

Meg was the host and Carmen the scribe.
Round Robin started with:

Bud: He is getting ready to leave for his Iceland and Germany trip with students. His organic garden has some good research questions in progress as well. They include work with strawberries and some foliar feeding trials. He also mentioned that there are 18 visiting Egyptian scientists presently at the University who have some deep interests in organic research.

Mary Jo: The issue about the national animal ID program is beginning to surface more often in discussions around the state especially among farmers. Avian flu is also on the agenda for discussion among many of these same groups. Mary Jo briefly referenced the recent article in The Land by Dennis Avery. She was disappointed in the inflammatory approach taken by the author. Her big announcement was the 2nd annual Minnesota Graze fest scheduled for August 4th at two co hosting sights; the WCROC and at the Prairie Horizon Farm. There are many good speakers already lined up including Dennis Johnson and Deon Stuthman. She is encouraging every one to be on the look out for upcoming additional information and to already mark their calendars for that date.

Bill: NCR-SARE Research and Education preproposals are due by June 20th. Look on their site www.sare.org/ncrsare for additional information or be in touch with Bill at the University. The transitional move of the official SARE offices from Nebraska to Minnesota is beginning slowly.

Robin: She reiterated the rising concern about the national animal health identification program.

DeEtta: She has been elected to the international board of OCIA. She also mentioned that there has been good growth in OCIA membership in Minnesota but that there appears to be a serious shortage of organic inspectors. She also gave some brief updates on the AGR Crop Insurance and whole farm revenue subject. She will keep us informed.

Carmen: Updated the group briefly on the continuing work relating to the large RMA organic research grant the university is working on. There will be a significant number of projects on his farm as well as at the Lamberton station. The annual Organic Field Day at the Lamberton station will be held on June 28th starting with a continental breakfast at 7:20, followed by tours of the various plots and keynote speeches by both Jerry DeWitt and Ken Meter. Exhibitors are encouraged to be in touch with Carmen about displaying at the field day and confirm with him if they plan to be there. Exhibitors will have an opportunity to give a little information about their organizations during the noon hour. Plans are underway to enhance the organic display at the MCIA booth at the state fair working in conjunction with Ron Farley.

Jim: Reported on the OATF most recent board meeting held at Byerly's

on March 30. One outcome of the meeting was a prioritizing of issues the board wished the commissioner to carry to the input sessions regarding the upcoming new farm bill discussions. The priorities included:

- Continued Certification cost sharing
- Organic transitional incentive payment program
- Renewed and enhanced organic research funding
- A voluntary commodity check-off program involving both

producers

and wholesalers and retailers.

Jim also is in the process of completing and making available a video of Ken Meter's presentation recently in Winona. He will let us know when it is available and at what cost. He attended the NOSB meeting in PA regarding pasture and organics and all of its benefits. He also reminded us to be aware of and participate in the public comments being asked for regarding the standards of production relating to pasture issues. They are due by June 12. The IFOAM conference planning is progressing nicely.

There are 69 submitted abstracts with intentions of having about 40 approved for presentation along with some 20 workshops. And in his role as Organic coordinator in charge of outreach, he is continuing work on the organic ecology web site which is getting very close to launch. He continues to request some good photos to help dress up the site.

Meg: There is a new reporter for the Mpls. Tribune who appears to have agriculture issues at heart and also appears to have some good interest in organics. The organic directory survey has had a great response from producers. There have been 204 returns and so the assembly and printing of the directory is beginning on time. Work has already begun on the annual organic conference. There should be a mailer coming to a house near you and you are asked to respond with any ideas you might have for the conference. Meg, Glen Schaefer and Brad Carlson are in the process of putting together a flyer of some sort giving suggestions and ideas on how and what to do with CRP acreage coming out and being thought of as possible organic acreage.

General Discussion: Mary Jo had some concerned questions regarding USDA certification for local livestock processing plants getting USDA approval. There appears to be a bit of a hassle factor. She and Meg will get together some people to contact for possible resolution of the issue. Mary Jo also commented about the "Green Acres" provision that is being enforced in some counties and not in others. It is causing some land price issues. She will send out some information and hopefully we can have some deeper discussions on it during future calls. Meg informed us about some SARE, RMA and other requests for proposals that we might carry on a discussion via the list serve. Look for this and become engaged if possible. Jim also gave us a heads up on a special rules submission that has only until May 12 for response from the public. Look for his e-mail about this and respond appropriately.

Next meeting: June 1, 2006

Host: Jim Riddle

Scribe DeEtta Bilek

Carmen Fernholz, Scribe

