Grass based dairying is the focus of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s Grazefest Minnesota 2008™ on Friday and Saturday, August 1-2, rural Verndale, MN. Grazefest starts on Friday August 1, at 9:00 a.m. at MiddMinn Dairy. Host farm families are Dan & Rosie Middendorf of MiddMinn Dairy and Kent and Linda Solberg of Seven Pines Dairy. Joel McNair, editor/publisher of Graze magazine, is the keynote speaker. Farmers and other distinguished experts will speak on starting a grass-based dairy, low cost parlor design, New Zealand style swing parlors, low-cost/low-labor dairying, selling your carbon credits, pastured egg production, forage production and economics, irrigated pastures and pasture tours. Featured speakers include Dan Middendorf, Kent and Tim Anderson, and University of Minnesota experts Dean Current, Craig Schaeffer, and Dennis Johnson.

Working parlor demonstrations on select dairy farms run from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. A concurrent evening program at England Prairie south of Verndale, MN starts at 4:30 p.m. with a reception in the indoor exhibit area. The evening program at England Prairie will include an interactive discussion focusing on current “hot-button” issues in grazing, and feature grazing specialists John Zinn, Lance Smith, Mark Hayek, Wayne Monsen, and grazing consultant Howard Moechnig. The evening will include plenty of grazing information, exhibits.

Grazefest continued on page 22

Inside ...

Minnesota Garlic Festival
Saturday, August 16th • Howard Lake, MN
...read more on page 10!
Working Lands continued from page 8

collaborate, set goals, strategize, and implement practices. They may also sponsor field days and workshops to share information and demonstrate practices.

Achieving conservation goals while providing opportunities for livestock producers has generated considerable interest. If you are contemplating improvements in your grazing infrastructure and practices, Working Lands may provide the boost you need to achieve your goals. Just be aware that Working Lands is far from a “program in a can”, so asking for the list of standard rules won’t be very useful. Instead, be ready to roll up your sleeves, join a team in your area, share your vision and goals, and help steer Working Lands to achieve its greatest potential in your community.

To find out more about the Working Lands Initiative trailblazing approach, contact Wayne Edgerton, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, 651-259-5224 or Mary Jo Forbord, 320-760-8732.
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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sustainable farming association of minnesota chapters .... there’s one near you!

Chapter Updates

Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

On Saturday, June 7th we hosted the first ever canoe trip farm tour. I’m not sure where the idea came from, but it was great. The trip started at Crow Springs Park where we fed the mosquitoes for a while waiting for people to arrive and get their boats in the water. There was plenty of water due to the recent rains. No chainsaws were required. The weather was perfect.

Twenty-four people made the trip. It was a different group than we usually get on our farm tours. There were people from Harvest Moon Co-op in Long Lake, MN, folks who are starting an organic farm near Watertown, MN, some people who found the SFA website online, a University of Minnesota Extension educator, a Master Gardener, etc. There were also 4-5 kids who went along on the trip. Diane Sander from Crow River Organization of Waters and Kerry Saxton, Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), canoed with us and talked about wild parsnip moving into the area, cleaning up the Crow River, feedlot issues, river bank erosion, septic system and drain tile problems, sediment and nutrient loads. We weren’t even off the water and people were making plans for a longer trip next year.

When we arrived at Nature’s Nest, Cathy Rose’s farm. Mary Jane Miller and her daughter Rachel had a spectacular local foods lunch laid out for us. The chicken salad was made with chicken from Prairie Produce, the bread was from the Collegeville Artisan Bakery, Mary Jane provided the rhubarb, berries, herbs, and the skill to make such a meal, Jerry Ford and Marianne Kreitlow supplied mint, garlic and asparagus, and Dennis Ingle provided vinegar. Mary Schmidt and River Bend Farm (my place) supplied the lettuce and radishes.

Crow River continued on page 4
Local eggs, milk, butter, cheese, herbs, honey, potatoes, wild mushrooms, and (beet) sugar were also used. Canoeing would be a lot more popular if shore lunches like this were always available.

After lunch we walked over to River Bend Farm and everyone got to hear about crop rotations, cover crop strategies, and all the details of growing vegetables on a small scale. One of the new things this year is planting pumpkins into crimped rye cover crop. It will be interesting to see if it works, or is just a weedy mess.

Jerry called ‘time’ after about an hour and we went back over to Cathy’s for a tour of her farm. Cathy has an organic greenhouse and landscape gardening business. We never even made it to the greenhouses as she concentrated on the agritourism aspect of her farm. Cathy and Don operate a Bed and Breakfast and host an Art Fair and Farmers’ Market in mid-May (where the Crow River Chapter of SFA had a booth). It is a beautiful spot.

The Garlic Festival is grinding its way forward. We met over at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Howard Lake, MN the Monday after the canoe trip and Irene Bender made sure that we were all using the same calendar, if not exactly on the same page. I think that Jerry is writing an article about the Garlic Festival, so you can read about it elsewhere in this issue (specifically on page 10).

We are trying to get as many SFA members as possible in for free. All you have to do is show up and volunteer for a few hours. If you contact Mary Raisanen (mraisanen@valcocompanies.com) or at (320) 286-6195 ahead of time, she will find you something more fun than washing dishes, bussing tables, and cleaning up after the festival closes.

