Support and mentor the next generation of sustainable farmers is a goal that has always figured prominently into SFA’s mission. Over the past few months, I’ve had the enriching experience of gaining an inside track on the ideas and aspirations of high school and college-age youth, and hearing their views on how they wish to participate in careers that could enhance the sustainability of our food and farming system.

Earlier this year, a panel of college-age youth drew a standing room only crowd at SFA’s annual meeting at Gustavus Adolphus College. Riveted attention and pure enjoyment was the universal audience response. Those assembled seemed downright thriled that a panel of four bright, articulate young people held center stage as they wrestled to formulate their solutions to some of our most daunting food and energy system concerns. The students’ thoughtfulness and energy had been introduced to us the evening before, as we enjoyed a “Locavore Dinner” that we had prepared together in the Gustavus campus kitchen. The Gustavus interaction left many in SFA eager for the next opportunity to engage and learn from youth.

Another unique opportunity arrived in April, courtesy of the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships. The charge of the retreat was to envision Minnesota in the year 2050 and collectively search for pathways to a sustainable future.

Forbord cont. on page 2
Forbord continued from page 1

future. Students created and performed a theatrical presentation based on words and voices gleaned from interviews with community leaders about successful experiences of people working together to bring about positive community change. The youth performance was most memorable, enjoyable, and insightful. It caused a noticeable spike in the energy and creativity that set the tone and lasted throughout the retreat.

In May, SFA convened a meeting jointly with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Youth were invited not just to participate, but to run the meeting…and run it they did! With youth taking center stage, those of us not so young could concentrate on using our collective experience and resources to creatively align our support around their aspirations. We talked about what divides us, how to overcome barriers, and how to better engage young people in working toward a more sustainable future. It didn’t take long to arrive squarely at the technology and communications divide. Facebook, My Space, blogging, and text messaging are indispensable daily communications fare for teens and twenty-somethings. We are perhaps facing a communications gap nearly as wide as our grandparents from the “Old Country”, as the younger generation aggressively pursued leaving old ways and language behind to solely adopt a new language. When I ask my aunt about my great grandmother and her life experience, she can only say that she was a smiling woman who never spoke a word that she (her granddaughter) understood. The inability to communicate and develop relationships can cause all involved to lose out.

And what of SFA? I believe we need to be at work in the gap. Our members possess well-honed skills, timeless wisdom and a generous spirit to share, but the opportunity doesn’t always automatically present itself. We must search for ways to fully engage youth on center stage. This may take us out of our comfort zone, but the rewards...
Chapter Updates

Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

It has been hot and dry around here – and windy too. A couple of weeks ago, we got in a front of a couple showers and picked up about a half inch of rain, but it is still hot. The corn should be enjoying this.

The big news for us is the Second Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival happening on Saturday, August 18th at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Howard Lake, MN. Having a year’s experience and not wanting to repeat all of the experiences of last year, we are madly calling, planning, working, networking, and trying to get a little farming done. I blame Jerry Ford for this. Last year we had over 1000 people come through the gate. This year we are expecting more, somewhere in the neighborhood of 2000-3000 people.

Not only is Mary Schmidt up to her ears in gardens, but she also is organizing the vendors for the Garlic Festival. If you have Minnesota (or even local) crafts, food, art, homemade pies, rugs, shoes, clothes, alternative energy systems, wood products, information, garlic related products to sell to the general public, or other local, sustainable products or services, give Mary a call (320-485-3562) for a vendor form. Booth space is cheap at only $5 per foot. Some restrictions apply such as no junk or junk food. The deadline for the cheap rate is the middle of July. If you know of other people who would be a good fit, don’t be shy about telling them about the festival.

We are looking for people to help set up, tear

Crow River continued on page 4
Crow River continued from page 3

down, clean up after the event, chop garlic, wash dishes, serve food, work the gate, point people in the right direction, spell vendors so they can go look around, etc. We would like all the SFA chapters to feel free to become involved in making this event a success. The point of the Garlic Festival is to promote local sustainable agriculture in all of Minnesota and to have some fun. To make sure it has a statewide effect, the Garlic Festival will donate 10% of the net profit back to the state SFA treasury. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Sheryl Woullett at 320-286-5950.

Marienne Kreitlow has been working on the entertainment line up. Acts include Papa John Kolstad’s swing and jazz band, Will Hale jammin’ with the kids, Qeej traditional Hmong music and dance, garlic songs by Marienne and Texasota, Jawaaahir mid-eastern dance, Mu Taiko Group Japanese drumming (don’t miss this), Star Michaelina magic, kids games, yoga, belly dancing, kite flying, and Shakespearean comedy.

The kite flying workshop will be from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Feel free to bring your own homemade kite to fly. If there are thunderstorms with impressive lightning strikes nearby, this event may be postponed.

The food was great last year and this time, it should be better than ever. An all-star line up of chefs from the Twin Cities is coming out to see if they can prepare and serve food to 1200 – 1800 people in three hours. In alphabetical order they are: Alex Roberts (Restaurant Alma), Lucia Watson (Lucias), Mike Phillips (The Craftsman), Phillip Becht (The Modern), Russel Klien (ex-WA Frost), and Tracy Singleton (The Birchwood Cafe). They will be using the finest local ingredients in this attempt.

In addition, the chefs will be judging locally made wine, beer, and cheese. Food and cooking demonstrations are planned throughout the afternoon. Local vintners, brewers and cheesemakers should call or email me, Greg Reynolds, (763-972-3295 or riverbend@usinternet.com) for more information on entering the competition and having this unique chance to show off your abilities in front of some of the best chefs in the state.

Before the Garlic Festival, the Crow River chapter is hosting a farm tour on Saturday, July 7th at Peter and Katy Hemberger’s August Earth Farm. August Earth is a CSA operation and Peter and Katy are also involved in researching alternative ways to deal with cucumber beetles. If you grow vegetables, you should be there.

The event will start at 2:00 p.m. August Earth Farm is located at 23229 200th St., west of Hutchinson, MN. Contact Jerry Ford (320-543-3394 or jerry@marienne.com) for more details and to reserve a spot.

Western Chapter

By Cheryl Landgren

The Western Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, in cooperation with the Land Stewardship Project, is excited to co-host an “Introduction to Permaculture” workshop in Montevideo, MN on August 3-4. This unique opportunity, presented by the Minneapolis based Permaculture Institute Cold Climate, will be led by Certified Permaculture Designers Guy Trombley and Paula Westmorland, both of whom will share their extensive experience in Permaculture practices.

So what is Permaculture and what does it have to do with sustainable farming? I was intrigued to discover the similarities. Permaculture is defined by its co-founder, Bill Mollison, as “the conscious design and maintenance of productive ecosystems that have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people, providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way.” (From Permaculture: A Designer’s Manual) Permaculture practice begins with a statement of ethics: care for the earth, care for people, share the surplus. The principles of Permaculture can be practiced anywhere – farm, city, village, suburb, forest, desert, prairie – any place that humans inhabit. By working in collaboration with natural systems, this global movement has brought sustenance and hope to people in some of the most ecologically challenged places on the planet.

