

March 6, 2008

Organic Network Conference Call

Present: Bud Markhart, Mary Jo Forbord, Jim Riddle, Harriet Behar, Helene Murray

Next call: Thursday, April 3, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Host: Harriet Scribe: TBA, **we need a volunteer for this please!**

Mary Jo said that the farm adjacent to theirs has been spreading ash from incinerated turkey manure on frozen ground. She is concerned about it blowing onto their certified organic land and asked Jim what he knows about this. Jim said that the NOP specifically states that application of manure that has been burned is strictly prohibited (section 205602A.) Of concern is the arsenic content and chemical trespass issues. Mary Jo said they have sent a sample to a lab for analysis but they have not yet received the results. Bud offered to put a sample through the lab here on campus if needed. Jim also suggested that Mary Jo be in contact with Jeff Strock at the SWROC in Lamberton. Dr. Strock is conducting some research trials using the ash but asked Jim about it before setting up the plots so as to avoid any problems for the certified acreage at the station. He can be reached at 507-752-7372.

Jim noted a couple of upcoming events including: Winona Local Food Forum tomorrow (3/6)

Organic Winter School held in Litchfield on March 4 (30 attendees) and another on March 18 in Lamberton, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., followed by of an [on-farm water quality monitoring network](#), led by Ann Lewandowski, coordinator of the U of M Water Resources Center. Organic and sustainable producers are encouraged to participate in this meeting. Pre-register before Friday, March 14 by contacting Molly Werner at 507-752-5062 or werne022@umn.edu. Copies of presentations from these events will be posted to the Organic Ecology website: <http://organicecology.umn.edu/>

University of Minnesota Organic Winter School on Monday, April 7, 2008 at the St. Charles Community Center in St. Charles, MN. This event is being organized in collaboration with the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service. Jim Riddle and Craig Sheaffer, U of M, and Harriet Behar, MOSES Organic Outreach Coordinator, will team-teach the school. The event will focus on the production of organic feed crops, ways to minimize risks, and will feature a panel of experienced organic producers. For more information or to register for the St. Charles event, contact Harriet Behar at 608-872-2164 or harriet@mosesorganic.org.

Jim and Helene will be at the National SARE conference March 25-27 in Kansas City; Bud said he will be there for part of the meeting.

Plans are underway to host a meeting to discuss the 18 year old VICMS trials at Lamberton (research on high input/low input/organic/no input systems) and to get input on the future of this land... ie. should they consider shifting to crops for human consumption or other cropping systems? Forum date is still being sought but it looks like Thursday April 3 would be a good date as the MDA Commissioners' Organic Ag Advisory Task Force is meeting on April 2.

Jim, Harriet and Bud noted there was great turn out at last week's UMOFC conference in La Crosse (2,500 people.) Jim will post a link to proceedings from the Organic Research Symposium at the conference to the Organic Ecology site.

Jim will post some late breaking news about the NOP and their new policy statement to the organic network asap. (done)

Mary Jo noted the upcoming Organic Dairy 101: A Workshop for Dairy Support Professionals in Rochester on March 25 Rochester, MN from 9:00am - 3:30pm and again on March 27th in McIntosh. They have a great line up of speakers but are still hoping to identify a veterinarian to present at the McIntosh event. Jim mentioned that he will be speaking at WI's final Org Dairy 101 workshop, to be held March 13 in Loyal, WI.

Mary Jo asked if anyone knew about the grant that Dr. Katie Pelican, new vet med hire, has received regarding wildlife and grazing systems. Kathy Draeger alerted her that there is currently no farmer involvement in this grant. It was generally agreed that this should change; Helene noted that Wayne Martin is on the Advisory Committee for this grant and that she has asked him to work on increasing farmer involvement in the project. Farmers have much to contribute to this topic and in fact the Forbords received the Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society award in February 2008 for their work on conservation to increase wildlife habitat.

Mary Jo noted the upcoming "Home Grown Economy" session in Crookston on March 31. This is the second such event hosted by Representative Collin Peterson. Helene noted that Kate Clancy will be back in town to present at this event; she will be in Minnesota from March 29 until April 3 if you need to meet with her. Helene also said that Larry Lev will be in town from March 25-28 if you need to meet with him.

Harriet said to go to the MOSES web site to get an update on the huge number of events coming up to learn how she will be spending her time over the next month:
<http://www.mosesorganic.org/>

She also noted that she participated in a 3 hour workshop sponsored by the Midtown Farmers Market in Minneapolis where there was high interest in organic farming shown by many new immigrant farmers in the audience (simultaneously translated for the many Hmong farmers present.) Bud noted that MFA is hosting a new immigrant farmers meeting on Friday and Saturday (March 7 and 8) at the May Farm.

Harriet said there is an effort underway to get a sustainable and organic agriculture tent at Farm Fest this year (August 5-7.) If you know of groups that would like to participate they should be in contact with Wayne Martin (612-612-25-6224, marti067@umn.edu)

Bud noted that there is currently an effort to get input on the future of the St Paul campus. This memo was recently sent out by Dean Allen Levine:

"Provost Tom Sullivan's office has scheduled a series of public forums on a draft strategic plan for the St. Paul campus: "Defining the St. Paul Campus: A Working Document." Your input into the planning process is critically important and will shape the final document. The document is intended to guide the future land use and facilities decisions on the St. Paul Campus, and eventually lead to an integrated strategic and capital planning plan.

The forums will be held:

- Tuesday March 4, 3-4:30 pm, 105 Cargill, St. Paul Campus;
- Wednesday March 5, 9:30-11am 325 Educ. Sciences Building, East Bank Campus;
- Wednesday, March 12, 4-5:30 pm, B35 Classroom Office Bldg, St. Paul Campus.

The March 12 forum will focus on issues of interest to students. In addition, a fourth public forum is being scheduled to collect feedback from neighborhoods adjacent to campus.

You can download a copy of the draft plan at:

http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/reports/st_paul_planning.html

as well as submit comments electronically."

Bud recently participated in a Sustainability Forum on food systems on the Minneapolis campus. Fellow presenters included Dana Jackson from LSP and Anne Kapuscinski from Fisheries and Wildlife. The event was well attended and students from across the University expressed an interest in working on the Student Organic Farm this summer. He also noted that there are 14 students enrolled in the student farm class this spring semester. Three of the students in the class have applied for undergraduate research opportunities program (UROP) grants to do research on the farm this summer.

Bud noted that there will be a Master Gardner's "Spring Fling" event at the Women's Environmental Institute this Saturday (March 8)

Meg emailed Bud some information to share with the organic network as she is unable to be on the call today:

All of the 06-07 cost share funds available through MDA have been distributed.

Meg is currently writing a proposal to RMA to continue the Organic Farm Business Management (FBM) project. The major collaborator is UMN Center for Farm Financial Mgt. They are also in discussion w/ groups in North Dakota and Wisconsin to see if they want to participate.

Meg also noted that the Directory of MN Organic Farms just went through its 3rd proofing and that the final copy should be out within weeks.

Helene noted the presentations from the third Solution-Driven Science Symposium sponsored by CFANS on "Food Systems and Human Health" on February 14, 2008 featured speakers Kate Clancy, Vince Fritz, Jean Kinsey and Francisco Diez. Their presentations can be found at:

http://www.cfans.umn.edu/Food_Systems_Symposium_Video_Presentations.html