Just in case Jerry forgets to mention it, The 3rd Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Howard Lake, MN on Saturday, August 16th from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. We’ll see you there.

**Western Chapter**

The Western Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA) is hosting the second in its series of “Farm Tour Fridays” on Friday, July 11th at Jim & LeeAnn VanDerPol and Josh & Cindy VanDerPol’s Pastures A’ Plenty Farm, rural Kerkhoven, MN. The event kicks off at 6:00 p.m. with a Western Chapter meeting. A potluck supper will follow at 6:30 p.m. After supper there will be a farm tour and time for socializing.

The farm tour will feature Pastures A’ Plenty system of pigs on pasture. They currently have young pigs. They will also showcase their grazing system and annual crop grazing of oats and turnips.

The VanDerPols changed the way they farmed after the drought of 1988. They wanted to take better care of the land, so they began to change their farming practices. They became involved with the SFA and the Land Stewardship Project. These organizations offered a chance to see how those changes were possible through meetings and workshops. According to the VanDerPol family they are SFA members because, “We like the support system it offers and being with others that care about the land as we do. We are energized after being with the group.”
Lake Superior Chapter

By Joel Rosen

Spring and Summer have been slow to arrive in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin, but thankfully most of us have not been plagued by the floods that have devastated farms and towns further south. We’re no longer hearing much about the potential for drought and low water levels.

Approximately 100 people packed into Amazing Grace Bakery and Coffee House in Duluth’s Canal Park enjoyed our early spring fundraiser, “Farmers Take the Stage.” The headliner, the Free Range Chicks, treated the audience to a closing act featuring topical farm songs and graced by remarkable a cappella harmonies. Some (maybe just the participants) are hoping that the jam that followed the program will become a regular event and that musically inclined farmers from other chapters will consider making the trip next year.

On April 16, friends and neighbors of Ken Peterson held an afternoon reception at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Wright, MN, recognizing Ken for a lifetime of contributions to farming and local as well as global communities. Ken was awarded the Sustainable Farmer Emeritus 2008 award during the SFA’s Annual Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN in February, but was unable to attend. At the reception SFA’s state board president, Joel Rosen, presented Ken with the plaque. Brooks Anderson and former state Senator Becky Lourey also honored Ken with speeches.

In April, long-time SFA member and vegetable and berry grower Shary Zoff broke her hip. With greenhouse work needing to be done in a timely fashion, Shary’s friends and neighbors responded generously with enough help to get her through this difficult spring. Thanks to this very real community, Shary has already made a couple of deliveries of greenhouse lettuce to the Whole Foods Coop in Duluth, and she should be off her crutches soon.

Much of the chapter focus for the next few months will be on the upcoming 15th Annual Bayfront Harvest Festival, now called the Lake Superior Harvest Festival and Energy Fair. Held on Saturday, September 6, the day has been expanded to include an early evening picnic featuring locally grown foods, sponsored by Slow Foods, and performances by local musicians that will continue until 8:30pm. SFA members from other chapters are welcome to attend this fun-filled day. Plans to continue parts of the festival on Sunday have been shelved, at least for this year.

Our chapter has a new coordinator. David Hopkins resigned May 1. Long-time board member, Joel Rosen, has agreed to fill in until January 2009.

Chapter President Loren Nelson is recovering at home after cancer surgery. We ask that you keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Southeast Chapter

By Edgar Hansgen

Due to computer and lightning conflicts this will be short. Our chapter just sponsored a ‘WEED FLAMING” demonstration on Ray Nelson’s farm, thanks Ray. Dennis Luttke from Wells, MN did a real good job for us. With all the good weather and all the haying going on, we had a real good turn out for this demo. We have a vineyard tour scheduled for late August - early September near Plainview, MN, maybe we’ll do a little sampling!!! There is also a possibility of having a haying event yet this summer, we’ll see how this develops. Our crops look pretty good down here considering the Spring that we had.

Central Chapter

By Sue Peterson

SFACM (Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota) has been working on two major items: distribution of the Annalid Coloring Book, and holding more workshops for the 100 Orchards Project. 2500 copies were made of the booklet, which is designed for first and second graders. Over 1000 copies of the Annalid Coloring Book were distributed to local schools by our members during April and May.

For the 100 Orchards Project, a grafting workshop was held in February in Pine River, MN and had 29 attendees. A pruning workshop held in Little Falls, MN in March drew 11 attendees. Another workshop/nursery tour is planned for mid-summer, and a harvest related event for September or early October. Work continues on the workbook/catalog. More farm tours are in the planning for this fall. Please contact Sue Peterson, chapter coordinator, for more information about all Central Chapter activities at azariahsue@yahoo.com or (320) 355-2980.
South Central Chapter

By Jim Tjepkema

At the last chapter board meeting, which followed our chapter’s annual meeting the following officers were elected: Jim Tjepkema – President; Dean Goette – Vice President; Wes Tennis – Treasurer; and Katy Wortel – Secretary. Dean Goette is a new member of our chapter board elected at the 2008 annual meeting. Jim Tjepkema will continue as the chapter representative to the state SFA board. In addition to electing officers, plans were also made to contact past members who have not paid their membership dues. The annual membership dues for our chapter are $15. Those wishing to renew their membership or join should send their payment to Wes Tennis, 23086 820th Ave., Hayward, MN 56043. Our chapter is currently operating without a coordinator to handle publicity, mailings, arrangements for meeting, and other duties that were done by chapter coordinators in the past. For the present the board will take over the duties of the coordinator and will call on chapter members to help with these duties.