I first learned about Permaculture in Santa Fe, NM, where I saw examples of dry desert landscape becoming green oases. Now I’m attempting to apply Permaculture principles to my 15 acre homestead along the Chippewa River. As a member of the Permaculture Collaborative (see website link below), I’m helping to organize this workshop so I can connect with other “permies” in Western continued on page 5
region to contact him about research ideas. The three criteria are needed for ideas to be presented are the following:

1) A question
2) A paragraph to define the question
3) A list of names of people that could work with that particular question.

Then these criteria can be matched up with a potential grant. Carmen also pointed out that all of us, as members of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, need to get involved by contacting our local legislative representatives and senators about sustainable farming to encourage development of future programs, studies and organic research university positions. Carmen Fernholz can be reached at: 2484 Hwy 40, Madison, MN 56256 – phone: (320) 598-3010 or Southwest Research and Outreach Center, 23669 130th St, Lamberton, MN 56152.

Chapter officers were also elected at our annual meeting. They are: Jim Sovell, President; Don DeWeerd, Vice President; Joe Rolling, Treasurer; Dorinda Speh, Secretary; and Sunny Ruthchild, State Board Member.

On Monday, April 30, 2007 we had Terry VanDerPol from the Land Stewardship Project as a speaker at our chapter gathering. She spoke about her position and duties at that agency. Our chapter spoke with Terry about marketing problems that we have with our farming operations. This led to a discussion about cooperative marketing for our group.

An upcoming event for our chapter this summer will be a tour of the Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) greenhouse, followed by a picnic in the SMSU flower garden courtyard.

Mark your calendars! The Organic Field Day at SWROC, Lamberton, MN will be Wednesday, July 11, 2007 from 7:30 a.m. (continental breakfast, with tours starting at 8:30 a.m.) to 4:00 p.m. They will present the latest research-based information about organic weed management, cover and companion crops, soil quality, variety selection, vegetable crop trials, and no-till organic production. The Organic Field Day is free and open to the public. A fee will be charged for the lunch. For more information, contact the SWROC at 507-752-7372 or online at www.organicecology.umn.edu.
Central Chapter

By Sue Peterson

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Central Chapter (SFACM) is working on several projects this summer. The chapter received grants from the Runestone Electric Cooperative and Todd Wadena Electric Cooperative Operation Roundup programs.

We are going to use these funds to reprint of the Annelid Coloring Book, which will be distributed to local schools.

There will be a “100 Orchard Project” planning meeting on Friday, June 22nd at noon. It will be held at the Franciscan Sisters Convent in Little Falls, MN and anyone who is interested in this project is invited to attend. For more information contact Sister Ruth Lentner (rlentner@fslf.org) or me, Sue Peterson, (azariahnsue@yahoo.com).

The Central Chapter will have a booth at the Ecofair, which is being in conjunction with the Pine River Cass County Fair on July 19-21. We will also have a booth at the Green Fair, being held at the Franciscan Sisters Convent in Little Falls, MN, on Wednesday, August 8th from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Plans are being finalized for a two-day orchard planning and maintenance workshop, which will be held near Longville, MN on August 17-18. Contact Jim Chamberlin (islandlakefarm@brainerd.net) or Sue Peterson for details.

Lake Superior Chapter

By Jean Sramek

We held our 3rd Annual “Farmers Take the Stage” (FTTS) in March. “FTTS” is basically a talent show featuring Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA) members and SFA supporters, along with homemade treats, a silent auction, and some great performances—everything from music to poetry to a little standup comedy. This year’s event featured local musicians, The Free Range Chicks, and a wonderful silent auction organized by board member Karola Dalen.

Our 14th Annual Harvest Festival will be held on Saturday, September 8th in Bayfront Park, Duluth. We hope (as always) for record attendance (last year we had around 9,000 visitors), and a breezy, sunny, perfect late-summer day. We’ll partner again with the Lake Superior Energy Fair, and we will work on ways to enhance, refine and expand the event.

Saturday, September 15th will be our 3rd Annual Urban Farm Tour and garden hop. It’s a self-guided tour of backyard food production within the city limits of Duluth. Tour participants are always amazed and inspired by the amount of food grown in small spaces. Everything from orchards to poultry are featured.

If you haven’t made a note of our new website and email, please do it now. We can be reached at www.lakesuperiorfarming.org and info@lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Southeast Chapter

By Edgar Hansgen

Hello from the Garden of Eden. If green is beautiful, we are in a garden of beauty. Our crops really do look great!! This may seem a little early, but it will be time to think about covercrop interseeding before very long. Andy Hart gave a presentation on it at our annual meeting. For more info, call me at (507) 932-4219 or Andy at (507) 876-2256. The seeding is done when soybeans start turning color and corn reaches the black layer stage.

We have scheduled our “DIG” on Tuesday, August 14, at 10:30 AM at the Roy Michaelis farm. This activity shows our soil profile, plant root growth, and biological activity. We hope to have a mailing on this with more details. Please put it on your calendar.

A pasture walk is scheduled for September on a farm north of Rochester. We hope to have some of our farmers market customers there to see how our meat and milk is produced. It would be great to have a good farmer turnout too. We will start planning our fall/winter activities, so if you have any ideas for us, please let me know.
South Central Chapter

By Julie Ackland

The South Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA of MN) participated in Earth Week Festivities that were held in Albert Lea, MN. Terry Cunningham, who is a member of our group, was one of the speakers at the Earth Day Rally, which was held at the Fountain Lake Park Gazebo on Sunday, April 22nd. Terry was also feature on the front page of the Albert Lea Tribune. He farms 120-acres near Twin Lakes, MN and was the second person in Freeborn County to make a switch to organic farming. Also a baker, Terry makes many different types of bread and he always brings it to our chapter annual meeting.

The SFA of MN has been working with the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) to educate and engage citizens on clean energy and global warming issues, along with ways of protecting Minnesota’s great outdoors. MEP is a coalition of over 80 statewide groups that are working together to protect and restore Minnesota’s precious natural environment. This year the partnership has three legislative priorities: Clean Energy Minnesota, Clean Water Legacy and Investing to Protect Minnesota’s Great Outdoors. Locally in Albert Lea, our chapter has formed a group with the help of MEP called the “Albert Lea Environmental Coalition.” The Albert Lea group has been meeting on Wednesday evenings at the Audubon Center at the Skyline Mall. We will be having a table at the Albert Lea Farmers Market, so people can pick up information about the group there. If you would like more information about the Albert Lea Environmental Coalition contact Paige Shaw at 507-377-2292.

Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter

By Mary Ellen Frame

It seems that most crops are two weeks ahead of normal again this year and, at least locally, we had a very dry May. June has brought some rain. A week or so ago, there was a hailstorm in this neighborhood, which was devastating to many vegetables, and probably hard on fruits and other crops as well. It seems that farmers are going to have to deal with weather that is even wilder and more unpredictable than it has been historically in Minnesota.

The next event planned for the Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter will be at Mary Ellen Frame’s place (31679 Dahomey Ave. Northfield, MN) on Sunday, July 8th. The board of directors will meet here at 1:30 p.m. At 3:00 p.m., all are invited to tour Open Hands Farm, which adjoins the Frame Farm, operated by Erin Johnson and Ben Doherty. They grow vegetables and other produce for a 40-member CSA. They also sell vegetables at the Northfield Farmers Market, Just Food Co-op, and St. Olaf College. At 5:00 p.m. we’ll have a potluck supper back at Mary Ellen’s. Bring your own utensils and a dish to share. In the fall we’re going to have a field day or two, but they’re still in the planning stage.

Although we’re all super busy at this time of year, another important task is to contact our senators and representatives about the 2007 Federal Farm Bill. Its provisions affect everyone in the country, and in fact have an impact worldwide, not just on farmers in this country. If enough people write letters or email or make phone calls, we can influence how it comes out.

Forbord continued from page 2

couldn’t be more substantial. You see, along with advice that farmers should do more blogging about life on the farm, and wondering how anyone can farm without a high speed internet connection, came the following thoughts from youth: “People need to have a greater understanding of their connection to food and the people who grow it. Land should be kept together with family farms. We want a connection to the land. We need opportunities for learning experiences on farms, and education from farmers about farming through internships, apprenticeships and urban-rural exchanges.” This is our future talking. Are we listening… and responding?

Do you need to renew?

Membership in the SFA of MN entitles you to receive the CornerPost Newsletter and discounts on SFA of MN Events. Use the form on page 16 or go to www.sfa-mn.org and join or renew your membership today!
I have been thinking about the poster the Kerkhoven blacksmith had hanging on the wall a half century ago when I used to follow Dad everywhere. This was in the mid fifties, when blacksmiths were still called that, in part because they were not at that time so very far away from shoeing horses. But the horse I noticed was the one on the poster. It was just a line drawing of a horse with its tail raised and a steaming pile of fresh manure on the ground below. Below was inscribed this thought:

BUYING QUALITY IS LIKE BUYING OATS.

YOU CAN BUY FRESH CLEAN OATS FOR WHICH YOU WILL NEED TO PAY A FAIR PRICE.

OR YOU CAN BUY OATS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THE HORSE.

THAT COMES A LOT CHEAPER.

I noticed this poster at the time due to the novelty of seeing plain farmer language in print and also because posters were not so common then. I remember it now with such clarity because of the completeness with which we as rural people have lost track of that thought. It has been a slow steady process since that time, encouraged in us, I think by very wealthy and powerful folks who have made a nice living for themselves for several generations now out of our destruction of ourselves as both a people and a place. When we made the changes in the nineties that brought this farm to where it is today, where it sells virtually nothing as a commodity, we were in a corner and willing to do pretty much anything. We knew if we kept going in that direction, the cause was lost for certain. That kind of choice, whether it turns out to be a success or not, does serve to knock the scales off the eyes.

One of the things visible from this perspective is that value is made of price plus quality. This truth can be denied by the consumer who always buys whatever is cheapest and the farmer who dedicates his farming and life to producing the maximum quantity of something. But the reality cannot be changed. By excerpting quality from consideration they are both dealing in something like the commodity lying just under that poster horse’s tail.

The consumer of pork products, for instance, can always find something cheaper than most of what we sell. The first thing she may sacrifice in doing that is taste. But it goes far beyond that. Low price in pork is made of too many hogs crowded into too little space, of hogs separated both from the source of their feed and the destination of their manure. It means hogs tended by underpaid illegal immigrants in some cases. It also means hogs slaughtered at tremendous line speeds by immigrants both legal and not who are paid not much over minimum wage to work the ten years or so that their bodies will last doing that kind of labor at those speeds.

And the farmer knows this. He or she also knows that the act of farming itself has been getting less and less satisfying each year; that more and more inputs are used at a higher and higher price and that the more he tries to ease his life a little, the harder it seems to get. He runs harder to stay even.

The part that most people don’t get is that anything produced to a standard, rather than with a goal of quality is always a commodity and as such, will always benefit someone else more than the original producers. That is because someone else is putting in the illusion of quality later in the process. This is what the hog industry is doing when it puts its commodity sausage into a plastic tube and then gets its advertising “creatives” to put a cute old fashioned farmer on the label.

The upshot of all this for our rural places is of course Pogo’s dictum: “We have met the enemy and he is us.” We cannot make a quality life out of high priced inputs and cheap food.
Community, Cafeteria, and Curriculum: 
Farm to School in Western Minnesota

By Lynn Mader

Food Service directors at over 950 school districts in 35 states are now buying fresh produce from local farmers or telling their wholesale vendors they want locally grown food, not that jet-lagged stuff from South America. Local farmers are starting to feed local kids at the same time that innovative teachers are building history, biology, geography, and health lessons around the locally produced food that students are eating in the cafeteria. School children are starting to identify their food with a place, and even the face of a farmer. The Farm to School movement is gaining great momentum, improving students’ eating habits and farmer’s incomes.

Over the past three years, the University of Minnesota’s West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, serving a 12 county area, has supported a Farm to School Program with me, Lynn Mader as the coordinator. This program is trying to integrate the 3 C’s – Community, Cafeteria, and Curriculum. Local farmers have offered opportunities for field trips, in school classroom education and sales of products from their farms to area schools.

One example of this integration is happening at Willmar Public Schools where fifth graders made a visit to John and Leila Arndt’s “J and L Bison Farm.” This was coordinated with students sampling bison hot dogs and then having the opportunity to choose them from their cafeteria lunch selection. Annette Hendrickx Derouin, the Willmar Food and Nutrition Services Director, reported that the cafeteria served 205 bison hotdogs, which is a very good count for an alternate menu item. This example showed that sampling local items the day before they are served on the menu is very effective. In addition to this, John and Leila Arndt brought their bison display into the cafeteria, helped with the hotdog sampling and fielded questions from curious students.

Successful planning for the fall begins the previous spring in the Willmar Public Schools’ “Farm to School” program. In the upcoming school year students will have the opportunity to choose local apples, potatoes, cabbage, wild rice, cheese, dried beans, whole wheat rolls, wheat berries and bison, as the monthly local food Farmers Market Feature.

Over the past 3 years we have found it most successful to offer a new item as a sample or taste testing in one of the district’s schools, and if it is a hit, then the item is added to the school or district menu later in the school year or for the following year. This gives the foodservice director and cooks a chance to make a connection with a local farmer and to determine the best way to purchase and use the product within the school foodservice menu.

