My crystal ball is experiencing some technical difficulties, so I hope you will help me envision what comes next for Minnesota agriculture.

As I look around my farming community, it seems we have run the course of six generations of northern European immigrant farm families since the homesteading days of the 1860s. The earliest settlers staked their claim in the rich and deep prairie soil, but it was a tenuous beginning at best. Survival for the first white people through the first winters was possible only because of food and medicine offered by indigenous people. In desperation, white settlers dug into the prairie and overcame their fear and trepidation of the native people to accept their gifts of survival.

The settlers moved in quickly, the Indians were relocated to reservations, and the medicine bundles that held the botanical cures were burned in great bonfires to remove the last traces of the indigenous culture. Carving subsistence from the soil with oxen, horses, mules, and many strong backs, yields and railroads grew to supply wheat to Minneapolis, known by 1880 as the “Flour Milling Capital of the World.”

By 1927, 2 billion people lived on the planet, 119 million people lived in the United States, and the farm population was at 28 million, almost a quarter of the total population. The USDA Yearbook of Agriculture heralded the “eastern march of the combine” and “a tremendous increase in the use of large power units in agriculture”. The 1927 Yearbook forecasted that “increased efficiency resulting in an increased output per worker may necessitate a reduction in the number of farmers.”

Fast forward to the 21st century. With 6.6 billion people living on the planet and the U.S. population topping 300 million, less than one million people in the U.S. now claim farming as their principal occupation. The decline is evident as I look around my community and to my neighbors, mostly descendants of the first white settlers, mostly older couples or widowers past 70 years of age, their children living elsewhere, and far removed from farming. Most now rent
Mark your calendars for ...

**Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s 18th Annual Conference!**

St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN • Saturday, February 21, 2009

More information coming soon!
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Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
Chapters .... there’s one near you!

Chapters are active in many interesting events year round. Call the chapter contact for more information, or visit our website at www.sfa-mn.org.

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Central Chapter

By Sue Peterson

The Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota (SFACM) members have been working this summer to host and participate in educational events, and distribute coloring books. Over 1000 “Annalid and her Friends” coloring books were distributed this spring to local schools and county organizations. Two workshops were held for the 100 Orchards Project - a farm tour at Pat Altrichter and Judy Heiling’s Saskatoon farm near Randall, MN, and a series of sessions on orchard maintenance and design held at The Farm on St Mathias in conjunction with the opening of their Corn Maze. In addition, SFACM Chair Kent Solberg co-hosted Grazefest Minnesota, along with his neighbor and fellow dairy farmer, Dan Middendorf. The focus of Grazefest this year was on low-input, grass-based dairies.

A book to accompany the 100 Orchards Project is in the works, as well as more educational opportunities. One or two grafting workshops are planned for this winter, along with the annual meeting to be held in January. If you would like to be on the contact list for the 100 Orchards Project, please call (320-355-2980) or email Sue Peterson at azariahsue@yahoo.com.

The non-profit American Solar Energy Society (ASES) is bringing together more than 5,000 homes, schools and businesses across the U.S. to introduce...
Central continued from page 3

neighbors to the solar technologies they are using
to 1) drastically reduce monthly energy bills, 2) reduce
harmful carbon emissions, and 3) enjoy rich tax credits
and cash incentives as they improve their property
values.

Local residents fed up with fossil fuel prices will join
more than 100,000 participants nationwide to discover
the latest real-world insight on how neighbors can use
solar energy and energy efficiency and become more
energy independent.

On Sunday, October 5th at 2:00 p.m. the Sustainable
Farming Association is organizing an open house tour of
Snowy Pines a solar powered farm working with local
foods and sustainably harvested wood products. The
residence at Snowy Pines has been “off the grid” for
almost 30 years. The commercial buildings have a 3.5
ekilowatt grid tied solar electric system that runs wood
products milling equipment, a solar warm room kiln,
irrigation for a market garden and refrigeration for food
storage.

The tours, which last year attracted more than 115,000
people in 46 U.S. states, afford participants the direct
perspectives of homeowners and installers about the
costs, components, and economic and environmental
benefits of going solar.

This event billed as the largest solar energy event in
the history of the United States – is free and open to the
public at Snowy Pines. Details are available at: www.
NationalSolarTour.org.

Snowy Pines is located in rural Todd county, 10
miles east of Browerville on Co. #16 or 7 miles west of
Cushing Mn. (US Hwy 10) on Co. #16. Then south for ½
mile on 321st Ave. Look for signs.

Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter

By Mary Ellen Frame

On May 18, Open Hands Farm (Erin Johnson and Ben Doherty) hosted a farm tour of their vegetable CSA. They also sell
vegetables at the Northfield Farmers Market, Just Food Co-op, St. Olaf College and Carleton College. Some of the plants that
had been started in their green house were already in the field, some hardening off in flats outside, and some still in the green
house. In the field, we saw the raspberry, asparagus and rhubarb plants that had just been set out. Some of the early greens
were under row covers, which they use to protect against frost and pests. We visited their newly erected hoop house, which
they’re trying out this year for season extension. It was filled with rows of red and green head lettuce, coming along nicely.
After the lettuce is harvested, they’ll put in late tomatoes and peppers to be sold to the colleges in the fall when the students
have returned to campus. The hoop house isn’t heated, so the weather ultimately will determine how long it can be used in
the fall/winter, though it should extend the season by 2 or 3 weeks.

On June 15, the second in our series of monthly farm tours took place at L and R Poultry and Produce (Rae Rusnak). Rae
has laying hens, broilers and turkeys as well as vegetables. These different enterprises fit nicely together. Because of her
many acres of woods, she has to have good protection from predators, but the woods are also productive. She’s been able to
selectively harvest mixed hardwood timber: maple, basswood, oak, and ash. She knows people with a small sawmill who
will take out a certain percentage of the trees without clear-cutting, and they do the work in mid-winter so that damage to the
soil and ground cover is minimal. To keep from getting bored in late winter/early spring, she has a maple-syruping operation.
This year she had a tremendous run of sap, and could hardly keep up with it, keeping the fire going night and day for a while.
Her vegetables are mostly root crops, which she sells wholesale to a couple of CSAs, Just Food Co-op, and Valley Natural
Co-op. This year she’s outfitted her truck with a couple of small freezers, so she’s taking frozen chickens and fresh eggs to
Northfield Farmers Market.

On July 13, we toured two farms. First we met at Kathy and Nick Zeman’s Simple Harvest Farm. They’ve been on the
farm for only a couple of years, but they haven’t wasted any time getting multiple enterprises going, including beef cattle,
pigs, goats and sheep. Kathy, pointing out the hillside above the vegetable garden said, “My farm tells me it should be
grazed.” From the people who’ve been growing vegetables longer, she asked for some ideas of how to deal with the weed
Cannon River/Hiawatha continued on page 5
Cannon River/Hiawatha continued from page 4 pressure in the two acres of vegetables they planted this year. She figured that a field day is an opportunity to get some advice, as well as to show what’s going well. “Nick’s Eggs” were featured in the September/October issue of Mix magazine, a publication of Twin Cities natural food co-ops. The front-page article, entitled “A Passion for Poultry in Nerstrand,” told about Nick’s flock of 200 laying hens and their colorful eggs, which are sold at Just Food Co-op in Northfield. Nick also raises ducks and geese.

From Zeman’s, it’s only a few miles to Big Woods Farm, owned by Laurie and David Hougen-Eitzman, but with a very different terrain, quite flat, with heavy clay soils. They grow a wide range of vegetables for their CSA. We couldn’t stop nibbling on the sugar snap peas as we passed by them walking through the field. They’re also trying out a hoop house this year.

Between the tour of Big Woods Farm and our next tour, of Loon Organics on August 17, there was scarcely any rain in our area. Since vegetable growers are set up for irrigation, they’re able to survive such a drought all right. Laura Frerichs and Adam Cullip operate Loon Organics. I find it very encouraging that our area can support all the CSAs that it does. Adam showed us the tractor that he’d converted from a gasoline engine to electrical power. He intends to eventually be able to run it on solar energy, but for now he says plugging it into the grid doesn’t cost too much. The eight batteries mounted on it allow it to run for the better part of a day. We’ll miss Adam and Laura when they move to the Hutchinson, MN area this fall.

All of our tours finished with potluck suppers, during which the conversations continued. And we ate well!

This October, Loon Organics (Laura Frerichs and Adam Cullip,) Gardens of Eagan (Atina and Martin Diffley,) and Elizabeth Mulvilhill will be going to Terra Madre, the international Slow Foods gathering in Turin, Italy. The emphasis this year is on representations of “Food Communities.” Their “Food Community” includes our SFA chapter and Just Food Co-op. Our Chapter will be hosting the State annual meeting at St. Olaf College on Saturday, February 21, 2009. See you there!
Lake Superior Chapter

By Joel Rosen

Our chapter concentrated most of its efforts the past few months on our signature event, the Lake Superior Harvest Festival and Energy Fair. Held on Saturday, September 6th at Duluth’s Bayfront Park, this was the 15th Annual Harvest Festival, and the fourth year for the Energy Fair, produced by our cooperator, the Lake Superior Energy Association. With a focus on building a local food system and advancing renewable energy, this free event attracted somewhere between 7,000 and 15,000 visitors on a day that started out with a warm, light drizzle, saw some threatening clouds overhead that gave way to blue skies, and finally after the main event was over and the first annual Slow Foods picnic was underway, the remaining celebrants were treated to a rainbow after enduring a brief downpour.