The board is looking forward to helping with an organic farming field day that Ray Yokiel and Dennis Lutteke have organized, which will be held on their farms on Saturday, September 6th. Ray and Dennis hosted a very well attended organic field day on their farms last year. The field day planned for this year will be similar to the one held last year. The event will start at Ray’s farm with a farm tour and a presentation by Bob Yanda of Midwest Bio Ag. Then the event will move to the Lutteke farm for a lunch featuring organic food followed by a talk by Jerry Bernetti, a well know speaker on organic topics. The event will end with a tour of the Lutteke farm. At this meeting there will be opportunities to exchange information on organic farming and other topics that would be of great use to anyone involved in sustainable farming including both those that are organic and those that are not. Keep your eyes open for more information about this field day.

Keith Bakken, a founding member of our chapter, died on April 18th following a long battle with leukemia. Keith was a past President of our board and also served as the President of the board of a very active ridge tillers club that that played a big role in the formation of our SFA chapter. Keith was preceded in death by his father, Grant, who was also a strong supporter of sustainable agriculture. Grant was known for defining sustainable farming, as farming that is good for the land and good for the farmer.

As a farmer Keith made good use of ridge tillage to protect his land, grow good crops, and raise livestock on the hilly fields that made up much of his farm. He also sold ridge till equipment and other equipment including some that he designed and manufactured. Keith was devoted to his family and is survived by his wife Barb, who also helped start our chapter, and by his children and grandchildren. At his funeral, by his request, the grandchildren were dressed in the same colorful shirt that Keith was dressed in for burial. Many people remember Keith as a quiet person who usually had something interesting to say when he did speak up. I remember him telling the ridge till club that deer liked to hang out in his fields and he had to look out for the antlers they shed in the fields because these antlers might puncture the tires on his tractors.

Lake Agassiz Chapter

By Denise Hemreck

Well, things here in Northwest Minnesota, have been off to a slow start, probably like most of other areas. The cool temps and the recent couple weeks of damp and wet conditions certainly have the row crops at a stand still. Hopefully with warmer temps in the forecast that will change and crops will start growing. The grain crops look very good here so far, so we hope that continues.

Our chapter is planning on having a summer field day on Tuesday, July 15th. We encourage all members of the Lake Agassiz Chapter of SFA to participate in this meeting. The field day will feature: field tours and a tour of the organic high tunnel and gardens at the Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Crookston, MN. Mary Jo Forbord, SFA’s Executive Director, who is also, a registered dietician, will be speaking on nutrition. The event will hopefully end with a pig roast.

Well besides all of this and trying to keep up with the weeds in our crops, which is keeping everyone busy, we hope that everything is going well for all, and that we all stay safe and keep farm safety first. Have a great growing season!!!!
Grass-based Ag in Action at Prairie Horizons

Luverne and Mary Jo Forbord are hosting a day and evening at Prairie Horizons Farm, focusing on grass-based agriculture. You are welcome to attend the entire day, or any segment of the day without a fee, but you must pre-register by August 15th for the 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. bioenergy segment. Visit www.sfa-mn.org for updates, registration, and directions, or call Anne at 320 226-6318 for more information.

Prairie Horizons Farm, rural Benson, MN
Friday, August 22nd, 2008
A Whole-Systems Approach to Bioenergy
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Explore today’s hottest issues in bioenergy production from on-farm, on-the-landscape, and in-the-market perspectives.

1) What is the state-of-the-art in bioenergy production?
2) Can biomass cropping systems be productive and profitable while benefitting soil, water, wildlife, and rural communities?
3) How feasible and productive are native grasses compared to other sources of biomass?
4) What is, and will be, the bioenergy market for native grasses?

Tour highlights:

Productive Conservation on Working Lands ‘native grass for biomass’ field study; On-farm risk management strategy using warm and cool season native and introduced grasses, legumes, and native prairie in rotational grazing, multi-species grazing, and biomass production; 3rd crop demonstration plot tour; Goals, status, successes, and challenges of the U of M Morris and Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company gasifier projects; and Locally grown, in season lunch featuring delicious pasture-raised foods.

Speakers:

Mark Lindquist—MN Department of Natural Resources Biofuels Program Manager; Luverne Forbord—Prairie Horizons Farm owner/steward; Sharon Weyers—USDA-Agricultural Research Service Research Soil Scientist; Joel Tallaksen—U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center gasification project coordinator; Andy Zurn—Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company, Engineer; Jim Klein—Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Gary Wyatt—U of M Extension Natural Resources Educator; and Mary Jo Forbord—Sustainable Farming Association of MN Executive Director, Prairie Horizons Farm owner/steward

In partnership with:


Evening Schedule:

Pope County Working Lands Initiative Tour 3:30 pm to 5:30 p.m. Rotational grazing systems, multi-species grazing, cooperative grazing, invasive species control, native remnant prairies, public/private partnership innovation for more and higher quality grasslands.