The chart on page 10 shows the progression that has occurred over the last three years in Willmar School District. This slower approach has worked best for this school system. I have worked as the translator or forager to connect the farmer to the foodservice and this has been a really important part of this work. In addition, there has been support from a public health grant, “Steps to a Healthier Willmar,” to help incorporate nutrition information into school newsletters and take-home parent handouts, along with helping teachers connect about this issue. Farm to School can be incorporated into school wellness policy efforts to enhance nutrition education and healthy food offerings in the cafeteria.

Plans are under way to consolidate the recipes and resources developed through this work in Willmar to Farm to School continued on page 10.
The table below illustrates how locally produced foods can be incorporated into a school’s lunch program.

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<tr>
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<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Future Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td>Apple Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td>Apples on Menu</td>
<td>Apples on Menu Tomato Sampling</td>
<td>Peppers, Melons, Basil, Corn, Carrots, Zucchini, Fall Berries, Plums</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>October</strong></td>
<td>Squash Sampling</td>
<td>Potatoes on Menu</td>
<td>Potatoes on Menu</td>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
<td>Wild Rice Sampling</td>
<td>Wild Rice on Menu</td>
<td>Cabbage Sampling</td>
<td>Cranberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oatmeal on Menu</td>
<td>Wild Rice Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td>Garlic</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Cheese Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td>Beef, Pork</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dried Beans Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td>Edible Soybeans</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole Wheat Rolls on Menu</td>
<td>Flax</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April</strong></td>
<td>Whole Wheat Rolls on Menu made at Local Bakery</td>
<td>Whole Wheat Berries Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maple Syrup, Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May</strong></td>
<td>Bison Sampling</td>
<td>Bison on Menu</td>
<td>Bison Sampling and on Menu</td>
<td>Asparagus, Rhubarb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greens, Lettuce, Berries</td>
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Farm to School continued from page 9 make a Farm to School Toolkit. We are hoping that initial versions of this toolkit along with some training for foodservice and community folks will happen by summer 2008.

Farm to School Programs can take many forms based on the interested partners. The resource that I have found the most helpful is: The Community Food Security Coalition website: www.farmtoschool.org. They have a new publication, “Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School Programs,” by Anupama Joshi, Marion Kalb and Moira Berry. My contact information is: lynnemader@charter.net, work/cell phone number: 612-708-8635.

Save the Date!
Rural Youth Summit

A Rural Youth Summit – planned by and for youth – is scheduled for October 26-27, 2007 at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Mark your calendars for this exciting opportunity to connect with rural youth from across the Midwest to discuss the challenges and opportunities you face in rural areas. Young farmers, rural residents, college and technical college students, new Americans and youth who wish to live and work in rural areas are invited to participate. Event highlights include a 2008 Presidential Candidate Forum, rural youth presentations and discussion, leadership training and networking opportunities. Check www.iatp.org/ruralcommunities for Summit updates and registration information.
WILL TO DO GOOD WORK

By Greg Nolan

I had a dream the other day… “When I opened my electric bill, I found a letter that offered an investment opportunity to me. It seemed that our legislators had changed the way citizens and utilities were taxed on investments they made together. The utilities saw an opportunity to use their customers’ investment capital a share at a time, to purchase and operate utility grade wind machines in our region. What the utilities offered, with the legislators blessing, was a chance to democratize the production of electricity. Both the legislators and the utilities knew that utilizing peoples’ “will to do good work” was the best way to solve problems in America.

Making ratepayers a part of the production of clean power made all of us winners. Everyone involved knew that new power plants that burned coal would create a lot of problems and that the wind in our region was a clean, renewable resource that could produce vast amounts of home brewed power. The electrical co-ops had a leg up on other electric companies, as they were organized perfectly to get their customers involved. The consumer did not just own a monetary investment, but a production quota, so as the price of power went up, so did their investments. Customers had the right to take their production quota off their bills every month after the power company was paid for the good service they provided moving the power to the customers.

Power lines from these wind machines were put up in windy areas, connecting the people in need. These were built with the same federal loan program that got power to rural Minnesota in the 1930s and 1940s. Non-profits in our region followed this program up with investments of their own, in economic development to build utility grade wind machines in our area, creating jobs.

The goal was to produce the best wind machines in the world and export these wind machines instead of weapons to the world. Research dollars were invested in electrifying transportation and more economic development went into making cars locally with good batteries that could store the wind energy. We all lived in a cleaner more peaceful place. Our kids took stock in our investments in the future and let out a sigh of relief.”

Greg Nolan lives and naps at Snowy Pines, a 40-acre well managed forest in rural central Minnesota. He has lived in a solar power home for over 25 years, and has planted over 3 million trees with his family forestry business.

Manure Management Plans Revisited

By Jeremy Lanctot

I know, I know, I mentioned this in the last issue of the CornerPost, but if you’re a dairy farm, and haven’t completed a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) manure management plan for your feedlot, contact SFA. We have access to grant monies to help defray the cost of completing these plans.

The Environmental Quality Assurance (EQA) project has resources to help farms improve their environmental ratings and some watersheds, like the Chippewa River Watershed Project, have grant money available for feedlots to complete a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)-approved nutrient management plan. The MPCA manure management plan is a subset of the NRCS version.

Most feedlot officers and NRCS employees are so backlogged right now, they are happy to have someone else help them complete these plans. SFA can help you find a person and money to get these done right. If you’re nervous about having a regulatory agency representative set foot on your property, we can help find a non-governmental person to perform the work and provide liaison interface with them. Contact Jeremy Lanctot at (320) 980-2333, or mdi@sfa-mn.org to arrange for this work to get completed.
SPICY ENTERTAINMENT AT THE SECOND ANNUAL MINNESOTA GARLIC FESTIVAL!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18TH
10:00 A.M. TO 8:00 P.M.

WRIGHT COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
HOWARD LAKE, MN

Garlic Festival founder Jerry Ford says, “Minnesota Garlic Festival (www.sfa-mn.org) is to festivals what garlic is to food: a little funky, a bit spicy, and really good for you.” This year’s entertainment line-up reflects that attitude. In addition to the great Minnesota-grown garlic and delicious food, this family-friendly event has something for everyone – from kids’ musicians and down-home blues to Shakespeare, a magician, belly dancing and kite flying.

Kids have a full slate of activities throughout the day. Will Hale’s (www.willhale.com) exuberant act gets them dancing and singing, and then leading them, like a pied piper, to “The Garlic Games” – a collection of country-picnic competitions and diversions.

Papa John Kolstad & The Hot Club Of East Lake, (www.millcitymusic.com/artist/papa_john_kolstad) virtuoso players firmly rooted in early blues, swing and jugband jazz, will get toes tapping; while performers from the Actors Playhouse of St. Cloud will joust and jeer their Shakespearean comedy throughout the grounds and on stage.