For most of our farmer members, the month leading up to the Harvest Festival is the busiest period in the growing season, so the need for volunteers to help keep the festival running smoothly is critical. Our non-farmer membership, as well as some other groups, notably the Duluth Rotary Club, came through for us once again.

On August 23rd, the 3rd Annual Fall Fest, re-named Farm Fest due to the earlier date, was held at the Cree and Jason Bradley farm north of Two Harbors, MN. The Bradleys operate CSA vegetable farm and also include Lake Superior fish as part of their share offerings. The day featured tours, kids activities, and a huge potluck spread that included fresh, batter-fried Lake Superior herring. The event is held as a fund-raiser for the Farm Beginnings classes which begin in late October. Enrollment for Farm Beginnings is now full.

On Saturday, September 13th, our chapter presented the 4th Annual Urban Farm Tour in the city of Duluth. This tour features a variety of urban food and ornamental gardens as well as backyard chickens. For those unfamiliar with the city of Duluth, its position on Lake Superior tempers winter extremes as well as summer, and “inlanders” who walk/drive/bike this tour are always impressed by the variety of tree fruit that flourishes in city backyards--primarily apples, but also cherries and plums. The big lake also extends the growing season well into the fall, so early frosts that had touched sensitive annuals like basil and cucumbers in inland areas had not yet even left a hint of damage in the urban gardens. Duluth City Council recently passed an ordinance legalizing the keeping of backyard chickens with some restrictions, and this added quite a bit of interest to the backyard chicken component of the tour.

On Thursday, October 9th, the Duluth Rotary Club is holding a locavore luncheon at the Radisson. Our chapter is the chief cooperator in this effort, with our producers supplying virtually all the ingredients for this meal. Coming up in late fall, date not yet set, will be our increasingly popular Farmers Take the Stove, a fundraiser that features pot-luck style dishes cooked by farmer members using their own meat and produce.

Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

This summer we have had meeting after meeting after meeting. Then we had the Minnesota Garlic Festival. It worked out great. I did not get out to see much, the Great ‘Scapes Cafe had a line out the door and across the street from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. I have heard that most of the vendors had a good day and some of the vendors sold out and went home early. I think that Jerry is writing more about the festival elsewhere is this edition. (page 11)

This is being written just before our next event, our Fall Social. It will be held at a local (Delano) winery, Woodland Hills, and will include a presentation by Jessica Flannigan on fermenting food for flavor, health, and storage, a wine tasting, and time to catch up on what everyone has been doing this summer.
Southeast Chapter

By Edgar Hansgen

Jeepers, Creepers! I think Anne is asking for monthly Chapter Updates now. Seems I just sent her one just a little while ago!!! Sure hope winter goes as fast as those three months. Well, so much for my Sunday afternoon nap.

Everyone down here in southeastern Minnesota has been really busy trying to do their thing, staying sustainable. We’ve had a really dry summer here, and most farmers are wondering how it affected their crops. We do not want to go the way of Wall Street. A lot of our farmers are sustainable and do not have all the expensive inputs, so that should help some.

We really didn’t have any other events after our flame-weeding demo early this summer. Our local extension service held a vineyard tour and meeting, so we just went with them. We didn’t hear of any interest in a roundtable discussion on raising grapes, so we will drop that unless we get some interest later.

At our next few board meetings, we will be planning activities for those SHORT winter months. We don’t have anything planned yet. If you would like some input, please call me (507-932-4219) or any of your board members and give us your ideas.

Sure hope our next report is more interesting, or we’ll just run this one again. Anyway, it is time to go out and look for a dear or was that a DEER.

South Central Chapter

By Dean Goette

Greetings from our South Central Chapter of SFA! One of our latest events was the summer picnic and social held Wednesday, August 6th in Hope, MN. We had a great tour and received information on how Hope Butter is made and the quality and pride that goes into this locally raised and crafted product. We also learned that Hope is one of the country’s older creamery facilities. The history and potential plans for renovating the upstairs social hall were impressive. We thank Victor Mrotz of Hope Creamery for the tour and information.

Next we were given an excellent tour of the SunOpta grain facility, also in Hope, MN, where their non-GMO and organic grains are screened, graded, and bagged or bulk loaded to rail. The facility’s capabilities and quality control measures all were very impressive. Tony Schiller gave us the tour and invited us back another time.

Next our chapter held an organic field day on Saturday, September 6th at Ray Yokiel’s and Dennis Lutteke’s farms. At this event, in the morning, Bob Yanda of Midwest BioAg presented a very good outline of sustainable agronomic principles as well as keeping the message engaging and entertaining. Bob was a great teacher.

After an excellent organic meal in Lutteke’s machine shed, Dr. Will Winters presented to the crowd of 220-250 people on his work. The message was built around animal science and health, centering on “We are what we eat.” We all have heard the “We are what we eat” message, but Dr. Will Winter’s experience, as well as his emphasis on consuming grass fed beef, are hard to argue with and I would challenge anyone to get to know the value of CLA (Conjugated Linolic Acid) in grass fed beef and dairy products before any conclusions are reached.

To close the field day, our state SFA Events and Youth Coordinator, Jerry Ford, addressed the crowd and invited us to attend the state SFA Conference at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN on Saturday, February 21, 2009. Keep this date as a priority because it is another excellent opportunity to come together to advance our work including the production of more good food.

Do you receive SFA’s biweekly Events Email?

No, then you are missing out on the what, when and where of the sustainable farming world. Sign up today to stay informed. Don’t miss out on any great events! To subscribe: email Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org with “Subscribe to biweekly email” in the subject line.
Western Chapter

by Jim Van Der Pol

The Western Chapter of the SFA, together with interested newcomers, met at Richard Handeen and Audrey Arner’s Moonstone Farm on Friday, September 12th. We toured the farm’s beef grazing project and related tree plantings, sparking discussion about which trees are succeeding and which not, as well as how the tree plantings work to shelter cattle enabling the winter feeding period to move increasingly out into the paddocks keeping the manure and other animal impact where it can do the most good. We saw the new vineyards and talked about the need for extra help in taking on this kind of project.

Audrey noted that she and Richard are not shy about involving others, which was evident from the presence of new faces at the tour.

We had a chance to gather around Aziz Ansari a bit to support him in his struggle with Watson, MN over his efforts to establish a vegetable growing enterprise, and then ended the evening with a discussion about involving some of the younger people in the Western Chapter. It was decided that Richard Handeen, John Sluss, Jim Van Der Pol and Paul Wymar would meet soon by phone to begin to put together a plan for a few winter meetings and a structure to carry us into the future.

The CornerPost Advertisement Policy

The CornerPost is the official membership publication of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. It is mailed to members and friends of SFA, and relevant agency personnel, through the postal mail. The CornerPost is published four times per year, with advertising deadlines of March 15th, June 15th, September 15th, and December 15th. The CornerPost runs between 24 and 32 pages per issue. CornerPost circulation is approximately 1200.

Here is our fee schedule for CornerPost ads for the 2008-09 fiscal year:

- $500 full page ad
- $260 for half page
- $130 quarter page
- $ 75 one eighth page
- $ 50 business card size

Starting in September of 2008, we are offering a classified ad section. Current SFA members will be invited to submit classifieds free of charge.

Ads ready for print may be emailed to Anne Borgendale, CornerPost Editor, at communications@sfa-mn.org. If you need assistance in composing an ad, please call Anne at 320-226-6318.

Our policy on advertising:
- SFA will not devote more than 25% of the total print space to paid advertisements.
- Advertisements must represent products and services that are consistent with SFA’s mission.
- SFA reserves the right to accept or deny any advertisement, and retains all editorial control over content.

Thank you for your support of sustainable farming in Minnesota!
What Comes Next? continued from page 1 their farmland to larger operators. With 50% of farmland transitioning in ownership in the next 10 years, I am more than curious about the fate of farming and my community. I hope some answers will be found in the statistics of the 2007 Census of Agriculture, which promises that "your response will provide a brighter future for you, your operation and your community."

Wow, I can hardly wait to see that promise come true, but the 2007 data won’t be released until 2009. For now, the 2002 statistics will have to do:

- The average age of all U.S. farmers is 55.3 years, an increase of about one year per year since 1978.
- 26% of farmers are age 65 or older.
- 5.8% of farmers are less than 35 years old. The number of farmers under age 35 has dropped by about 20 percent in each census since 1982.

An ambitious and enterprising group of Gustavus Adolphus College (GAC) students, also interested in discovering who the next generation of farmers might be, uncovered these statistics and trends:

- Female full ownership farm operators increased 158%, from 2,093 in 1987 to 5,407 in 2002.
- The number of black principal farm operators decreased nearly 62% between 1987 and 2002, from 42 operators to just 16.
- The most significant increase is in the number of Spanish, Hispanic and Latino principal farm operators. The increase totaled 382.6%, from 104 operators in 1987 to 502 in 2002.