Potluck Dinner 6:00 p.m. with a special invitation to members and prospective members of the Sustainable Farming Association—Western Chapter.

Prairie Horizons Farm Rotational Grazing System Tour 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Film Festival and Bonfire 9:00 p.m.

The Forbords rotationally graze Lowline Angus cattle on certified organic pasture, and sell 100% grass-fed Prairie Horizons Beef directly to customers. They are the 2007 Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society Conservation Award recipients.

For more information about Prairie Horizons Farm, visit www.localfoods.umn.edu/prairiehorizons
Working Lands Initiative: Something new for Minnesota’s Prairie Pothole Region

By Mary Jo Forbord and Wayne Edgerton, DNR Agricultural Policy Coordinator

Working Lands Initiative is a new cooperative venture that aims to support both agriculture and wildlife-based economies in Minnesota’s prairie pothole region. The prairie pothole region of Minnesota includes thousands of shallow wetlands known as potholes. The region is of high value for both agricultural and recreational uses. Agricultural and wildlife-based economies rely on sound land and water management. A healthy environment leads to a healthy economy that satisfies the long-term interests of both farmers and outdoor enthusiasts.

The “Working Lands” concept helps public, private, and non-governmental organizations improve conservation outcomes by working cooperatively with landowners to strategically identify priority conservation focus areas and practices. Agency partners work with landowners making a living from the land (thus the name “working lands”), and assist in implementation of the most necessary and appropriate land management practices that optimize benefits and minimize costs. For example, innovative tillage practices, crop rotations, and well-managed pasture systems not only increase farm income, but enhance wildlife habitat, and depending on location, may provide any number of additional benefits.

Working Lands Initiative brings grazing, farming, and conservation interests to bear on 4- to 9-square mile focus areas in the pothole region. Research shows that land management practices provide more benefits at lower costs when managed as 4 to 9 square-mile “complexes” rather than as scattered plots across the landscape. By working in close collaboration, agencies and organizations delivering conservation practice programs and tools are more effective and efficient, landowners can receive cost share on productive conservation practices and infrastructure, and communities can be involved in designing their preferred vision of the future. Locally based “Working Lands” team members

Working Lands continued on page 2

Areas highlighted are currently engaged in the Working Lands Initiative collaborations that match local conservation priorities with the natural resources base and the goals of cooperating landowners.
Introducing SFA’s Summer Interns

Whitney Prochazka Hohman

My name is Whitney Prochazka Hohman, I grew up in Roseville MN and recently graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN. During my four years of college I studied Biology and Studio Art. My art concentration was in sculpture and printmaking; some of my favorite artists are Van Gogh and Kiki Smith. I am also extremely interested in conservation and sustainable agriculture, so when I found the SFA/Minnesota Garlic Festival internship I naturally thought it was an ideal opportunity. My hope for these youth art workshop is that children will engage through art with one another and with the subject of sustainable agriculture.

Erica Dolven-Kolle

Greetings. I’m Erica Dolven-Kolle the 2008 Grazefest intern. I am from Saint Joseph, MN and recently graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris with a degree in biology and my pre-veterinary requirements. I really enjoy working with and being around animals. Besides my obsession with animals I have many other interests; reading, traveling, running, camping and outdoor activities in general.

The road that sparked my interest in sustainable farming is full of coincidences. When I was first considering vet school I only wanted work with small animals. I am a big fan of dogs and thought that I wanted to work mostly with them. However, something about the decision to work with only small animals didn’t feel quite right although I didn’t know why. As I continued my biology degree I learned more and more about increasing loss of habitat, biodiversity, and the effects of climate change. I began to wonder if I should take a more active role in counteracting these changes instead of waiting for someone else to handle the problem. This led me on a search of possible alternatives to veterinary school.

To dabble in the idea of research I took an internship doing research on Lyme disease at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in New York. I learned a great deal from the research component, but more importantly I met a professor who also farmed. On her system farm she was rotationally grazing sheep and cattle. I spent time on her farm and accompanied her on a few pasture walks. One pasture walk was led by veterinarian Anne Wells a lead veterinarian in rotational grazing. It was here that I began to realize that my dream of being a veterinarian and being able to help to make Dolven-Kolle continued on page 12
By Jerry Ford

You cruise in to the village of Howard Lake, unencumbered by stoplights, and as you turn towards the fairgrounds, you catch the first whiff of that unmistakable odor. You stroll up to the gate, just in time for the opening ceremony - “Throwing out the first bulb” - and you know you’ve reached Minnesota’s premiere festival for great local foods, quirky entertainment, fabulous chefs, and fascinating vendors, all in support of sustainable farming, vital rural communities and a healthy environment.

This year’s festival, always family friendly and fragrant, promises to be even more filled with the kinds of attractions one would expect at such an event: dozens of varieties of garlic for sale; experts on everything from growing your own wholesome veggies to wholistic health to honey to how to find local foods in your area to how to grow and store great garlic; old-timey kids games (and some for the grown-up kids, too) and an opportunity to build your own kite and fly it right there.

MN Garlic Festival is an “All Weather” event, with the ability to move indoors to the comfortable and accommodating buildings of the Wright County Fairgrounds. So, regardless of the weather, we’ll be “stinkin’”!