With an emphasis on cultural diversity, MN Garlic Festival welcomes members of the Middle Eastern dance ensemble, Jawaahir (www.jawaahir.org), and their lively rhythms from rural Egypt to the glittering courts of the Ottoman Empire. As a bonus, Jawaahir’s dancers will offer belly-dancing lessons on the festival grounds. Members of the Hmong Cultural Center’s Qeej Players (www.hmongcenter.org) will share the exotic sound of their native instruments made of bamboo pipes, orchestrated with intricate footwork and vibrant costumes.

Returning this year are the Mu Community Taiko Drummers (www.muperformingarts.org). Last year they amazed and mesmerized the entire festival with their highly physical, powerful and theatrical Japanese drumming.

Also back by popular demand, Magician Star Michaelina (www.magicianstar.com) will perform two shows with her inimitable sense of wonder and easy audience rapport. Marienne Kreitlow (www.marienne.com) will share her “Top Ten Hits about Garlic,” and bring her new duo “Texasota” onstage with music partner Ken Schaffer.

Mime performer, Allan Lavalier, will be wandering the grounds sharing this fascinating French art form. Town criers will noisily usher crowds to the right place at the right time, and yoga instructor Alysha Stalsworth will lead relaxing classes under the trees.

In the afternoon, kids of all ages can build own kites with materials and training provided by festival staff, and fly them in a light-hearted competition.

The works of creative young people will be on display in “The Youth Art & Writing Competition” exhibit, with an award ceremony and cash prizes. Their creations – written and visual – will reflect the mission of the Minnesota Garlic Festival, with themes of sustainable family farms, healthy foods, and living in harmony with nature. Young people nineteen and under are eligible. Submit entries to Melissa Gohman at the Paramount Visual Arts Center in St. Cloud by Friday, August 10th or bring them to the Wright County Fairgrounds on Friday, August 17th between noon and 4:00 p.m. (For more info contact Melissa Gohman at (320) 257-3112, www.paramountarts.org, or Jerry Ford, (320) 543-3394, jerry@marienne.com.)

Rumor has it that Count Dracula will return as an emcee, after a year of deep coffin therapy from his garlic-induced collapse onstage last year.

The festival will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 18th at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Howard Lake, MN, 1/2 mile north of U.S. Hwy 12, about one hour west of Minneapolis.

Garlic Festival continued on page 14
Youth Art and Writing Competition

Young artists and writers can enter a contest sponsored by Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota and the Paramount Arts Center, St. Cloud, MN. This contest will culminate in a juried exhibit at Minnesota Garlic Festival on Saturday, August 18, 2007. Artwork, short stories and essays based on, “What is your vision of the future for a healthy, prosperous and beautiful rural Minnesota?” are eligible for cash prizes. Themes can include sustainable family farms, living in harmony with nature, healthy local foods, the next generation of farmers, alternative energy, and vital small towns. Young people nineteen and under are eligible. Submit entries to Melissa Gohman at the Paramount Visual Arts Center in St. Cloud by Friday, August 10th or bring them to the Wright County Fairgrounds on Friday, August 17th between noon and 4:00 p.m. (For more info contact Melissa Gohman at (320) 257-3112, mgohman@paramountarts.org, or Jerry Ford, (320) 543-3394, jerry@marienne.com.)

Picture to the left: “Goat Girl” by Caleb Jacobs age 16, from last year’s “Youth Art and Writing Competition.”

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Artisan Cheesemaking in Minnesota: What’s the Point?

by Jodi Ohlsen Read

Some Minnesotans are ready to line up for cheesemaking classes. Others, well, they’re just puzzled by the whole idea of artisan cheesemaking, particularly farmstead cheesemaking.

“Why would you want to do that? Can you make a lot of money?” they ask. “Sounds like a lot work to me. Can’t we just buy cheese?”

Artisan cheesemaking IS hard work, it probably isn’t going to make anybody spectacularly rich, and yes, we can just buy cheese. But, the rewards of cheesemaking are plentiful, for the cheesemaker and for the larger community.

Cheesemaking, like much food production in Minnesota and the United States, has moved off the small farm and out of the home and into factories. Industrialized cheesemaking has given us what most of the nation demands -- large quantities of predictable cheese at low cost. Consumers demand that each slice of cheese be the same as the slice before and the slice before that, all for pennies per pound.

Convenient, but, we are missing out on a diversity of cheeses, a connection to local food and artisans, and the ability to create more of our own food.

Visitors to France or Italy are often struck by the astounding variety and abundance of local cheeses. In these countries cheesemaking is being preserved. Cheeses are identified and processes and styles recorded to make sure these treasures are not lost and the art is continued.

Minnesota may not have the extensive history of cheesemaking found in France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, and other countries. But, there was a time when nearly every Midwest community had a local dairy and often a local cheese. New immigrants also had their family recipes for junket, sour cream, fresh cheeses, and even some cheeses that were made and stored in home cellars.

These days, homemade cheese is unusual and locally made cheese is hard to find. With the industrialization of cheesemaking and the shrinking number of small farms, small scale hands-on cheesemaking and butter making began to disappear. Now the very idea of making cheese at home perplexes most people. Simple everyday recipes like yogurt and sour cream seem to require instruction books, videos, and classes.

No wonder the idea of incorporating cheesemaking into a sustainable farming business sounds implausible. Draft up a business plan, estimate costs, test market the product, finance the facility... It begins to look daunting. How can this be a good idea?

Cheesemaking can add to farm life and the community in many ways. It can benefit the farm family financially, depending on all the aspects that normally influence a business’s profitability (costs, ability, product, market, sales, etc). In a wider view, artisan cheesemaking can also benefit the community financially through local spending on a local product. With more local artisan cheeses available, consumer dollars can stay in the community. And, artisan cheesemaking is a perfect match with the growing emphasis on eating local foods.

Beyond financial benefits, cheesemaking is a creative practice, rewarding as an art itself. While there are many justifications for making cheese, if you ask, most of us who do make cheese will tell you that we truly do it for one main reason – because we want to, we like it! It is rewarding to see your animals grazing, watch their rich milk fill the vat, work the curd, fill the molds, and at the end of the day, admire your cheeses. It is one more way to bring the cycle of land to food to completion.

Garlic Festival continue from page 12

There will be constant entertainment throughout the day, not to mention all the great local food, farmers, vendors, and artists. Admission is $5 for adults and $3 for children under 12, with plenty of on-site parking. For more information visit www.sfa-mn.org, or contact Jerry Ford at (320) 543-3394 or jerry@marienne.com.

The Minnesota Garlic Festival is produced by the Crow River Chapter, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, a grass roots non-profit organization that supports family farms, local foods, environmental responsibility and vital rural communities in Minnesota.
By Jeremy Lanctot

Over the last few years, the popularity of low-cost milking centers, or parlors, has increased tremendously. Recently, I’ve seen new parlors designed and quoted for dairy farmers that exceeded $200,000. These weren’t necessarily fancy setups either. Many producers are seeing the need to implement more efficient milking systems in order to stay in the business of dairy.