The students’ analysis indicated that from 1987 to 2002, the demographics of Minnesota farmers changed tremendously. The number of Spanish, Hispanic and Latino principal operators will continue to increase. Although there are not nearly as many principal operators of any race as there are white operators, the numbers are rising at much faster rates. Female operators will continue to make a big impact on the demographics of Minnesota farming. Male operators in Minnesota will decrease in the future.

So, thanks to the GAC students, I have a better grasp of who might be farming in Minnesota in the future, and I’m starting to feel a little more reassured.

But what crops and livestock will Minnesota farmers be raising, how will they access land and capital, who and where will their markets be, what farming methods will replace our extensive reliance on expensive petroleum, and will public health and our environment be better or worse off for the choices made? Without the necessary statistics and trends to launch us into an informed discussion (local and regional foods, community based food systems, community supported agriculture, direct marketing, farmer’s markets, natural and whole foods markets have yet to make the realm of agricultural data collection) the future of agriculture in Minnesota seems a bit more like a two-sided coin toss. Here’s one side: When asked the question, “How large would a crop and livestock operation have to be to be considered economically viable for the long term?” a group of Purdue University agricultural economists offered this response in 2002:

An economically viable crop/livestock operation in the Corn Belt would have between 2,000 and 3,000 acres of row crops and between 500 and 600 sows.

I only can imagine how these numbers have escalated in 2008. As a corollary to this predominant and firmly held, a “more of the same, only larger” resource-intense vision, the phrase “American Farmers Feed the World” has resurfaced in surreal perfection, a monocultural splendor painted on the side panel of 18 wheeler semi trucks owned by one of the largest and most powerful agri-business conglomerates. The vision portrayed is clear and straightforward, and tinged with nobility: produce more and more of a few select crops to do your part to feed a hungry world. But is the world truly better off for the decades farmers have heeded the call for fencerow to fencerow action in the fields? Is world or U.S. hunger in decline, or has hunger abated even in our very own state of Minnesota? Do our crops contribute to the quality and diversity of the world food supply? Can the world afford to buy our bounty? Are we contributing to the ability of developing countries to feed themselves? The statistics don’t agree that our incredible yield increases have been effective in ameliorating hunger or producing desirable health benefits. What’s more, statistics now show that we import most of the food we eat in the U.S...but maybe that’s what’s painted on the other side of the truck.

What comes next? continued on page 10
What comes next? continued from page 9

On the flipside of the coin toss for envisioning the future of Minnesota agriculture, a study called the “Invisible Force: Farmers’ Mental Models and How They Influence Learning and Actions,” researchers Eileen Eckert and Alexandra Bell concluded that “the ways in which farmers put their visions into action are indicative of their mental models of farming. The results indicate that the farmers in the study have mental models of farming that are influenced by their values, knowledge, and experiences, and the models play a predominant role in their learning, problem-solving, and decision making. The results provide empirical support for conceptual researchers like Raedeke and Rikoon (1997), who recognized, particularly in more sustainable forms of agriculture, the multiplicity of ways in which knowledge is constructed and thus linked to diversity in farmers’ perceptions, understandings, and actions.”

Might we envision an agriculture that places the highest value on the diversity and health and interconnectedness of our land, resources, plants, animals, people, cultures…an agriculture that is truly sustainable? I’d like to try, for our sustainability as a species depends not on how well we can greenwash or increase market share, but on really getting this right. Before we remove yet another culture from the landscape in efforts to increase our efficiency to produce astronomical yields of an exceedingly short list of ever more expensive and input intensive crops to sell at highly volatile prices at the expense of our natural resources and health, we need more clarity, more accuracy, and less smokescreen about who is feeding whom, who has access to food, a true analysis of yield in terms of quality and diversity, and the actual, complete cost and benefit to people, cultures, and the environment. Minnesotans are up to the task, a great public discourse is underway, and with you help, clarity is improving day by day.

Size of Farms in Minnesota:

- The number of farms ranging from 1 to 99 acres jumped from 27% in 1992 to 39% in 2002.
- In the decade from 1992 to 2002, the only farms in the range of 100 - 999 acres showed a decrease in number.
- From 1992 to 2002, the number of farms in the size range of 1,000 - 1,999 acres stayed steady.
- 2,000+ acre farms increased 1.9% from 1992 to 1997, and 2.3% from 1997 to 2002.
Blessed with perfect weather, the Minnesota Garlic Festival began with an opening ceremony, “Throwing Out the First Bulb,” that set the whimsical and delectable tone for the entire day. The mayor of Howard lake pitched a garlic bulb to Festival Director, Jerry Ford, who caught it in a chef’s hat, the local beauty queens wielded hedge trimmers to cut the ribbon across the main entry gate, the cry of “Let the stinking began!” rose over the lively music, and the crowd rushed in to the festival grounds. Once inside, they found a bounty of locally grown garlic and other farm products, delicious healthy foods from around the state, fascinating entertainment, and interactive displays on sustainable farming, environmental stewardship, conservation and renewable energy.

SFA’s Crow River Chapter, sponsor of the festival, decided to combine the Chef Cooking Demos with the performances on the main stage, and this was met with universal approval, as the shows ping-ponged nonstop between music, food, dance and magic. The chefs tantalized the crowd with garlicky treats like Lori Valenziano’s sausage, Lucia Watson’s summer succotash; Phillip Becht’s milk roasted garlic, and Phil Werst’s aioli. (Several of the recipes are up on the festival website at: www.sfa-mn.org/garlicfest) The Mu Taiko Drummers thundered, Mariénne and the Shovel Girls sang more songs about garlic than are usually allowed in polite company, Star Michaelina wowed everyone with incredible illusions, and the Jawaahir dancers mesmerized with mystical movement. The Fjord horse carriage, under the direction of SFA’s Western Chapter’s John Sluss, carried fascinated riders; kids competed in games, made and played musical instruments, and built and flew kites; fuzzy animals were petted; lots of garlic was eaten and even more was carried home to happy kitchens. A stinky time was had by all!

A veritable cornucopia of local foods filled the booths, and though some of us were caught off guard by the overwhelming - but greatly appreciated - demand, the vendors did their best to keep up. We’ve learned the delightful lesson that Minnesotans now realize the value of local, healthy and delicious foods, and we’ll be more than ready next year!

This was our most successful garlic festival yet, with 1906 garlic lovers walking through the front gate, and close to 200 in the crew of vendors, volunteers, performers, chefs and workers. It seems word is getting out that you can have a great time enjoying locally produced healthy foods and fine entertainment, while learning about the sustainable farming movement in Minnesota.
From Left of Center Stage at the Minnesota Garlic Festival

By Mary Jane Miller, chef wrangler

The Great Scape Café at the Minnesota Garlic Festival was staffed by some stellar Twin Cities chefs. We were so lucky that these incredibly busy successful chefs chose to spend a beautiful August day working their tails off at the Garlic Festival. Not to mention all the planning prepping that happened before the big day. These chefs support sustainable farming every day in their kitchens by purchasing, cooking and serving the fine foods from sustainably farmed Minnesota land.

I wrangled the chefs out of the kitchen and onto the festival stage to elevate our everyday foods with garlicky goodness. I chatted with them and lent a hand during the demos. Jerry Ford asked me to help put together the Garlic Festival Cookbook a couple of years ago over coffee at church one day. While working on the still unfinished book, one thing led to another and I’ve emceed the chef demos twice now. For almost 30 years I’ve worked in just about every part of the food business; from our family farm in Iowa, to restaurant kitchens, to food science labs, to test kitchens and publications. I’ve done tons of work for Betty Crocker and Pillsbury. My latest work is culinary innovation and design for Target. At home I’m a mom and wife. For the most part, what I don’t grow myself I buy locally from growers I count as friends. Enough about me.

Phillip Becht, chef at the Modern Café, was polished and poised in ’08. We chatted about sealing up roasting pans with plastic wrap and foil as he put together the milk roasted garlic. He uses that technique up to 350°F to make his luscious pot roast at the restaurant.

Phil Werst from Common Roots made from-scratch aioli, a garlicky mayo. Making one egg worth of mayo in my big food processor wouldn’t work, so he poured the runny mixture into a big bowl and we took turns whisking oil into it by hand. It turned out perfectly and illustrated a real-life kitchen save. The mayo was spread on homemade bread that became part of a yummy fried green tomato sandwiches from the Common Roots menu. That’s how we found out my cool new cook top blew fuses and wouldn’t get my big skillet hot enough to fry but the crummy electric skillet scrounged from the café worked great. I’ve got to get into the city and have a Common Roots bagel. They sound fantastic.

