

Minnesota Organic Network Conference Call
December 1, 2005

Participants: John Beckwith, DeEtta Bilek, Mary Jo Forbord, Milton Haar, Matthew Harbur, Hans Kandel, Jeremy Lanctot, Meg Moynihan, Helene Murray, Pauline Nickel, Paul Porter, Jim Riddle, Lori Scott, Bill Wilcke and Nathan Winter

Host: Meg Moynihan

Scribe: Milt Haar

Round-robin:

- Helene: Applications for the organic coordinator positions are due by the 5th of December; the search committee will meet on December 14th to review applications.
- Paul: A brochure has been put together for the student organic farming seminar; an article on the VICMS study at the SWROC was submitted to IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements); the article will be part of a collection of work on long-term organic studies; this summer there will a meeting in Philadelphia devoted to long term organic research; soil will be the emphasis of meeting.
- Bill: NRC-SARE office will be moving from Lincoln, Nebraska to St. Paul. Old projects will continue operate out of the Nebraska office and new projects will operate out of St. Paul.
- DeEtta: Midwest dairy expo on the 6th and 7th of December.
- Nathan Winter: Interested in introductory organic programs; he works at McCloud and Meeker counties extension office; small farms and truck farms in his area expressing an interest in organics; he would like to assist them with certification and transition.
- Mary Jo: Annual meeting of Sustainable Farming Association will be held on the 18th of February at Little Falls; "Cultivating Common Ground: Linking Sustainable Ag and Health"; December 21 is the deadline for *CornerPost* newsletter; working on MN dairy initiative and Organic Network webpage.
- Jeremy: Initial network information posted on web site; receiving inquiries about raising goats; ethnic and health reasons for the interest, not necessarily organic.
- Pauline: Ongoing search for statewide organic coordinator position
- Matt: Working on statewide partnership with Risk Management Agency; the goal is to develop an interactive software tool to help producers make decisions; next step is to organize teams/learning groups.
- Lori: Alternative crops harvested and being threshed; considering a proposal for flax in an organic breeding grant.
- Milt: Matt, Lori and Milt have received a grant to look at the weed competitiveness of soybean varieties.
- Hans: Putting together a booklet on his trials; among his trials this past year were organic flax, organic products for control of soybean rust and organic wheat varieties.

- John: EQIP sign up until the end of January, 2006; a component has been added to the program to encourage pollinators; areas may not have to be contiguous to qualify, so border areas could be used.
- Jim: Off tomorrow to teach an ag inspector training course; two weeks ago Jim attended his last NOSB meeting as chair; he is still on the board; Kevin O'Rell from Horizon Dairy is the new chair; The focus of the meeting two weeks ago was review of accepted synthetic substances for organics; 120 substances were approved, action on 20 was deferred and 1 was removed; a draft recommendation for pasture requirements was submitted for consideration; an executive director of NOSB is being hired and should be in place mid to late December; all the money allocated for the cost share program has been allocated to the states; states that have spent all of their money, and need more may ask for a reallocation of funds; Six new appointees will be made to the NOSB; the names will be announced in early January; the first meeting of NOSB next year will take in public comment about the pasture requirements for dairy; the new organic law passed by congress will entail the development of new rules and regulations; a recently published study found residue of livestock antibiotics given on produce (Antibiotic Uptake by Plants from Soil Fertilized with Animal Manure, J. Environmental Quality:34:2082-2085).
- Meg: Preparations for the organic conference are coming along; MDA has a grant that will pay 80% of the cost for organic farmers to participate in the Farm Business Management Program; developing an Organic Producer Directory; the intent of the directory is to help buyers find producers and for producers to find one another; early spring is the target date for this directory to be available; updated statistics on organic agriculture are available at www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/organic

Next conference call will be January 5th, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. Host and scribe to be determined.