Several reasons for upgrading parlors include -- Time efficiency with fewer workers as children move on to college and sourcing outside help may be difficult. Wear and tear on one’s body is another strong motivation to upgrade a milking system. As a person ages, all of those movements between standing, bending and kneeling take their toll on joints and ligaments. Repetitive motion injuries are common with any manual labor from typing to tennis to playing violin. Many farmers suffer from joint problems as soon as they grow out of their twenties.

A more efficient milking parlor can solve many work inefficiencies when designed properly. The problem faced by these farmers is the high cost of converting to a better milking parlor. By the time these injuries start not healing and become a daily pain in the you-know-what, it’s very difficult to justify the mortgage payments on borrowed money to complete an upgrade. At today’s cost of construction materials rise ever higher, the thought of building something so expensive can be a daunting dilemma. For many dairies, the costs of upgrades for work efficiency and the latest environmental rules can be the nail that closes the farm coffin. I’ve heard this said more times than I can count.

“I’ll just milk another X years, and then I’ll sell the herd and find something else to do.”

Interestingly, I’m running into many former farmers who sold-out five or ten years ago and want back into the milking business. I’ve even stood in front of some who have tears in their eyes as they talk about starting up a new herd, but are having trouble finding the right situation in which to get started. Humorously, when they are looking at the $1500 (and up) price tag for a decent milking cow, many start looking at $200 milking goats! Trust me, goats are one-tenth the price tag of a cow, but they’re also one-tenth the production of milk, plus the marketing of goat milk is really a serious problem in Minnesota. Look twice before you leap.

Over the last few years, I’ve learned more about low-cost dairying in general. There are more and more farms popping up that are started on a shoestring and are making a go of it. Some of these farms are starting with less than optimum herd genetics and facilities. I’ve driven onto dairy farms that belive their purpose. I can see a house and a few small buildings, but where’s the dairy part?

This is a new breed of dairy farm. Dispense with the expensive herd housing and equipment sheds. Often the garage or workshop has become the milking parlor. There’s the house, there’s the one small outbuilding, and… that’s it! No fuss, no muss, just a simple setup with very little overhead and underfoot. The uninitiated could drive onto the farm site and not realize it is a profitable dairy farm.

What is the cost of this type of dairy? Often the family’s house is the biggest expense. If someone decided to start from scratch and buy 50 cows and build a new pit parlor, $150,000 would do a lot. Most situations I see are much less than this. For example, an existing dairy farm decides to upgrade to a pit parlor. An existing pole building, or barn, gets retrofitted for under $50,000 and they’re off and running. One farmer near Wadena retrofitted his barn for under $15,000 and has a parlor every bit as nice as most have. Of course, he did a lot of his own work and found good deals on materials and equipment.

Milking Parlors continued on page 16
Milking Parlors cont. from page 15

Even though it can be done for this little, realistically, a farm shouldn’t have to spend over $50,000 when retrofitting an existing building. There are exceptions, but not many.

If you’re a dairy farmer and are looking at changing your parlor setup, there are excellent resources available in Minnesota via the Minnesota Dairy Initiative. My first recommendation is to contact Vance Haugen, who is a University of Wisconsin Extension Specialist in low-cost parlor design, but lives in southeastern Minnesota. I was recently in a dairy diagnostic team meeting with Vance and he went out of his way to be informative, but not pushy. He has nothing to sell. His experience and a vast knowledge-base will be a great aide to anyone interested in exploring their options. He can be reached at (608) 326-0223, or vance.haugen@ces.uwex.edu. One can reach me, Jeremy Lanctot, at (320) 980-2333, or mdi@sfa-mn.org, if you’d like to talk with a dairy farmer who has built a low-cost parlor. I know of some of these farmers who like to help others retrofit their facilities. They’re that sold on the improvements to be had.

I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention the six regional MDI groups. Each of these has been helping local farms make necessary changes in a controlled fashion. If a dairy farm needs a team approach to solve on-farm problems, I often ask for the local MDI region to help form this team. Don’t forget the grant monies available for studying changes that are being considered. Dairy Planning Grants, available from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), are a big help when one wants to explore a new idea. Contact myself, or David Weinand of MDA, at (651) 201-6646, or david.weinand@state.mn.us, for more information on what is available.

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Thank you for your support!
One of the country’s most successful beginning farmer-training programs will be holding classes in La Crosse, Wis., and Marshall, Minn., beginning this fall. In 2007, Farm Beginnings celebrates its 10th year of providing firsthand training in low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. During the past decade, over 300 people have graduated from the Minnesota-region Farm Beginnings program, and 60 percent of them are actively farming, according to class data. In 2005, Farm Beginnings was extended to Illinois and Nebraska. Beginning this fall, Farm Beginnings classes will be held in North Dakota.

Some of the folks who attend the class come from farming backgrounds. For example, 2000 graduate Justin Leonhardt grew up on a dairy farm in southeast Minnesota. Today, Leonhardt and his partner Gayle Hanson farm Justin’s grandparents’ land. The farm consists of 135 tillable acres, and they rent an additional 70, raising alfalfa, corn and soybeans. Through Farm Beginnings, Leonhardt and Hanson also got a Heifer International interest-free livestock loan, which they used to purchase 10 brood cows with calves and five heifers. They also raise pigs in a natural, humane environment without the use of antibiotics—a challenge for even veteran livestock producers. This year, the farm will produce around 1,500 pigs, mostly for the natural meat company Niman Ranch. Pretty good for someone who once swore off farming forever.

“When I graduated from high school, I said I would never farm,” says Leonhardt. He grew up on a farm the next ridge over above the Mississippi River town of Kellogg, where his parents, Larry and Diane Leonhardt, still farm. Justin liked living in the country, but was less enamored with the seven-day-a-week, twice-a-day routine of milking cows.

“I hate it,” he says bluntly.

That’s why after high school he trained to become an aircraft mechanic, a 9-5 job that can pay $50 an hour. But when it came time to move to the Pacific Northwest to work for Boeing, Leonhardt couldn’t bring himself to leave southeast Minnesota behind. He ended up working a factory job close to home and doing some carpentry. Slowly, steadily, the draw of the land became too hard to resist. In 2000, he and Hanson took the Land Stewardship Project’s Farm Beginnings course in nearby Plainview, MN.

Farm Beginnings provides participants a chance to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. It provides workshops on goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative production techniques. Established farmers and other professionals present at the seminars. The course also offers a series of on-farm educational field days during the spring and summer where students get to see the production systems they are learning about in action. In addition, class participants have an opportunity to network with established farmers and utilize them as mentors.

The registration deadline for the 2007-2008 edition of the Land Stewardship Project’s Farm Beginnings program is Thursday, August 30th. For more information, contact Karen Benson in the Land Stewardship Project’s Lewiston office at 507-523-3366, or Michele Skogrand in Land Stewardship Project’s Montevideo office at 320-269-2105 (see www.farmbeginnings.org for more info).