Lucia Watson and Lori Valenziano from Lucia’s each took a turn next. I love to eat at Lucia’s. The food is deceptively simple. I always leave there determined to serve better meals at home. Lucia’s treatment of veggies was simple but showed off her understanding of layering flavors. Lori made homemade sausage. We were rushing to finish up the schedule, so I assigned her this topic. I don’t think she had ever made sausage before. That didn’t matter; she came off without a hitch, sharing lots of ideas for making your own personally seasoned sausage patties at home. Of course, I on the other hand wrestled to make my sausage stuffer work. At home, it was effortless—in front of a

Miller cont. on page 14
In keeping with SFA's goal to mentor and encourage the next generation of Minnesota's sustainable farmers, we've developed one technique that Events' & Youth Outreach Coordinator, Jerry Ford, likes to call “stealth education”. With the idea that the arts and farming are intrinsically related -- aren’t sustainable farmers some of the most creative people you know? -- we launched the Youth Art Competition in 2006 in conjunction with the Minnesota Garlic Festival. Young people enter their artwork based on the theme “What is your vision for the future of rural Minnesota?” This year, we ramped up the effort with an intern. Whitney Hohman, a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College who majored in art and biology, was recruited as our Arts Intern. She immediately launched into designing a series of workshops for young people in which they would explore the issues of sustainable farming, a healthy environment and locally produced foods by creating artwork that reflected their thoughts about MN countryside.

Whitney proved to be quite creative herself, leading a wide variety of workshops in an interesting range of locations. At the Stone Arch Bridge Festival in downtown Minneapolis, she had a booth where kids could make whirligig windmills while talking about wind energy and decorating them with rural themes. In addition to events at school programs, she led workshops at Pine River County Fair and Gale Woods Farm.

The summer culminated in workshops Whitney conducted at two of SFA’s flagship events, Grazefest Minnesota and the Minnesota Garlic Festival. Whitney came up with a great way to get the kids talking about farming while doing their artwork: she led them in creating collages out of crop and vegetable seeds. During the open air session at the Garlic Festival, as many adults were drawn in to creating their own artwork as kids.

Youth art continued on page 14
Youth art continued from page 13

18-23 age category, Delore Sander of Roseville, MN won with her sculpture, “Vase de Fleur”; while the high school division saw Cokato, MN’s Ian Wuollet take top honors with his photograph, “Blooming Scape”. Lexie and Bridget Leukemia swept the Elementary and Intermediate groups with their drawings, “Garlic Family” and “Starting Fresh with Garlic”.

Several of the participants of the art workshop at the Garlic Festival featuring seed art.

High School division winner, Ian Wuollet’s photograph, “Blooming Scape”

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crowd—awkward and difficult. It worked eventually. It was great to hear Lori, who works as buyer as well as sous chef, talk about sourcing ingredients for the restaurant.

Marshall Paulson from the Birchwood Café made a poached garlic and cucumber soup in a blender. The garlic was poached in olive oil until it was butter soft. The cold soup was rich but light and a pretty pale green color. Marshall and I talked quite a bit about the recycling and composting program they have at the restaurant. The Birchwood got a round of applause when he shared that they’ve gotten rid of “the big dumpster” because of it.

Jenny Breen from Good Life Catering made a big skillet of roughly chopped mixed greens served warm with delicious vinaigrette. Earlier in the day, it came to light that she thought I had ingredients for her vinaigrette and I thought she had it with her, pre-made. Whoops. We scrambled around the festival and came up with apple wine, local honey and enough other ingredients to make a great tasting dressing. The crowd really enjoyed watching Jenny zip the stems off the cooking greens. She grabbed the tough stem with one hand and slid her other hand along that stem in a quick motion that left a pile of stemmed tender greens on the cutting board below.

Kirsten and Martha worked tirelessly behind the scenes throughout the day. They are the best in the food consulting business. You can thank them for a couple of Pillsbury BakeOffs and many cookbooks. We are all great friends, too.

At the end of the day as we enjoyed a cold beer outside the kitchen door all the goofs and troubles were forgotten. I wrote them down the next day so next year will be perfect. See you there.
The Databank (TDB) Update

By Jeremy Lanctot

After many months of transition, SFA is finally using the new online data coordination tools provided by The Databank (TDB) (www.thedatabank.com). We’ve consolidated our mailing lists and contact info into a single location. SFA staff can now access the same information from any internet browser located anywhere and see the same thing as anyone else looking at the data. This is a big step forward and will streamline many tasks that historically were onerous.

We now have the capability to coordinate events centrally and the volunteers associated with those events. People from each chapter can view the contact information for members in their regions and also collaborate with members in other regions as needed. Many of you get the biweekly email of events that Anne Borgendale coordinates. This can now be managed with the tools provided by TDB internet site. Anne can target regions of the state within a certain radius of an event or choose to send to all members. This flexibility will make communication with members much easier than before.

We now have the ability to manage member donations and can accept donations online through our custom online donation form. When a chapter puts on an event, we can setup online payment for these events and coordinate emails, or regular mail, to our mail list to advertise what’s going on and how to attend.

SFA staff is still in training on how to best utilize this online service, so look forward to more communication concerning TDB over the next year as we get up-to-speed on all we can accomplish. SFA has a very small staff and a much larger cadre of volunteers that make the organization function. TDB will help us save costs and time and allow us to do more without going insane doing it.

SFA Ridesharing
Save Gas & Make Friends

How does a person double or triple their vehicle mileage? Simple, just rideshare to your SFA events. We can save many gallons of fuel by the simple expedient of sharing a ride. If we make a commitment to conserve energy we can help our planet as well as our pocketbooks.

There are also some additional benefits to your ridesharing travel time as well: You would have like-minded people to share the experience of SFA events with; an extended time to renew or begin new friendships; and a captive audience for the exchange of views and ideas. Your co-riders will be there for the duration of the ride: what are they going to do, jump from your speeding vehicle? If they persist in escaping you by jumping, you might want to re-consider your communication skills, to prevent future casualties. Go to the SFA-MN discussion board to voice opinions on the above topic. Let’s see if this can work.

- John A. Sluss

Make Your Own Snow Cover? Develop New Crop Varieties?
Grant $$$ Available to Support Sustainable Farming Projects

Do you want to research a new idea that promotes sustainable agriculture? Or demonstrate a sustainable project you’re already working on? Your idea or project may be eligible for up to $25,000 in Sustainable Agriculture Grants from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Proposals are due by January 16, 2009.

The MDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program funds farmer-initiated practices that promote environmental stewardship and conservation as well as those that improve farm profitability and quality of life.

Apply now at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants or call 651-201-6012.

(MDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider)
Celebrating community, food and farming at Terra Madre 2008

By Anne Borgendale

“It feels like the U.N. of food. Sessions are translated into seven languages. There is every kind of national costume, language and skin color ... and a great diversity in faces and food.”

This is Audrey Arner’s best description of the biannual Terra Madre gathering in Turin, Italy. Audrey and her husband, Richard Handeen, of Moonstone Farm, Montevideo, MN, attended Terra Madre in 2004. They applied for and were chosen to attend again this year. From October 23-27 they will be among the 14 Minnesotans traveling to the Piedmont Valley to convene with thousands of others. The mix of those in attendance comes from every inhabited continent and includes farmers, cooks, educators, and students.

The literal translation of “Terra Madre” is mother earth, but in actuality the event and organization are more complex than just another environmental awareness activity. According the Slow Food International website, “Terra Madre is a network of food communities, each committed to producing quality food in a responsible, sustainable way. Terra Madre also refers to a major bi-annual conference held in Turin, Italy intended to foster discussion and introduce innovative concepts in the field of food, gastronomy, globalization, and economics. Terra Madre is coordinated by the Slow Food organization.” Over the course of five days participants will share their experiences and information about global issues, cultivating awareness about how land, ag and trade issues affect the ability to feed people on the planet fairly.

The event is purposely designed so attendees will spend time intentionally and casually. Audrey found that Moonstone benefited from this. “I had the time to talk with people from around the world who are doing similar things to gain ideas of how to diversify. For example agritourism is more popular in other places,” she said. She’s also been able to stay in contact with some of the people she met in 2004 thanks to modern communication methods. This has further enabled the exchange of information and growth of ideas.

Terra Madre has a greater reach than just a few days in Italy every couple of years. The individuals that attend represent the import work that is being done around the world on every level. “Community organizations all over the world are working on preserving small farms, training farmers, maintaining genetic diversity and cleaning up rivers. Slow Food aligns all of those aspects with the pleasure that comes from good flavor and eating food together,” Audrey said. She also noted that attendees from
developing nations are able to see that people around the world care about them and the issues they face. They are able to engage in an idea exchange with people from developed countries in a way that is not missionary work or food aid.

For those individuals that have made farming and food issues their life’s work, Terra Madre provides unexpected benefits. “It’s affirming to see that we are on a path that is worthy and important,” Audrey said. It is also an opportunity to address pressing questions such as, “Who in the world is going to farm?” She elaborated, “As a society we must figure out who will be the next food producers. The World Trade Organization recently commissioned a study on this. The results show how important it is to have a local democratic process and to have environment and ag programs to support small farms.”

While Terra Madre is focused on the protection of traditional foods, endangered foods and traditional food preservation methods, it also offers a chance to peak into the future of farming and food. It provides a different picture than the “bigger and bigger industrial agriculture” path. “It is time to shift back to what we knew about small agriculture, appropriate technology and new ways of communicating with each other,” Audrey commented.

Audrey and Richard hope to share their experiences at Terra Madre with others in their community when they return. They especially want to help cultivate interest about it among young farmers in their region and would love to see these farmers attend Terra Madre in 2010.

If people are interested in learning more about Terra Madre they should join Slow Food and participate in the conversations happening on www.slowfood.com. Also communities of farmers and eaters and related organizations should start thinking about a young person or farmer they could sponsor to attend Terra Madre in 2010.