3rd Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival

Stinks so good!

The Food

We’re lining up an impressive roster of chef’s for the festival, including those returning from last year and some new faces. Though we can’t announce all of them at press time, we do know these:

LUCIA WATSON, owner of Lucia’s Restaurant and Wine Bar, whose name is often associated with the finest in local foods, will be accompanied by Lori Valenzaino, the sous chef at Lucia’s.

TRACY SINGLETONN of The Birchwood Cafe, which The Pioneer Press recognized as one of the top 10 restaurants that serve organic and locally grown foods.

PHILLIP BECHT, winner of the City Pages “Best Star Chef Experience in a Restaurant” award and head chef of The Modern in Minneapolis.

DANNY SCHWARTZMAN, renowned for “the best garlic bagels in town” which he serves at Common Roots Cafe, and who has taken charge of making the festival restaurant a ‘No Waste’ venue, with compostable cups, plates, and utensils.

JENNY BREEN of Good Life Catering, a chef and educator focused on local and sustainable food, and Resident Cooking Instructor at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

All these great chefs and more will be planning the menu and actually cooking in the kitchen at The Great Scape Cafe, the festival’s resident restaurant, all under the management of Greg Reynolds, an organic vegetable farmer well known to the chefs and co-ops of the Twin Cities. (A “scape” is the flower stalk on hardneck garlic plants.) Greg insists on sourcing as much of the food as possible directly from MN farmers, and is often seen buying right from vendors at the festival. Festival Director, Jerry Ford, had lunch at The Great Scape last year with WCCO Food Reporter, Sue Zelikson, who, between mouthfuls, raved about the menu.
Throughout the day, you can participate in up close Cooking Demonstrations - one of the most popular features of the festival - by the celebrity chefs, with SFA’s own Mary Jane Miller emceeing. Mary Jane, our official “Chef Wrangler”, is a chef in her own right who serves as a recipe consultant for Target and has worked with Schwann’s and Pillsbury. Due to overwhelming response to the chefs demos last year, we are moving them to the main concert stage, side by side with the entertainers.

Minnesota Garlic Festival also attracts an impressive array of food vendors, and all of them meet our standards of wholesome fair sourced as much as possible from right here in Minnesota.

Of course, it wouldn’t be a Garlic Festival without the garlic growers, including Dakota Garlic from the southwest corner of the state; Hawk’s Brain Garlic from Red Wing; Coffman Garlic from the southeast; Living Song Gardens from 5 miles north of the festival site; and the “Grandfather of MN Garlic”, Joel Girardin, with over 100 varieties in stock. If you store garlic properly (just ask these folks, they’ll tell you how), it can last for 9 months or more - so you can really stock up on some of the best garlic in the country!

**The Entertainment**

This year the 3rd Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival entertainers and celebrity chefs will be stars on the same stage, wedding music to food in a daylong gustatory celebration.

For all your favorite songs about garlic and “other strong forces of nature”, MARIÉNNE KREITLOW will be joined by her whimsical band, THE SHOVEL GIRLS (www.marienne.com).

Critically acclaimed author CATHERINE FRIEND (“Hit By a Farm”) will be reading from her new book, “The Compassionate Carnivore” and signing copies. (www.compassionatecarnivore.com)

Native American flautist BOBB FANTAUZZO

Minnesota Garlic Festival continued on page 12
Minnesota Garlic Festival continued from page 11 pushes the envelope of this ancient instrument, from beautifully simplistic melodies to exuberant jazz (www.bobbfantauzoo.com). If you were at the festival last year, you’ll remember the antics of ACTORS PLAYHOUSE OF ST. CLOUD, who will joust and jeer throughout the grounds and on stage with “The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) Part II”.

And you’ll be mesmerized by the Middle Eastern dance ensemble JAWAAHIR as they undulate to lively rhythms from rural Egypt to the glittering courts of the Ottoman Empire (www.jawaahir.org).

The LIGHT OF THE MOON band will wander the grounds playing an enchanting and eclectic mix of Southern Old Time and Rags, ‘extra-strength’ acoustic roots and dance music from the American South (www.lightofthemoon.com).

Though there will be no rain or lightning that day, there will be thunder as the MU COMMUNITY TAIKO DRUMMERS return with their highly physical Japanese percussion, combining martial arts and drumming (www.muperformingarts.org).

And festival favorite, STAR MICHAELINA, unveils her magic with an inimitable sense of wonder and easy audience rapport (www.magicianstar.com).

The kids get to become stars, too, when MR. GREEN’S RHYTHM BAND takes over the stage and “gets down” with instruments they will make from recycled objects. And MR. FUN will be on hand with creative outdoor toys for all ages in “The Spin Zone” (www.mystiktoyz.com).

**Minnesota Artists and Crafters**

Young artists from all around the state will be featured in the Youth Art Competition Exhibit, which will cover the walls of the Octagon Building Gazebo. See the accompanying brochure about entering the competition and the free workshops that we can bring to your youth group.