Gayle Hanson and Justin Leonhardt with their hogs
Lorentz wants you to find $$$ on your farm

By Anne Borgendale

Mike Lorentz wants you to make money on your farm. A speaker at the upcoming Grazefest Minnesota 2007, Mike is co-owner of Lorentz Meats, a business started by his parents in 1967. It is now a USDA–inspected meat processing facility that primarily provides services for farmers who direct market and specialty brands. It isn’t the same kind of butcher shop his parents operated – however, he isn’t working in the farm economy of 40 years ago and neither are his customers.

For the past seven years, Mike has been speaking to farmer groups about how they can increase income at the farm level to be more competitive in the ever-evolving marketplace. However, over the years his presentation has changed because he’s observed that not all farmers actually net more money on their farms when they switch to methods such as direct marketing. They may be grossing more money, but much of it may still be leaving the farm. Because of this, Mike has been changing his presentation to focus on how farmers can increase their bottom line.

This will be the theme of his talk at Grazefest Minnesota: “How to Increase Farm Income by Selling What You Do, What You Have, and What You Know.” According to Mike, farmers are very good at selling what they do -- this is how they have traditionally made a living. When they need to earn more money, their first reaction is to do more whether it is work on the farm or an off-farm job. However, farmers have much more to offer than just working harder, which is why Mike is having this conversation with farmers. He says that they need to stop simply working harder and think about what they have and what they know, which is often more than they think.

Direct marketing fits this philosophy. Farmers can take what they do (growing crops and raising livestock), then look at what they know (identifying market trends such as organic, sustainable and local foods), and then sell what they have (organic vegetables, grass-fed livestock, etc.) to increase the bottom line of their farms.

So why should you come to Grazefest Minnesota and listen to Mike’s talk? Because he wants to challenge you to look at your operation differently in order to make more money. Mike also points out that he’s not the main draw of Grazefest Minnesota -- Cedar Summit Farm, owned and operated by the Minar family, is. Mike feels that Cedar Summit is one of the premier grass-based dairies in the state, if not the country. Cedar Summit is also a great example of how to sell what you have and what you know.

Mike explains, “SFA (Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota) is based on the principle of everyone growing from the knowledge within the group. Grazefest is an example of us all benefiting from sharing ideas.” The more people that attend, farmers and non-farmers alike, the more the sustainable farming community will benefit.

Artisan Cheese and Grazing DVDs

By Jeremy Lanctot

For those who missed the Artisan Cheese Workshop last winter at Gustavus Adolphus College, we have compiled a DVD of the event. It’s available on a single DVD in MPEG-4 format for a suggested donation of $15 payable to SFA of MN to cover duplication and distribution costs.

Also, we have a DVD of a grazing workshop taught by Howard Moechnig, a much sought after grazing specialist formerly with NRCS. This is available for a suggested donation of $15. Beware that not all computers or DVD players necessarily play all formats of DVDs. If you have an older computer, then this video may not work. Most new computers will play most anything, so it is just the older machines, maybe older than three years that could be a concern. If you can play a standard movie DVD on your computer, you shouldn’t have a problem. Contact Jeremy Lanctot at (320) 980-2333, or mdi@sfa-mn.org to place an order. We’ll have a place to order one on the www.sfa-mn.org website soon.
Grazefest Minnesota 2007: “A Day for Eaters” has something for both farmers and consumers, combining on-farm education with tours, demos, music and tasty treats. This Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA of MN) event is being held on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at Cedar Summit Farm, rural New Prague, MN from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

SFA of MN is hosting Grazefest Minnesota to promote the health benefits of pasture-raised foods, the positive environmental impact of grazing and the economic growth from local, pasture-raised food. This event will also highlight how farmers can benefit from grazing systems through healthier animals, a healthier working environment, and healthier land.

Grazefest Minnesota will feature pasture walks lead by experienced and well-known graziers such as Jim VanDerPol and Ralph Lentz. Throughout the afternoon there will be cooking demos presented by chef Philip Dorwart of Create Catering. Dave and Florence Minar, Cedar Summit Farm; Mike Lorentz, Lorentz Meats; and Mary Jo Forbord, Executive Director of SFA of MN, will also speak about the benefits of pasture-raised foods. Chuck Suchy and the Roe Family Singers are providing musical entertainment. Chuck Suchy is a “Folksinger, farmer, songwriter, storyteller...a man who many describe as the “Voice of the Upper Great Plains.” The Roe Family Singers are an indie roots music and folk group from the Twin Cities. There will also be delicious locally produced food available for purchase and exhibitors of all kinds.

Tickets are available online at [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org) before July 13<sup>th</sup> or by sending a check to SFA of MN, c/o Mary Jo Forbord, 29731 302nd St., Starbuck, MN 56381. The cost is $6 per adult before July 13<sup>th</sup>. After July 13<sup>th</sup> and at the gate the cost is $9 per adult. Tickets are $3 per child ages 7-17 years old and admission is free for children under 6 years old. For more info contact Anne at SFA of MN, (320) 226-6318 or communications@sfa-mn.org. For sponsorship or exhibitor info contact Mary Jo Forbord, Executive Director of SFA of MN, at (866) 760-8732 or mforbord@sfa-mn.org. Check [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org) for updates.

The sponsors of Grazefest Minnesota are: the Sustainable Farming Association of MN, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Minnesota Dept of Ag., Eating Fresh Publications, Cedar Summit Farms, Lorentz Meats, Edible Twin Cities and Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service.
**Grazier Session**

By Anne Borgendale

You can improve water quality and protect and enhance wildlife on your farm while using agricultural practices that can earn you living via grazing and grassland management. To see examples of farms working toward these goals, register now for the “Grazefest Minnesota™/Working Lands Bus Tour,” scheduled for Tuesday, July 31st from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The tour is aimed at graziers and conservationists, but all are invited to attend. There is no charge, though pre-registration is required by July 23rd. To register, use the form on page 21 or contact Anne with the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318. For more information visit www.sfa-mn.org.

Hosted by the Pope County Working Lands Initiative, the purpose of the Grazefest Minnesota/Working Lands Bus Tour is to demonstrate various grazing and grassland management options that will increase perennials on the landscape and provide economic options for farmers and beginning farmers. It is also designed to help connect farmers, grazing systems and grassland management experts, interested faculty, staff and landowners.

The event begins and ends at Luverne and Mary Jo Forbord’s Prairie Horizons Farm, 31008 State Hwy 29, 11-miles north of Benson, MN. At 9:00 a.m. the buses will leave Prairie Horizons Farm for the farm of Randy and Vicky Anderson. They will discuss their grazing system and use of solar powered watering system on native prairie. The second stop will be at Fredrickson Hereford Farms, where Mark Fredrickson will provide an overview of his grazing operation located near Glacial Lakes State Park.