Look for more coverage of Terra Madre and the Minnesota attendees’ experiences in the Winter 2009 edition of the CornerPost.

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**Minnesota’s Terra Madre 2008 Delegation:**

Laura Frerichs, Farmington MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
Adam Cullip, Farmington MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
Atina Diffley, Farmington, MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
Martin Diffley, Farmington, MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
Elizabeth Mulvihill, Farmington, MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
Joyce Shaeffer, Hampton, MN – Hiawatha Valley SFA
LeeAnn Van Der Pol, Kerkhoven, MN – Pastures A’ Plenty Farm
Jim Van Der Pol, Kerkhoven, MN – Pastures A’ Plenty Farm
Brad Donnay, Kimball, MN – Donnay Dairy
Leanne Donnay, Kimball, MN – Donnay Dairy
Audrey Arner, Montevideo, MN – Moonstone Farm
Richard Handeen, Montevideo, MN – Moonstone Farm
Lori Callister, West Concord, MN – Callister Farm
Alan Callister, West Concord, MN – Callister Farm
Katie Blanchard, Carlton College, Northfield, MN (student)
Conversations with the Land: Standing beside the archer

by Jim Van Der Pol

Joel (McNair, editor/publisher of Graze magazine) has challenged me to begin to think and write about a better more satisfying life on our farms and in our rural communities, so this and several columns to follow will assume that we all pretty much know the problems, that we all as farmers, graziers and Americans live every day in the midst of the damage and could benefit from encouragement to talk together about another direction in our lives and businesses. This encouragement I will attempt to provide, but there is an important caveat; that we live and farm in a powerful national and nationalizing economy that will not take kindly to any kind of real change, and has immense power to block change. Much of this power inheres in the wants, desires, and thoughts of our own minds, so that we tend to enable this powerful economic structure while it sucks the wealth out of our communities and the satisfaction from our lives.

Necessarily then, given the economic powers that be, we will be talking always about the idea of the one degree deflection. To understand this idea, visualize standing beside an archer who is in the act of drawing back his bow, arrow notched to the string. At the very instant he releases the arrow; we are going to blow a very small puff of air at it from the side. The puff of air is so small, the archer will not feel it on his hands or face, the effort required to release the air toward the arrow so slight a bystander is apt not to notice it happening.

If we have managed to deflect the arrow one degree, and the archer is able to send the arrow a thousand feet into the distance, the arrow will land many feet wide of the target the archer intends, and in the direction we are trying to encourage. The archer is the national economy/culture, the arrow is the passage of time, and the puff of air is, of course, anyone with the audacity to think that his/her life can make a difference.

I would not say that this slow and incremental change over a long period of time is the only change possible. Huge and relatively fast change happens frequently. Think of the dissolution of the Soviet Union or the end of apartheid in South Africa. Imagine what change will come from the passing of the peak in oil production, or some of the likely results of foolish government policies such as free trade and trade deficits, as well as our attempted military control of the entire globe. But the slow change is change that can be driven by us, and if we have a wholesome view of ourselves it will be beneficial to many people; it is less apt to be violent and more likely to be permanent, rather than just being an excuse for the next war. In addition, if we have accustomed ourselves to searching out the needs and desires of our hearts and minds, and have learned to judge them and to put the good and necessary ones on the road to becoming reality in our own and our children’s lives, we will by that exercise be better equipped to cope with the change that huge events are going to force upon us and possibly even to turn some of that change to advantage.

And we are fortunate, because most of us have some kind of ownership and management interest in a business that is biological, that is to say, part of the great beating heart of the earth itself. We have therefore a tool that is potentially more powerful than any held by any hand in Washington DC.

How do we use it? I think we start by taking up one by one the common mundane kinds of things we deal with every day as we manage our farms and businesses and examining them for meaning and for opportunity. We must, for instance, regularly deal with labor, generally our own, but also sometimes and for some of us, that of others. Labor is related to physical work; in fact physical work before the advent of modern machines and technology would have been the entire definition of labor. And the idea of physical work has in my lifetime, endured a complete change in meaning and significance. It was
honorable in 1955, in 2007 it is not, having been replaced in our minds with the idea of games and the passing interest of the outdoor “sports enthusiast”. A farm boy in 1955 would swell with pride at having first kept up with his elders at stacking hay, a farm boy in 2007 expects to “work” in a suit while occasionally “working his body out” in a weight and exercise room.

This compartmentalizing of work in our minds is not so much useful to us rural people as it is a very real marketing opportunity for the economy surrounding us. Because our bodies are less healthy, we are a market for the health sales companies. Since we will not walk, we can be sold gadgets to ride in, that which we will not put our hands on must be handled by a machine sold to us by a farm technology company. If we soon develop a horror of having to exert hands on control of the machine we bought to do the work we didn’t want to do, we can be persuaded to buy a computerized control for that purpose.

The entire oversold biotech industry, from the bag of manufactured seed to the needle full of growth hormone, is a triumph of technology over labor and management.

It is important to realize that we have been sold this concept. It is one of the foundations of our entire economy, which functions to delete or at least outsource all labor so that profits may return exclusively to capital. But when we rural businesses outsource labor, we delete ourselves and shrink our communities. This is not something we will ever hear from the farm financial advisors. The disdain we have been taught for physical work translates into a knee jerk tendency to always choose technology over labor in the management of our farms.

Richard Levins, formerly an economist with the University of Minnesota uses as one of his four Schedule F based measurements of the sustainability of farms the amount paid out for labor, both the bottom line return to operator labor and management and the categories for hired labor and custom work hired. These are put into a ratio with the total expense and Levins concludes that for this measurement, the higher the ratio, the more sustainable the farm. He is right. But actually getting there is a little complex and involves a route with which we are not entirely comfortable. The deck seems stacked against any move in this direction. This is where it gets discouraging but remember the one percent deflection.

Our farm has changed and grown to the point where we have two families living and working on 320 acres, a situation unheard of here on the prairie. In addition we are part of the cause for employment for several meat cutters and part of a trucking firm, all local. This works in large part because we have marketed the concept to the buyers of our products. But the livestock housing and handling systems we certify to our customers mean that we use straw and therefore pitchforks. The flush toilet system of livestock production is not an option for us. We keep a small bale baler because that is the best way to feed calves and because our farrowing systems are based upon straw and grass. None of this is the most “economical” method of livestock farming, but it is what people seem to want in their meats purchases and it better fits the choices we want to make in terms of where we invest our money. Nothing is sadder than the farmer who keeps a brand new tractor but cannot afford decent shoes for the kids or a family vacation. We do not keep Sunday-go-to-meeting pickups and we do not trade machinery when we are lean on income for family living.

Now we keep a skidloader, which is in no danger of being disposed of anytime soon. It helps us cope with this huddle of obsolete livestock buildings. But we also have in the tool inventory a half dozen useable pitchforks which go where the Bobcat cannot. I am instructing my grandsons in the use of these, so that when they get to the situation where fuel for the Bobcat gets to be a problem they will understand that there is always another way.

Meanwhile work that kids can do, so long as they get the real benefits of it, are a way of binding them to the farm, so that they can see it as an honorable occupation, one that uses mind and body both and helps them imagine their lives proceeding forward on this land and among these people. They must be mentored in this by a respected adult who is not afraid to use his body sometimes instead of the latest technology. If we are to continue any kind of life here in the country, we must at least demonstrate to our young this difference between us and the culture. This work must be securely fastened to a reward that is both remunerative and satisfying. Youth must be able to see the progression from the well bedded sow to the thrifty piglet and the healthy bottom line; they must be encouraged to feel the connection between tired muscles and the satisfaction of owning a healthy and valuable calf. We should remember that many of our kids are very unhappy in the culture and may very well be longing for a respected adult to point another direction. We need a little more confidence in our own ability to lead.

*This originally appeared in Graze, and you can get a sample copy at PO Box 48, Belleville, WI 53508; graze@ticon.net; 608-455-311.*
Jenifer Buckley honored for distinguished dedication to Lake Superior Chapter of SFA

By Anne Borgendale

For a non-profit like the Sustainable Farming Association to succeed it takes more than dedicated farmer members. It also takes that person who makes stuff happen – organizing events, putting together the newsletter, keeping track of members – that person who keeps the day-to-day activities humming.

Just such a person was honored at the Lake Superior Chapter’s Harvest Festival on Saturday, September 6th. Jenifer Buckley, the former Lake Superior Chapter coordinator and a former board member, was presented with the 2008 Lake Superior Chapter’s Distinguished Service Award. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes non-farmers who have helped promote local farming, to create a more locally based food system and who have made the work of the Sustainable Farming Association (SFA) possible.

Jenifer was quite surprised about receiving the award. “I was astonished. It hadn’t really crossed my mind. I was just doing a job I thought was important and that I loved. I wasn’t doing it to an award,” she said.