*This activity is made possible by a grant from the Central Minnesota Arts Board, through funding provided by the Minnesota State Legislature.*

Minnesota artists will display their creations: light-catching slumped glass from Kimberly’s Dreams; Calissa Designs’ custom skirts, bags, purses, fabric book covers; fair trade pieces from around the world by Lamprecht and Bajari; fiber art from the Minnesota Prairie Spinners guild; silver and gemstone jewelry from Sara Cura; and so much more.

**The Mission**

All this fun and festivity is in support of a worthy cause, as our goal is to put as many people as possible directly in touch with the farmers that grow great local food, and with the resources to support vital rural communities, a clean environment and thriving family farms. Come out to farm country and taste the bounty!

Dolven-Kolle continued from page 9 a positive change in the world could coincide very easily. I hope to become a veterinarian and a support for farmers who are working with sustainable agriculture.

Many people have asked how I came to know about SFA. This is another big coincidence. One of my classes had ended early so I had unexpected chance to stop in at the farmers market on campus. The sign for SFA caught my eye and I started chatting with Mary Jo and Anne. You can probably figure out the rest from there.

The Grazefest internship has many varied components. I am working on an urban sustainable farm. My on-farm activities include participating in a SARE and MDA sustainable farming research grant, working on the development of a combined animal/vegetable CSA, working with animals, building fences, and event planning. I am also supporting Grazefest 2008 and tracking events and making contacts for Grazefest 2009 which will be located in part on the farm at Prairie Oaks Institute. I am enjoying the challenges and accomplishments of working as the Grazefest intern and I am looking forward to the rest of my summer. The Sustainable Farming Association is doing important work in Minnesota and I am happy to be involved.
2008 Entry Form  (One Entry per Person)

Name: _____________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
City: ______________________________________________
State: ___________   Zip: _____________________________
Phone: ____________________________________________
Email: _____________________________________________

Age Group: (Grades are for 2007-2008 school year)
☐ Elementary School, grades 1–6
☐ Intermediate School, grades 7–8
☐ High School, grades 9–12
☐ Ages 18–23

Media:
Painting       Drawing       Sculpture       Photography       Print Making

Title: _______________________________________________________

I give the Sustainable Farming Association the right to publish a photo of my artwork (signed by parent if artist is under 18)

X _________________________________________________________

This form is available in PDF form at: www.sfa-mn.org

Contact

Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
Minnesota Garlic Festival
This activity is made possible by a grant from the Central Minnesota Arts Board, through funding provided by the Minnesota State Legislature.

Jerry Ford, SE4 of MN
Events & Youth Outreach Coordinator
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Sponsors

Third Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival
Saturday, August 16, 2008
10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Wright County Fairgrounds
Howard Lake, MN

Your Vision for the Future of Rural Minnesota

www.sfa-mn.org
Submit your artwork

On the theme: "What is your vision for the future of rural Minnesota?"

Sustainable family farms
Living in harmony with nature
Healthy, locally produced foods
The beauty of the Minnesota countryside
A new generation of farmers
New or alternative energy sources to run farms and small towns
Cultural and biological diversity in rural areas
How healthy, happy farming communities and small towns are good for everyone in Minnesota

Rules & Regulations

Publish & Pick up

With the artist's or parental permission, artwork may be published in the Cornerpost. Artwork may be picked up there by appointment. Capital Resolved office and may be picked up there by appointment.

Deliver & Pick up

Artwork postmarked by Friday, August 8, 2008 may be shipped to Minnesota Garlic Festival, 7616 25th St SW, Howard Lake, MN 55349. Artwork may also be delivered in person to the Wright County Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 16, 2008 from 8:00am-10:00am. Pieces will only be returned if the artist provides a return shipping container with pre-paid postage or if pre-paid postage is included in the entry fee. All artwork returned will be picked up at the fairgrounds on Sunday, August 17, 2008 from 8:00am-10:00am.

Awards

There will be one best-in-show prize and one honorable mention prize per age category.

Eligibility

Age 19-23
Intermediate School Grades 7-8
Elementary School Grades 1-6
(Grades as of 2007-2008 school year)

Categories

Painting
Drawing
Sculpture
Photography
Print Making

Rules & Regulations

Eligible for everyone in Minnesota:
Healthy, happy farming communities and small towns are good for everyone in Minnesota.
Cultural and biological diversity in rural areas
New or alternative energy sources to run farms and small towns
A new generation of farmers
The beauty of the Minnesota countryside
Healthy, locally produced foods
Living in harmony with nature
Sustainable family farms
Lake Superior Farm Beginnings:
Cultivating a New Crop of Farmers

By Cree Bradley

Lake Superior Farm Beginnings, a program of the Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association, is a farmer-taught educational training and support program designed to help people evaluate and plan their farm enterprises. Participants attend practical, high quality seminars, farm tours and skill sessions taught by successful, innovative farmers; engage in mentorship opportunities; and receive resource materials that broaden the foundation of support participants need as they begin and continue their farming ventures. Through the program, participants will:

• See a variety of sustainable farming practices being used on real farms.
• Develop lifelong friendships and support networks with both experienced and beginning farmers.
• Learn critical farm management and enterprise skills such as creative financing and innovative marketing strategies.
• Craft a tailor-made farm and business plan.

