

Organic Network call
Thursday, November 6, 2008

On line:

Helene Murray (host)
Carmen Fernholz(scribe)
Jim Riddle
Harriet Behar
Meg Moynihan

Carmen: quick update on work at Lamberton especially the submission of a SARE proposal for sustainable education in the class room.

Jim: Traveling in GA. He reminded us of the Eliot Coleman season extension seminar ahead of the Minnesota Organic conference. Pre-registration is required so get registrations in by January 7 for the January 15 event. Registration is limited so sign up soon: www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic
<<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic>>

The latest Organic pasture rules have been published and will be receiving comments until December 23. There are some significant economic impact pieces to the proposed rules so everyone is encouraged to study them and make comments if so desired.

Harriet: conducted a workshop in Wabasha on transitioning to organic livestock feed production. Good turn out. There will be another one in Wisconsin at a later date. She also encouraged producers to study the current farm bill and learn how to work with government agencies to receive assistance for various practices on your farms. And finally Organic Valley is taking on a major effort to inform owners and operators of CRP acreage coming out of contract this year and next about how to maintain the organic status of this acreage. They are also offering a \$200.00 scholarship to help defray soil testing costs and some consulting expenses.

Meg: The organic certification cost share is still proceeding. Minnesota is waiting for the final details of the Federal portion of the program to better determine how to proceed with both the 2007-2008 cost share as well as the 2008-2009 program. Organic conference planning is progressing in good fashion. MDA is working with MFA to initiate some language translation opportunities for some of the sessions to better accommodate some of the attendees at the conference. MDA has acquired some new funding to continue and to expand the Farm Business Mgt program with new emphasis on specialty crops. Be in touch with Meg for more details. And revision of the OATF board will be part of the legislative proposal that will along with Minnesota Department of Agriculture, will also include the University

of Minnesota Extension, College of Food, Agricultural & Natural Resource Sciences, and the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station.

Helene: The job description for the new position at SWROC should be coming out within the next week. Jim Orf is heading up the search process. The position will be 60% Extension and 40% research appointment with much emphasis on organics.

Next call is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2008 from 8:30-9:30 a.m.

For the Dec 4 call we need: 1) a host and 2) a scribe ... please volunteer!