Joel Rosen, retired farmer, chair of SFA’s state board and current Lake Superior Chapter coordinator presented the award to her in absentia. In his remarks he noted how Jenifer’s work as coordinator greatly contributed to the current success of the Lake Superior Chapter and the Harvest Festival. He also commented that, “We decided on Jenifer because of the huge contribution she made organizing the administration of our chapter business, especially Harvest Festival. We hired our first coordinator in 1995. Jenifer arrived in 1996 and served as coordinator of our chapter for 8 years. She has a remarkable talent for organization. During her tenure, she set up the files, notes and calendars that not only helped make Harvest Festival one of the major community events in the Twin Ports, but also ensured that future coordinators were able to make all the preparations for the event with a minimum of confusion and unforeseen difficulties.”

A life immersed in food, farming, and the environment wasn’t Jenifer’s original plan. She was studying humanities at the University of Wisconsin – Madison when she took a botany course to fulfill her science requirement. She had a great professor who had an infectious love of biological sciences. This changed her course of study and after her bachelor’s degree she traveled the globe following her interest in international ag development. However, based on her observations during these travels she decided that it was best for

Jenifer Buckley continued on page 22
Grassland Farming:
Increase Production - Reduce Cost - Improve Health

By William Spencer

Vibrant Health Systems announces a one-day conference to be held Tuesday, October 28, 2008, on the third floor of the Village Emporium in downtown Wadena, MN. Ways to increase dairy and meat production while reducing animal health expenses are the major focus of the conference.

The conference will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration and refreshments commence at 9:30 a.m. in the third floor meeting room of the Village Emporium (114 South Jefferson Street).

The major speaker is Denie Hiestand. Hiestand is one of New Zealand’s top pastoral farmers, world famous animal and human health consultant, pastoral dairy and meat production specialist, and internationally published author. He will share his experiences, methods, and knowledge to achieve outstanding production, increased soil health and fertility, and increased herd health and longevity.

Other speakers include widely known Richard J. Holliday, DVM and James Helfter of Advanced Biological Concepts, a Certified Organic processor/handler.

The cost of the conference is $200 including food and beverages.

Participants will learn how New Zealand is and has been a world leader in pastoral farming for centuries. Hiestand brings to us timely information to achieve outstanding production, and biologically correct digestion to produce improved animal health and production while improving soil fertility and plant health.

Other topics will include organics and biodynamics, bacterial outbreaks such as E. Coli, salmonella, staph, to name a few along with how to protect your farm and animals. There will also be a brief time for input regarding the honeybee colony collapse disorder plaguing most of the industrialized agricultural nations.

Space is limited. Pre-registration is required by October 1, 2008. Send full payment to VHF, POB 264, Wadena, MN 56482 or call William Spencer at 320-291-9094 or 320-232-5358.

MDA Sustainable Ag Demonstration Grant Program

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) will award up to $150,000 in 2009 for the Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program. Competitive grants for up to $25,000 will be awarded to individuals or groups for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects in Minnesota. The purpose of the Grant Program is to fund practices that promote environmental stewardship and conservation of resources as well as improve profitability and quality of life on farms and in rural areas. Proposals are due at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture by January 16, 2009.

Examples of eligible projects include fruit and vegetable production, conservation tillage and weed management, integrated pest management, livestock production, organic farming, alternative energy crop production, use of cover crops, or other innovative projects. Grant applications are available on the MDA website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.htm or contact the Agricultural Development and Financial Assistance Division at 651-201-6012.
Minnesota Dairy Initiative Update

By Jeremy Lanctot

Even with tough economic times for sheep and goat dairy producers, there is still strong interest in taking a small hobby dairy into a full-fledged business enterprise. The consumer interest in these dairy products is still strong. Unfortunately, the small livestock dairy industry is infantile and not prepared for the demand that is there. Some of these farmers I’ve encouraged to pursue expanding into these markets and others I’ve discouraged. Having a realistic outlook on what to expect is crucial before embarking on a major expansion project.

The Minnesota Dairy Initiative (MDI) is available to help people interested in pursuing alternative forms of dairy farming. MDI can’t pull rabbits out of a hat or make a weak business plan profitable, this is the work of the producer, but MDI can help coordinate resources of knowledge to help farmers get a broader perspective of their chances of making a new enterprise work.

As mentioned in previous articles, SFA receives a small allotment of money from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to aid dairy farmers in making changes to their business. SFA specializes in helping dairy enterprises that are looking at doing something a little non-standard, like grazing, organic transition, sheep, goat, on-farm processing...you get the idea. Basically, the farmer generates the idea and contacts SFA with a desire to try something new or fix a problem on the dairy farm. We work with the farmer to settle on a few one-year goals. Once the goals are agreed upon, we search out expertise to help the farmer with his/her plans. If money is needed to pay for some consulting, we have a small purse of coins to help defray the costs of hiring experts.

Presently, we are working with farms on process improvements, parlor upgrades/updates, on-farm processing planning, new dairy startup and expansions. No two farm projects are alike. Honestly, there are times when we have to gently explain to a farmer that his project isn’t realistic given scope, markets or other financial barriers. Recommending a farm wait on an idea is often the best thing. It is much better to have weight-in from many different people on changes to a complex dairy operation than to fire in the dark and miss the target. Hopefully, SFA with the help of MDI can help you find the best path forward. Contact Jeremy Lanctot at 320-980-2333, mdi@sfa-mn.org, or Anne Borgendale at (320) 226-6318, communications@sfa-mn.org, for more information.

Jenifer Buckley continued from page 20

her to stay in the USA and work on changing agriculture here. Thus, in 1995 after receiving her masters in eco-agriculture for Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands, she moved to Duluth. In picking Duluth she wanted a place with winter, but also found a great community of farmers in the Lake Superior Chapter.

While Jenifer is no longer directly working for the Lake Superior Chapter, she is still working to advance local foods and sustainable agriculture. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Community, Ag, Recreation and Resources studies (CARRS) at Michigan State University as a University Distinguished Fellow. According to Jenifer it is a, “fascinating and dynamic department that does practical, interdisciplinary research on community, food and agricultural issues.”

She also feels there is a lot of potential in this field and commented, “I’m not a farmer, so this is a way I can contribute.” She continued, “The local food movement is gaining a lot of traction. Nationally a lot is going on. I’m pleased to see this level of involvement and support from a major university.”

The Duluth area (northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin) is also a place on the cutting edge of the sustainable farming movement. Jenifer explained, “There are really exciting things happening with sustainable agriculture and local foods in Duluth. Growers there are hard to beat. They are critically engaged. They think. They have their act together and the tide is moving with them.”

Read about the Farmers Voice Award recipients, Mark & Terri Thell, in the Winter 2009 edition of the CornerPost.
The grass was greener at Grazefest 2008!

By Anne Borgendale

Grazefest Minnesota 2008, held on Friday, August 1st, was a picture perfect Minnesota summer day. This year’s hosts, Dan & Rosie Middendorf of Midd-Minn Dairy and Kent & Linda Solberg of Seven Pines Dairy, were gracious and welcoming and their farms provided the perfect setting for this event. This year’s focus — low-input, grass-based dairy — offered fresh ideas, new opportunities and a bright picture for the future of dairy in Minnesota.

As Grazefest got underway the group split into two for the morning sessions at each farm. The audience at Midd-Minn Dairy started with a farmer panel discussion featuring Dan Middendorf, Kent Solberg, Ron Monson and Tim Anderson. They shared their own experiences on the topic of “Getting stared in grass-based dairies.” The group then moved to the pasture to discuss forages, grazing systems, grass and irrigation systems. Their last stop before lunch was Midd-Minn’s New Zealand swing style parlor. There was ample discussion about the pros and cons of various parlor setups and how to design an efficient and effective parlor for not a lot of money.

Across the road and field at Seven Pines Dairy, the group focused on “Selling your carbon credits.” This segment was lead by Dean Current who is with the University of Minnesota’s Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agricultural Management. Craig Scheaffer, a University of Minnesota Forage Specialist, provided a hands-on look at forage production on sandy soil. To close the morning session, Linda Solberg spoke about stacking enterprises at Seven Pines. They pasture chickens on a rotation following the cows. The chickens are also great for pest control; they love eating grasshoppers, which there is an abundance of during dry years.

After a delicious locally grown lunch, Joel McNair, editor/publisher of Graze magazine took the “stage.” Joel called his keynote presentation a “Keynote Exchange.” This keynote differed from those of Grazefests past as it dealt more with the general state of the world and grazing, than with technical information on a particular subject. This format was well received. The audience gladly peppered Joel with questions and intently absorbed his points of view on energy issues and farming practices.

Several eager groups of farmers took part in the self-guided “Working Dairy Parlor Tour.” They visited four separate parlors in the Verndale and Staples, MN area to see what low-cost milking parlors look like in action. Concurrent, there was a panel discussion at England Prairie, a pioneer village south of Verndale, MN, on hot button grazing issues. The grazing specialists on the panel included Mark Hayek, Howard Moechnig, Wayne Monson and John Zinn. Prior to the panel Mary Forbord presented Howard Moechnig, who recently retired from the NRCS, with a “grazing systems cake.” The chocolate zucchini cake, in addition to being delicious, featured a fencing system, cows and equally distributed chocolate chips in each paddock. To end the day everyone came together at England Prairie for a delicious, locally produced meal and good discussion.