Lake Superior Farm Beginnings provides 34 hours of in-class training and multiple hands-on learning opportunities from October 2008 through August 2009. In-class sessions will be held at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, MN while on-farm sessions will be held at various farms located throughout northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. The program is designed for beginning farmers and for experienced farmers wishing to make a new beginning using sound business planning and sustainable farming methods.

Participants learn about value clarification, goal setting, Whole Farm Planning, business plan development, financial management, marketing, Holistic Management, on-farm observation and low cost sustainable farming methods. The Lake Superior Farm Beginnings program will draw a diverse audience: enterprises in beef, dairy, vegetables, poultry, maple syrup, Community Supported Agriculture, hogs, organic grains, cut flowers, meat and dairy goats and more!

How successful is the Farm Beginnings program? To date, more than 300 people have completed the original Farm Beginnings course taught by the Land Stewardship Project. Of those graduates:

• Over 60% are farming.
• Over 6,000 acres of land is owned, rented or otherwise farmed by graduates and 91% of graduates use conservation practices.
• 66% of graduates who are farming say their net farm income has increased since taking the course by $12,500.
• 59% of graduates have a business plan and 98% of graduates do financial planning.

Farm Beginnings works because it removes major barriers - it provides essential farm business information and firsthand knowledge from experienced farmers; it helps beginning farmers reach their goals through the development of a solid business plan; and it removes isolation and the sense that you have to make it on your own by developing a lifetime community of support.

As the demand for local, sustainably-raised food increases in the Lake Superior region and the need for rotating in the next generation of farmers becomes apparent, the Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association is proud to offer this comprehensive program that will continue to build the agricultural heritage of our region. To learn more, contact Cree Bradley at (218) 834-0846, email cree@lakesuperiorfarming.org or visit our website at www.lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Do you receive SFA's bi-weekly 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 and not miss out on any great events! To subscribe: email Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org with “Subscribe to bi-weekly email” in the subject line.
Book Review:
A Collection of Essays Honoring Paul Gruchow

By Jim Tjepkema

Thomas Dean recently edited and published a series of essays on Paul Gruchow, a Minnesota author known primarily for his writings about nature including publications that cover his observations of native prairies and his trips in the boundary waters of Minnesota. He was also known for his comments on social issues, which included much that relates to rural life and agriculture. Paul was a featured speaker at an annual meeting of the South Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association and I believe he spoke at one or more additional SFA meetings. Paul also suffered from depression and apparently took his own life with an overdose of drugs in 2004. All of the authors of the essays honoring Paul knew him and indicated that he was one the best writers they knew and that his life and publications had greatly influenced their own lives. The nine writers in the collection, titled “The Grace of Grass and Water”, include Carol Bly, Bill Holm, and Louis Martinelli. Martinelli is the literary director of the Paul Gruchow estate and director of the Paul Gruchow Foundation. An essay by Paul on naturalists is included in the book.

Gruchow was raised on a small farm near Montevideo in Western Minnesota. His essays occasionally drew on his experiences growing up on the farm. In an essay that sticks my mind he tells about the time when his mother gave up baking bread for the family in favor of providing them with fluffy white store bought bread. In his essay Paul saw this change in his families’ diet as negative, but admitted that many people at that time, I think he included himself, thought that home made bread was inferior to store bought bread. In his writings and in his life, Paul had a strong sense of right and wrong. Early in his career he was the editor of the Worthington Globe. A tribute to Paul by a reporter who worked for him in Worthington tells how he grabbed a farmer by the collar and escorted him out of the newspaper office when this man bragged about having been a Klu Klux Klan supporter.

The collections of essays honoring Paul provides much information about his great skill as a writer and teacher of writing combined with his profound understanding of nature. As a tribute to Paul, Bill Holm wrote about the problems associated with corporate exploitation of natural resources in Iceland where Bill lives during part of the year. I think Bill Holm thought that an essay about environmental problems was appropriate in a tribute to Paul who was a strong advocate for preserving natural resources. Carol Bly, who passed away at the end of last year, speaks directly about Paul’s concerns in her essay titled “Our Dead Colleague Who Did Not Suffer Cruelty Gladly”. Carol tells us that many people frequently brush off serious social problems by joking about them, but Paul never did this. She said that Paul was able to engage people in serious discussion of important issues that many people try to ignore. When he spoke at our SFA chapter’s

Paul Gruchow
(Photo by John Gregor, courtesy of www.minnpost.com)
annual meeting he combined a discussion of agricultural issues with comments on the need to address racism and sexism in rural communities. One of our chapter members told me that Paul’s presentation caused him to do some deep thinking about the issues Paul addressed.

Paul was a participant in the Sustainer’s Coalition that has done much to advance sustainable agriculture in Minnesota. I believe his writings and speaking contributed extensively to our understanding of the relationship between sustainable agriculture and the conservation of native prairies and other natural habitats. It is my belief that it was his intention to encourage people to show respect for life in all forms including the life found on farms and the wild life found in areas untouched by agriculture. I recommend the collection of essays assembled by Thomas Dean for the insights they give into the work and life of Paul Gruchow. Also, I think that anyone interested in conservation of natural and agricultural resources who has not read the books that Paul published would very much enjoy any one of the six books that he authored.

Those interested in the Paul Gruchow Foundation can write to the foundation at 33245 Highway 56 Blvd., Dennison, MN 55018 or send an email to lamartinelli @ msn.com.