The buses will return to Prairie Horizons Farm for a locally produced lunch. After lunch the Forbords will discuss management intensive rotational grazing on native prairie pastures and established pastures. Howard Moechning, Midwest Grasslands Grazing Consultant, and Jason Garmes of the DNR Private Lands/Prairie Stewardship and Dennis Johnson of the University of Minnesota will speak on the environmental aspects and

Bus Tour continued on page 22
# Registration Form

You can also register for Grazefest Minnesota 2007 at the SFA of MN website: www.sfa-mn.org

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Total $$ Enclosed:

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

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*To request a scholarship please call or email Mary Jo: mforbord@sfa-mn.org or (866) 760-8732.
SFA’s Summer Events Calendar

For more details on sustainable farming and living events visit: www.sfa-mn.org/calendar

If you would like to add an event to the Events Calendar contact Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org.

July 7  Organic Vegetable Farm Tour – August Earth Farm, Hutchinson, MN. For more details contact Jerry Ford at Jerry@marienne.com or (320) 543-3394.

July 8  Cannon River / Hiawatha Chapter of the SFA of MN Field Day/Gathering – Mary Ellen Frame Farm, Northfield, MN. For more info contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446.

July 11  Leopold Center 20th Anniversary Conference – Iowa State University Scheman Building, Ames IA. For more info www.leopold.iastate.edu or 515-294-3711

July 11  SWROC Organic Field Day to Highlight Organic No-till Systems - SWROC, Waseca, MN. For more info 507-752-7372 or online at www.organicecology.umn.edu

July 11  Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society Summer Symposium – Wimbledon, ND. Info at www.npsas.org/events. For more info call NPSAS at 701-883-4304.

July 13  U of M West Central Research and Outreach Field Day - Morris, MN. For more info: 320-589-1711 or spohrjm@morris.umn.edu.


July 20  Productive Conservation Systems Workshop – Central Lakes College, Brainerd, MN. For more info http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa/ or contact Sue Crotty at 888-241-0720 or crott012@umn.edu.

July 21  Grazefest Minnesota 2007 – “A Day for Eaters” – Cedar Summit Farm, New Prague, MN. For more contact SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

July 24  Rotational Grazing Tour – Beltrami County. Info Giziibii RC&D at 218.751.1942 Ext 5 or email: colleen.oestreich@mn.usda.gov

July 26  WCROC Horticulture Night – West Central Research and Outreach Center, Morris, MN. For more info: spohrjm@morris.umn.edu.

July 28-29  Kickapoo Country Fair – La Farge, WI. Details are available at www.organicvalley.coop.

July 31  Working Lands / Grazefest Minnesota 2007 Bus Tour - Chippewa River Watershed. For more info contact SFA of MN at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

Aug 7-9  Farm Fest – Gilfillan Estate, Redwood County, MN. For more info www.farmshows.com/farm/ffst/index.po.

Aug 14  Southeast Chapter “DIG” - Roy Michaelis Farm. For more info visit Edgar Hansgen (507) 932-4219.

Aug 18  The 2nd Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival – Wright County Fairgrounds, Howard Lake, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or contact Jerry Ford, 320-543-3394.

Aug 17-18  Orchard Planning and Maintenance Workshop - Longville, MN. Contact Jim Chamberlin (islandlakefarm@brainerd.net) or Sue Peterson (azariahhsue@yahoo.com).

Aug 18  Parade of Community Gardens – Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. For more info: call (612) 278-7123; email: info@gardenworksMN.org or visit www.gardenworksMN.org.

Sept 8  14th Annual Harvest Festival – Bayfront Park, Duluth, MN. For more info visit www.lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Sept 15  3rd Annual Urban Farm Tour and Garden Hop – Duluth, MN. More info at info@lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Oct 26-27  Rural Youth Summit - Ames, IA. For more info email Amy Stratton at astra@iatp.org.

Bus Tour continued from page 20

achieving greater productivity in grazing. Also presenting are Don Struxness, Double D Natural Meats Farm, and Jeff Jensen, Rural Advantage. The day will end with small group pasture tours lead by grazing and conservation specialists.

The Pope County Working Lands Initiative, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota’s West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership and West Central Research and Outreach Center, Chippewa River Watershed Project and the Pope Count Farm Service Agency are sponsoring this event. Grazefest Minnesota™ is a trademark of Eating Fresh Publications.
Meet Jim Chamberlin

I first became involved with Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA) through the Central Chapter’s Windy River Fair. Immediately, I found the folks to be caring, passionate and sincere. The good food was, and continues to be, a big attraction. In addition, I have a deep respect for SFA members and producers. Although they are diverse group, they all share the common goal to preserve natural farming methods and to work and live with nature as the creator intended. It is my belief that organic based, ecological agriculture is the true science to growing healthy soil, plants, animals, and people.

Growing up in the suburbs of Minneapolis, we had a large lot and always raised small livestock such as chickens, rabbits, and guinea pigs. We also had a large garden and my mother did a lot of canning. I remember my sisters always complaining about working in the garden. I don’t remember enjoying it, but I don’t think I dreaded it like my siblings. For the past nine years I have worked for the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I was hired as a forestry technician, but also work with regulatory programs such as the Wetland Conservation Act, Construction Stormwater Program, and County Shoreland Rules. Often, it provides me an opportunity to promote sustainable agriculture and SFA. Before working at the SWCD I was a baker and cook for 17 years.

I am married to Audra, my companion for 16 years. We have nine children: Mike 21, Jada 20, Katie 18, Jon 16, Karen 15, Taylor 13, Harvey 11, Chantrelle 6, and Thomas 5. Our farm, Island Lake Farm, is located between Brainerd and Garrison. We live on 107 acres, much of which is wetland and borders Island Lake, a natural environment lake. We grow a large garden and raise both meat and laying chickens, and farrow a few sows. My wife and children also have a few horses, which we rotationally graze. We also manage a small wood lot for saw timber and belong to the Northwoods Forestry Enterprise. This is a group of landowners who cooperatively own and operate a Peterson portable sawmill.

Our forestry operation also includes a sugar bush and a mushroom yard. We recently started a “Pantry CSA,” in which we sell once a season shares from the farm. Currently, we sell maple syrup, mushrooms, asparagus, root crops, salsa, and sweet corn/ winter squash. The plan is to expand this to include other vegetables and fruits from our expanding orchard. I consider our operation to be ecologically sound, relying on permaculture-based systems that utilize diversity. The livestock is incorporated into the gardens and orchard, and companion planting and perennial plant guilds are emphasized.

Grazier Session continued from page 20

Graziers are invited to stay at Cedar Summit for the day and enjoy music provided by Chuck Suchy and the Roe Family Singers, cooking demos by chef Philip Dorwart, and more! The price for the morning session, including a box lunch, is $20 for SFA members and $30 for non-members, if registration is in before July 13th. After July 13th and at the door the cost is $30 for SFA members and $40 for non-members. The cost for children under 18 years of age is $10. To register use the form on page 21, visit www.sfa-mn.org, or contact Anne at SFA (communications@sfa-mn.org or 320-226-6318).
**mission:** we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.