Grazefest continued on page 31
# Fall Events Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Pastures A’ Plenty Farm Open House – Kerkhoven, MN. From 10am – 3pm; for more information on Pastures A’ Plenty visit <a href="http://www.prairiefare.com/pastureshp.htm">www.prairiefare.com/pastureshp.htm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Solar Home Tour – Browerville, MN. For more info or directions call Marcia or Greg at (320) 594-6317.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Duluth Rotary Club Locavore Luncheon – Radisson Hotel, Duluth, MN. For more information visit <a href="http://www.lakesuperiorfarming.org">www.lakesuperiorfarming.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Minnesota Food Association Fall Harvest Party – Wilder Forest. For more information or detailed directions, please call our office (651 – 433 – 3676) or check our website <a href="http://www.mnfoodassociation.org">www.mnfoodassociation.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Pride of the Prairie Fall Feast and Fall Community Farmers Market – University of Minnesota, Morris. For more info visit <a href="http://www.morris.umn.edu">www.morris.umn.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Field Day at Earth’s Return Farm – Nerstrand, MN. For more info contact Kathy Zeman, (507) 664-9446 or <a href="mailto:kzeman@kmwb.net">kzeman@kmwb.net</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>Grassland Farming Conference – Wadena, MN. Focusing on production, cost and human and animal health. For more info contact William Spencer, VHF environmental at 320-291-9094 or 320-232-5358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>High Tunnel Production for Beginning and Medium Sized Commercial Growers Conference – University of Wisconsin, River Falls. For more info contact <a href="mailto:gayle.a.dodge@uwrf.edu">gayle.a.dodge@uwrf.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>Native Pollinator Workshop – Chippewa Valley Technical College – Chippewa Falls, WI. You can register online, or by e-mailing Kevin Erb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 14-16</td>
<td>3rd Annual Northland Bioneers Conference – University of Minnesota, Willey Hall – Minneapolis. For more information visit: <a href="http://www.nbconference.org/">www.nbconference.org/</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Way of Life Conference – SSND Mankato Provincial House Conference Center, Mankato, MN. For registration info 507-389-4272 or <a href="mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org">lcoons@ssndmankato.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Field Day at the Mobry-Bathke Farm – Zumbrota, MN. For more info contact Kathy Zeman, (507) 664-9446 or <a href="mailto:kzeman@kmwb.net">kzeman@kmwb.net</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4-5</td>
<td>ACRES USA Conference – St. Louis, MO. For more information visit <a href="http://www.acresusa.com">www.acresusa.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4-5</td>
<td>Minnesota State Wide High Tunnel/Season Extension Conference – Alexandria, MN. To pre-register call the University of Minnesota Extension Crookston Center at 1.888.241.0781 and ask for Jolene or Marlene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16-17</td>
<td>Minnesota Organic Conference – St. Cloud, MN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s 18th Annual Conference – St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. For more info visit <a href="http://www.sfa-mn.org">www.sfa-mn.org</a> or contact Anne with SFA at (320) 226-6318 or <a href="mailto:communications@sfa-mn.org">communications@sfa-mn.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 26-28</td>
<td>20th Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference - La Crosse, WI. For more information visit <a href="http://www.mosesorganic.org">www.mosesorganic.org</a> or call 715-772-3153.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All about SFA: Who we are, What we do

By Mary Jo Forbord

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota is a nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1988. SFA’s mission is to develop and enhance sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking.

SFA provides year-round offerings of high quality, farm and family-centered programs, tours, field days and events to educate and demonstrate the depth and diversity of sustainable farming systems.

SFA ANNUAL CONFERENCES

SFA delivers major education conferences customized for sustainable farmers, supporters, and resource people from agencies and affiliations that support our mission.

In 2005, Success and Succession on the Land: Sustainable Farming’s Next Generation, focused on the next generation of sustainable farmers.

In 2006, Cultivating Common Ground: Linking Sustainable Agriculture and Health highlighted the connections between food, farming, the environment and health.

In 2007, Sustainable Farming Systems: The State of the Art was held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. Students, faculty and farmers enjoyed a pre-conference “Locavore Dinner” that farmers and students prepared together.

In 2008, Local Foods: The Next Step included the first Youth Sustainability Confabulation, a discussion with college students about food and farming system sustainability issues.

GRAZEFEST MINNESOTA

Since 2004, Grazefest Minnesota has provided a high quality, experiential educational opportunity for farmers who graze livestock and those who want to implement rotational grazing, while providing state-of-the-art grazing systems education. Grazefest events include on-farm field days, bus tours, and demonstrations that highlight the nutritional and environmental benefits of pasture-raised foods. Grazefest Minnesota brings together farmers, graziers, grazing specialists, chefs, processors, conservationists, and consumers for a daylong extravaganza of in-depth learning and information exchange, grazing systems tours, and top notch speakers.

MINNESOTA GARLIC FESTIVAL

SFA rolled out its first Minnesota Garlic Festival in 2006, under the direction of its founder and Crow River Chapter Chair, Jerry Ford. The Festival is an SFA outreach program, using family-oriented entertainment to educate about the benefits of sustainable agriculture, connect farmers directly with the public, and to share farmers’ experience of working conscientiously with the land. Nearly 2000 people attended Garlic Festival in 2008. The Festival has become a flagship event for SFA, and serves as a model for revitalization at county fair sites. The 4th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival is planned for 2009, featuring vendors of local, fresh or organic/sustainable foods, unique arts and crafts, farm products, chef demonstrations, and of course, lots and lots of garlic.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

SFA’s Lake Superior Chapter held its 15th annual Harvest Festival in September 2008 at Bayfront Festival All about SFA continued on page 26
All about SFA continued from page 25
Park, Duluth MN. Harvest Festival showcases local food and agriculture and promotes local food production as a key component of a healthy economy, environment and community. Renewable energy exhibits and demonstrations have spurred attendance to over 9000 people annually.

MINNESOTA DAIRY INITIATIVE
Since 1998, the goal of SFA’s Minnesota Dairy Initiative (MDI) has been to assist organic and grass-based dairy farmers in making well-informed decisions to enhance profit, quality of life and benefit to the environment. SFA focuses on farms in need of resources and information to start, transition to, or improve any aspect of grass-based and organic cow, goat and sheep dairies. Under the direction of Jeremy Lanctot, SFA’s MDI coordinator, SFA contributes to value-adding and success of many dairies in Minnesota.

ARTISAN CHEESEMAKING FOR BEGINNERS
With funding from MDI, SFA initiated an Artisan Cheesemaking for Beginners Online Forum, led and moderated by Minnesota artisan cheesemaker and writer Jodi Ohlsen-Read. An Artisan Cheesemaking Workshop in February of 2007 featured Minnesota’s artisan cheesemakers, and many expert resource people. Popular on-farm Cheesemaking tours helped to further experiential learning, and build an excellent and readily accessible resource network. SFA believes that Minnesota deserves to enjoy a flourishing artisan Cheesemaking industry, and we will continue to work with all willing partners to achieve that goal.

ORGANIC DAIRY 101: WORKSHOPS FOR DAIRY SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS
SFA expanded the organic dairy professional resource pool by educating veterinarians, vet students, lenders, nutritionists, crop consultants, dairy inspectors, agriculture instructors, and agricultural reporters about organic dairy systems. Four workshops were offered in four locations across Minnesota in 2008, funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Professional Development Program.

CORNERPOST NEWSLETTER AND SFA WEBSITE
SFA’s quarterly CornerPost Newsletter includes a variety of information and articles of interest to chapters, members, and Minnesota citizens. Editor Anne Borgendale packs in close-to-the-ground information in each issue. We like to print what farmers have to say, and our contributors are many. The circulation of the biweekly Sustainable Farming Events Email continues to increase. Email Anne communications@sfa-mn.org if you’d like to receive updates and the SFA event calendar electronically. Check out SFA’s Website www.sfa-mn.org and renew your membership online. You can also register quickly and easily for SFA events online. The SFA discussion forum provides an online venue for topical discussions, and SFA exhibits at more than 20 conferences and events each year to create awareness of SFA’s events, programs and information services.

YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY CONFABULATION: YOUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE
Youth gathered at Gustavus Adolphus College in February of 2008 for a World Café Discussion, an informal yet guided discussion that revolves around topic areas, including climate change, food, technology, rural communities/farming, renewable energy, and policy. SFA and Gustavus Adolphus College will host the 2nd annual Your Voice, Our Future Confabulation in 2009.

YOUTH EXPERIENCE IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
A major priority and focus area for SFA is working with partners to expand, connect, and improve access to learning, internship, and volunteer activities for youth with an interest in sustainable agriculture. SFA offered three internships in 2008, and collaborated with faculty on college campuses to offer service learning opportunities for students. We are developing more opportunities for youth to connect with SFA, farmers, and sustainable agriculture. Stay tuned.

SFA GOVERNANCE
In 2006, the SFA board of directors made significant structural changes to strengthen its strategic direction and diversify its governance. The board created four at-large board member positions to allow individuals with specific and necessary skill sets to augment effective governance. The board took on two top priority internal goals: building organizational capacity and fundraising.

