would be able to understand the ideas presented. The topics covered are thought provoking and keep the reader very interested. However, Davidson also uses humor and narratives to keep the book moving. While explaining difficult topics, Davidson remains optimistic. Instead of identifying all of these problems and fallacies and just complaining about them, he offers solutions on multiple levels. And, while the book is already five years old, it is gaining more and more relevance and urgency with each passing year.

At the beginning of “You Can’t Eat GNP,” Davidson presents the three economic fallacies. These fallacies are: (1) Marie Antoinette Economics – the assumption of substitutability (If there is no bread, eat cake!); (2) Custer’s Folly – the assumption that

the technological cavalry will come over the hill to save us from disaster; and (3) False complacency from partial success – the assumption that you can stop improving because you are no longer do a harmful action as much as you use to, even if you are still doing it (or not beating the wife as much as before). Davidson asserts that these fallacies have kept and are keeping people isolated from their responsibilities to the natural world.

Throughout each chapter, he presents examples of where the fallacies are currently in place in our modern economic model, why it is this way and what the results may be. However, Davidson also looks at solutions when explaining how ecological economics can help to alleviate these problems. He ambitiously tackles the topics of population growth, biodiversity, discount rates, global warming, soil erosion, forest protection, sustainable agriculture, and technology. One example provided is how to internalize externalities. In his example, air pollution — specifically CO₂ emissions — is the externality. Previously, this cost on the planet was ignored. However, after the government implemented pollution permits, meaning that corporations could only emit so much carbon per permit, the cost of polluting was internalized because it then had a monetary value. While the government regulated the total carbon load through the number of permits issued, the market was able to regulate how much each corporation could emit since permits could be bought and sold. An actual value was not given to air quality and the environment, there was instead a price put on the pollution harming it. This, in turn, benefited air quality and the environment by attempting to lessen global warming. Because global warming’s growing influence is slowed, the number of technological advances that would be necessary to successfully thrive as a people and planet, are also decreased.

In addition to the fallacies, Davidson also presents “The Laws of Technodynamics,” which are based in part on the laws of thermodynamics. The two laws are: (1) Conservation of Problems – problems do not go away, but are merely substituted, one for

(Review continued on page 13)

What makes grass-based foods better?

- ✓ **Health and nutrition:** Grass-fed meats contain the proper ratio of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids; they're lower in fat and calories than conventionally raised meats; and they're higher in conjugated linoleic acid (the cancer-fighting fat) and vitamins than conventionally raised meat products.
- ✓ **Environment:** The proper pasturing of animals promotes biodiversity, improves soil fertility and eliminates waste-management problems associated with confinement feeding operations. It also reduces fuel use because, rather than harvesting and shipping grain for animals to feed on, grass-fed animals harvest their own feed.
- ✓ **Animal and human welfare:** Pasture-raised animals are allowed to roam on grass, eating what they're naturally inclined to eat. They enjoy clean, spacious environments and are less likely than confined animals to become ill or contract diseases. Also, farmers and farm workers on grass-based operations enjoy an extremely healthy and pleasant work environment.
- ✓ **Culinary:** Many of today's best chefs are discovering the unique flavors and textures of grass-fed and pasture-raised meats and dairy products. Raised properly, animals raised on pasture mean better-tasting and higher-quality foods.
- ✓ Check out <http://www.eatwild.com> for a comprehensive list of farmers in your region who are raising animals on pasture. Noted journalist and author Jo Robinson has put together this well-documented website, where she reports on the multiple benefits of—and rising interest in—pasture-based foods.

(Review continued from page 12)

another or the solution of one problem creates another problem; and (2) Technological challenges always increase – thus, as the human population grows and as natural resources remain constant or degrade, technological challenges will increase in size, number and complexity. After the laws are introduced, Davidson also shows that following moderneconomics will only exacerbate problems and technological challenges. Even in ecological economics the fallacies and laws must be recognized.

After demonstrating the many problems facing economics and ecology today, Davidson does leave the reader on a positive note with clear action steps, also known as a “Modest Proposal for Profound Change” at the governmental and personal level. Some of the governmental fixes include: (1) Stop building newroads into wilderness areas; (2) Eliminate tax deductions for more than two children in countries that have income tax; (3) Eliminate governmental subsidies that hinder market forces that would

otherwise promote conservation of resources; and (4) Support governmental and non-governmental efforts that encourage farms in both industrialized and developing countries to make more efficient use of their land while also conserving soil and using only essential quantities of fertilizer and pesticides.

Some of the personal changes advocated include: (1) Analyze your habits of using electricity, heating, water, automobiles, consumer goods and food; (2) Insist that your elected representatives understand why you can't eat GNP; and (3) Figure out how you can best use your particular set of skills to contribute to helping change the way our society currently values and uses our resources.

While these steps will not directly put food on your table, they do lead towards a world where you will never be left to eat GNP. They help the government and average person look at the economics of their world within the ecological world. No matter what, if we want to survive we must do it within the natural world.