The SFA board is currently updating and revising our strategic plan. If you would like to explore leadership opportunities in SFA, please contact one of our board members. See list of SFA of MN state board members on page 29.
Dear SFA Members and Supporters:

Our first fundraising drive ended successfully on June 30 with a total of $6,387.75 contributed by 60 donors. This response to our first fundraising drive was incredible. Your donations provided support for important programs, including the youth outreach program, and supported improvements to our newsletter, The CornerPost, and our website, www.sfa-mn.org. We are calling on you to help again. This year’s drive begins with this announcement and ends on June 30, 2009. We’ve more than doubled our goal for this year. SFA’s work with the next generation of farmers is of vital importance due to the advancing average age of people involved in agriculture and in particular needs your support right now.

**2008/2009 Fundraising Drive**

- Our goal this year is $15,000, more than double the $6,387.35 raised in 2007/2008.
- Money from the first drive was used to support our youth outreach program as well as other programs. Your generous donations also resulted in improvements to our newsletter and our web site, essential pieces of SFA’s communication of activities and sharing of ideas.
- Much of our work is only partially supported by grants and other funding sources. Your support plays a critical role in allowing us to continue important programs, including an artisan cheese project that is being developed. The interest in and requests for our programs and information increase each year and we need more support from you in 2008/2009.
- There is an increased awareness by the public of the value of high quality locally grown food and the need to protect agricultural and natural resources. With your help we can play a bigger role in meeting the public demand for better food and increased protection of natural resources.
- Contributions are tax deductible. By contributing before the end of the year, you can take a deduction on your 2008 income taxes.

Your donations are urgently needed to support and expand our programs. Your support is especially needed now to offset any losses in funding that might occur due to foundations decreasing their support for sustainable agriculture. With your help, we hope to create a pool of regular donors who will sustain our efforts well into the future. Increasing public concerns about the unsustainable nature of agriculture in our country presents us with the opportunity to expand our work of advancing sustainable agriculture. Your support is needed to make this possible. Please contribute to the Sustainable Farming Association fundraising drive this year.

Gratefully yours,

Jim Tjepkema, SFA Fundraising Committee Chair
Mary Hanks, SFA State Board Secretary
Chris Barnier, SFA State Board Treasurer
SFA Membership & Sustaining Contributions

I am supporting the future of the SFA of MN with a Sustaining Contribution of:

$250 ____  $100 ____  $50 ____  $25 ____  Other Amount $________

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Farm/Business/Organization Name: ____________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________  State: _______  Zip: ________________

Phone: ___________________________  Email: __________________________

How would you like your contribution to be listed in the CornerPost?
____________________________________________________________________

Would you like to receive SFA’s bi-monthly Events Email? (If “yes,” please list email address):
____________________________________________________________________

Become a member...or renew your membership! Your sustaining contribution will accelerate our progress
toward a more sustainable food and farming system. When you become a member, you will receive the
CornerPost quarterly newsletter to “keep you posted” about happenings in sustainable agriculture and you’ll
receive discounts to SFA events.

SFA Annual Membership $30 ______

I designate that my membership goes to:

☐ Cannon River / Hiawatha  ☐ Lake Superior
☐ Central ☐ Lake Agassiz
☐ Coteau Ridge  ☐ South Central
☐ Crow River  ☐ Southeast
☐ Crow River  ☐ Western

Total SFA Support:
$ __________________

Please send a check payable to: SFA of MN, 29731 302nd St, Starbuck, MN 56381
You can also become a sustaining member & contribute online at the SFA of MN web site: www.sfa-mn.org.

Thank you for your support!
Why support the Sustainable Farming Association?

SFA Members and Supporters,

Although I coordinate the North Central Region Sustainable Ag Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program and I work for the University of Minnesota, I’m writing this as a private citizen – not as a representative of either one of those organizations. I think that SFA provides a valuable service to Minnesota agriculture and Minnesota farmers and that SFA is really looking to the future in trying to raise money.

We believe that granting organizations will continue to make funding available for sustainable agriculture, but since there is no guarantee that will happen, I think that it’s smart for SFA to raise its own money. If grant funding for sustainable agriculture continues to be available, SFA will be able to match grant funding and respond to calls for proposals in areas that meet the needs of Minnesota agriculture. If availability of grant funding diminishes, SFA will have some funds to continue its good work.

I encourage SFA members and those of you who support SFA’s activities, to respond to this fund raising effort in whatever way you are able to respond.

Sincerely,

William F. Wilcke
SFA Supporter

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plfarm@aol.com

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**Jim Tjepkema**
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jimkt@frontiernet.net
Meet Jim Tjepkema

Both of my parents came from rural agricultural backgrounds, but I was raised in the city. We had a fairly large garden and my mother did some canning and food preservation. I got a little experience with milking, haying and field work on my uncle’s farm during a few summer vacations. I got into agriculture through my interest in insects.

I studied insects at Michigan State University (MSU) in the Entomology department, which is in the School of Agriculture. While at MSU I worked on pest and disease control in the summer for the Michigan Blueberry Growers Association and did a Masters thesis on nematode pests of blueberries. Nematodes are not insects but they were included in the Entomology department. I continued my nematodes studies at Purdue University. I did basic research on them, but I also received some agricultural training. At this time I developed an interest in soil biology and the ideas of E.F. Schumacker on use of appropriate technology for rural development. I also began gardening and sold vegetables at a local farmers market.

I’ve lived in Clarks Grove, MN (near Albert Lea) since moving to Minnesota to work for a small private agricultural research and consulting company. Before I moved to Minnesota I was involved in agriculture through my work with a small crop consulting company in Indiana. Following my job for the consulting company, I start my own small crop consulting business in 1983. At about this time I also join the Seed Savers Exchange and have been one of the more active members of the group – I have a collection of “one kind” of rare vegetable seeds.

In my consulting work I started out with scouting fields for corn and soybean growers and later specialized in consulting with potato, carrot and onion growers. I’ve done a little work in county extension offices and in a conservation office. I also have a little direct experience with “big business” agriculture from doing quality control work at Hormel and even spent a few months working there as a production worker. Currently, I’m retired, but I work part-time as a substitute teacher in the Albert Lea school district. Writing has always been a bit of an interest too and I have started writing articles about some of the most active members of the Seed Saver’s Exchange. I also try to raise more and more of the food that my wife and I eat.

My wife is the supervisor of children’s mental health services in Freeborn County. I also have two daughters and two grandchildren. My older daughter is a civil engineer and my younger daughter is an art student at the Chicago Institute of Art.

I attended some the first Sustainable Farming Association (SFA) meetings held by the earliest SFA group, which was started out of the Land Stewardship Project office in Lewiston, MN. Shortly after that in 1988
some of the people in my area (south central Minnesota) decided to form their own SFA chapter and I became active in this new chapter.

At that time I had a small crop consulting business and some of my customers were ridge till corn and soybean growers. They belonged to a club where farmers, from both Minnesota and Iowa, shared information on ridge tilling. Some of these members were involved in starting our SFA chapter and some of the ridge till club members became active in sustainable agriculture in Iowa.

In 1988 the ridge till club took a field trip, which I attended, to the Dick and Sharon Thompson farm in Iowa. The Thompson’s made use of ridge tillage and their farm was one of the first to host large field days on sustainable farming. A few years earlier, around 1986 or 1987, The Rodale Institute started a project in the Midwest to support the educational work that Dick and Sharon Thompson were doing and to form a network of farmers from all over the Midwest that would follow the example of the Thompsons.

The first coordinator for the Rodale Project moved on to another job in 1989 and I was hired to replace him. I worked as the coordinator of this Rodale Project network for five years. I was also active in the South Central SFA Chapter and I have continued to be an active member of the chapter from then up to the present.

From my work with the Thompsons for the Rodale Institute and from other experiences, I have become an advocate for farm involvement in agricultural education and research and in farmers joining together to help each other make improvements in agriculture. My involvement with the Seed Savers is similar to that with farmers because it involves gardeners joining together to save and share seeds that are often family heirlooms. Of course, I am also interested in working with farmers and seed savers to reverse the destructive trends in agriculture brought about by excessive industrialization and other problems created by big corporations and certain government policies. Currently I am most interested in strengthening and increasing the work of SFA, especially at the chapter level. I think important to do more to develop our chapters because they are the link to work we need to do at the local community level and our best way of reaching out to other farmers and communities across the state. I also think that the work that Mary Jo (SFA’s Executive Director) does, with your help, at the state wide level is important because she can do things that the individual chapters cannot do or do very well.

I should also mention that I have been a volunteer for international agricultural work having done three short projects, 2-3 weeks long. The projects were done in three countries - Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and Bolivia. I enjoyed this work, which involved some direct contact with farmers and people who work with farmers in these countries through projects set up by ACDI/VOCA, a non-profit group that recruits volunteers and get money the US government to organize these projects and pay the volunteer’s travel expenses.

Grazefest closed the following day with two concurrent bus tours. One focused on grass-based dairy, organized by SFA, and the other on beef grazing, which was organized by the Wadena County SWCD.

After another successful year, plans are already being made for Grazefest 2009!

CornerPost Classified Ads

**SFA of MN members submit your classified ads free of charge to Anne Borgendale, CornerPost editor at communications@sfa-mn.org or call (320) 226-6318.**

**PASTURE RAISED CHICKENS:** Available now $10 each. Also taking orders for 2009. 320-815-1974 or GlenwoodPasturedPoultry@hotmail.com
mission:
we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.