GRAZEFEST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13TH 2005



PRAIRIE HORIZONS FARM - 31008 State Hwy 29, Benson, MN

Featuring:

Jim Gerrish, Independent Grazing Consultant
“Improving Pasture Nutrition & Your Bottom Line”

Along with:

- ⇒ **Howard Moechnig**, NRCS Grazing Specialist
“Four Giant Steps from Pasture Degradation to Rejuvenation”
- ⇒ **Luverne & Mary Jo Forbord**, Prairie Horizons Farm and SFA of MN
- ⇒ Guided small group **Pasture Walks**
 - ⇒ Music by **Marienne Kreitlow & Jerry Ford**,
The Strollers, Corridor, and others!
 - ⇒ Enjoy a locally produced **Grazing Lunch** and
Pride of the Prairie Grill-Off Supper

*****Note: Please bring your own chair for day. Thanks!******

All are welcome to attend!
For more info visit: www.sfa-mn.org
or contact Anne at 320-226-6318 or
communications@sfa-mn.org

Sponsored by:
Sustainable Farming Association of MN, USDA - NRCS,
MN Department of Ag Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, MN Farmers Union, Ag Resource Consulting,
Organic Land Management, and University of Minnesota

(Events continued from page 7)
or 218-393-3276 or visit: www.harvestfest.cjb.net.

September 12-15 *Conference to Reinvigorate Public Breeding of Seeds & Animals for a Healthy 21st Century Agriculture*, Ames, Iowa. For more info call 919-542-6067 or visit www.rafiusa.org.

September 15 *Harvesting and Using Herbs*, We will learn various methods of preservation. The class costs is \$5.00 and runs from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm. Location: Central Lakes College, Staples, MN.

September 24 *South Central Chapter of SFA of MN Annual Potluck Dinner AND Farm Tour*, The event starts off with a field day at 2:00 pm highlighting different conservation practices. The potluck dinner will be at 5:00 pm.

September 30—October 2 *2nd Annual Meander – Upper Minnesota River Valley Arts Crawl & CURE River Revival*, western MN; For more information call CURE, 877-269-2873 or visit www.curemriver.org.

October 20 *A Soothing Evening with Herbs*, The event costs \$35.00 and runs from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm.

(GrazeFest continued from page 1)
and pasture-raised foods. The concept was created by Eating Fresh Publications. SFA thanks them for their wonderful assistance.

Musical inspiration and entertainment will be in peak season at GrazeFest Minnesota. Marianne Kreitlow and Jerry Ford will provide the homegrown musical inspiration over lunch. The Strollers (Richard Handeen and friends) and Corridor (Glen Borgerding's band) will fire up in the late afternoon and evening for your listening or dancing pleasure.

As a major supporter of GrazeFest 2005, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist Bill Hunt is providing limited scholarship funding for deserving farmers and graziers to attend GrazeFest. *Send in your registration today, and please indicate if you are a farmer or aspiring farmer requesting a scholarship.* A complete GrazeFest Minnesota schedule and registration form is on page 15, or register online at www.sfa-mn.org.

Everyone, farmer and non-farmer alike, is welcome to attend GrazeFest Minnesota! I hope that you've circled the date, and that I will see you on at Prairie Horizons Farm, **31008 State Hwy 29, 10 miles north of Benson in West Central MN.**

(GrazeFest is a service mark of Eating Fresh Publications.)

REGISTRATION FORM FOR GRAZEFESTsm MINNESOTA 2005

You can also register for GrazeFest Minnesota 2005 at the SFA of MN website: www.sfa-mn.org!

GrazeFest Registration	Registration Status	per person#	attending	Line Total
Early--postmarked by Aug. 5th	SFA Member	\$40	_____	_____
Early--postmarked by Aug. 5th	Non-member	\$50	_____	_____
Postmarked after Aug. 5th	SFA Member	\$50	_____	_____
Postmarked after Aug. 5th	Non-member	\$60	_____	_____
Total \$\$ Enclosed:				_____

Lunch, Supper, Snacks, & Music are all included in price of registration.
Please send a check payable to: SFA of MN, 29731 302 Street, Starbuck, MN 56381

Name(s) _____

I am a Farmer or Grazier: **yes*** **no**

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

*To request a scholarship please call or email Anne for availability: 320-226-6318 or communications@sfa-mn.org.

Meet Joel Rosen



I live and farm about 1/4 mile from the southeast shore of Park Lake in central Carlton County, about 30 miles southwest from the head of Lake Superior. I grow certified organic vegetables and herbs for market. I also direct market lamb, Thanksgiving turkeys, meat chickens, eggs, and maple syrup. Before 1996, I had full-time hired help for four months plus seasonal pickers. However, I discovered that I was not good at managing other people. Now, I'm a one-man operation. I like the short growing season here as it gives me a fairly long period for rest and recovery – Christmas to mid-March – if all goes according to plan. I also really enjoy watching the young lambs as they start to socialize by holding nightly lamb races and playing king of the hill (or compost pile). Although it can be exhausting in a good year, I always look forward to gathering sap and making maple syrup. My biggest complaint would be bugs, so when the bugs are really bad it's nice to deliver produce to market in virtually bug-free Duluth. I've been married for 27 years to my wife, Diana Lahtinen Rosen, a veterinarian with a practice in Moose Lake, MN. We have two sons, Bret and Daniel.

I became involved in the SFA of MN in 1991 after attending the first few organizational meetings for the Northeast Chapter. I was elected to the first board of directors and I have been on the chapter board ever since. For about 13 years, I served as the Northeast Chapter Chairman, stepping down in April 2005. In 1996, I downscaled my farm operation enough to allow me to start attending state board meetings regularly. I have been on the state board ever since, acting as vice-chair since 1998. When I was younger I thought that maybe I would do something dramatic to change the world. However, as I matured I came to believe that if everyone would just do his or her part in making the world a better place, it just might happen. This is the guiding principle I try to follow in farming, in personal relations, in politics, and in my involvement with the SFA of MN.

Mission:

We support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through farmer-to-farmer networking, innovation, demonstration, and education.

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Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

29731 302nd Street
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