Thank You SFA Donors!

Sixty-six donors contributed and pledged a total of $6,802.20

Together we reached our matching fund goal by our target date of June 30th, 2008

But we are not done yet…

Watch for this year’s fundraising kickoff in the fall CornerPost, arriving in your mailbox by October 1st.

Help us grow our base of support for sustainably produced food, fiber, and energy.

Together we can transform Minnesota agriculture for the benefit of generations to come.
Farm Beginnings Grads Work to Meet Demand for Local Food

On a recent spring day Karola and Rick Dalen were providing a tour of their Northern Harvest Farm near Wrenshall, MN when they stopped in front of a large bunker-like structure with earth piled up on three sides. It turns out that this 80 x 30 foot behemoth served as a community root cellar decades ago, back when Wrenshall farmers grew a lot of cabbages and other vegetables for Duluth-Superior. The Dalens are doing their best to prove that those days when the Lake Superior region was more self-sufficient in food are not just agronomic history.

“There is definitely the consumer demand for local food,” said Karola. “We’ve seen farmers almost hide from customers because they were being harassed by the high demand.”

This is the fourth year the Dalens have raised vegetables for a living in the Duluth-Superior area. The young couple - both are 28 - say the growing demand for local food translates directly into a need for more beginning farmers to raise that food. That’s why they are excited an initiative that helped them get their own operation off the ground, Farm Beginnings, is now being launched in the region. The Dalens had to travel six hours round-trip twice a month to take the Farm Beginnings course in southern Minnesota during the winter of 2004-2005. But beginning this fall, the course will be offered in Cloquet by the nonprofit Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association.

“If we commuted six hours to take the class and still thought it was worth it, then it’s worth bringing up here,” said Karola.

Lake Superior Farm Beginnings is the latest version of the Land Stewardship Project’s popular farmer development initiative. During the past 11 years, Farm Beginnings has provided seminars, skills sessions and on-farm educational programs to people of all ages from throughout the Midwest who are looking to adopt innovative farming systems that are profitable and good for the environment. As of 2008, over 300 people have completed Farm Beginnings courses in southeast Minnesota and western Minnesota, and 60 percent of the graduates are farming, making it one of the most successful beginning farmer initiatives in the country (Farm Beginnings is also offered in Nebraska, North Dakota and Illinois). Farm Beginnings graduates are involved in various innovative farming enterprises, including organic fruits and vegetables, grass-based livestock, Community Supported Agriculture and specialty products.

Now it’s the Lake Superior region’s turn to begin developing the next generation of farmers, said Cree Bradley, who is facilitating the program in the area. As with other Farm Beginnings initiatives, at the core of the Lake Superior program will be a series of classroom
sessions led by established farmers and other agricultural professionals from the area. Farm Beginnings participants learn goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative production techniques. The students are also exposed to real-world farming through a series of on-farm educational sessions and mentorship experiences.

Bradley said the time is right for a beginning farmer training program in the area — an informal food assessment of the region done a few years ago confirmed what the Dalens and other farmers have been experiencing firsthand: there is a high demand for local food.

“That’s when we realized, wow, we have more demand than supply here,” recalled Bradley, adding that Farm Beginnings, with its emphasis on sound business planning and innovative marketing, is a good fit for people who want to produce food for local markets. “Farm Beginnings graduates in other parts of Minnesota have done a great job of satisfying the growing demand for local food.”

Farm Beginnings is useful for people who have extensive farming backgrounds, as well as those who have little or no agricultural experience, according to Bradley. The Dalens fall into the latter category: they took the class after learning about sustainable agriculture as students at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

After graduating from Farm Beginnings, the couple worked with John and Jane Fisher-Merritt on Food Farm, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) / wholesale vegetable operation with a long history in the Wrenshall area. Like other CSA operations, Food Farm sells shares to consumers before the season begins. In return, the shareholders get a weekly delivery of produce during the growing season.

The Fisher-Merritts loaned the Dalens equipment and shared their expertise, and allowed the couple to set up a mini-CSA on Food Farm land. In 2006, the Dalens bought 33 acres near Food Farm and moved the operation there, which they have now established as the home of Northern Harvest Farm. Today, they have 56 members in the CSA. The operation, which is certified organic, also sells vegetables to Whole Foods Co-op and Chester Creek Cafe, both in Duluth. Future plans include growing the CSA to around 100 members and starting an apple orchard.

Since they did not come from farming, or even small business, backgrounds, the Dalens say the Farm Beginnings course’s emphasis on whole farm planning and good financial management was key as their own operation sprouted and grew.

“It was good to focus on where do you want to go with your life, rather than just where do you want to go with your business,” said Rick. “It puts you in the driver’s seat. It gives you the leverage to problem solve.”

And if Lake Superior Farm Beginnings takes off and begins producing competing farms (at least two other Farm Beginnings graduates are already farming in the region), the Dalens believe their Farm Beginnings training may become even more valuable in the future. When they took the class they learned a lot about marketing, but so far the owners of Northern Harvest have not had to practice much salesmanship in the traditional sense, given the high demand for local food.

“In 10 years there may be 15 CSAs in the area and we may have to change our marketing strategy,” Karola said with a laugh.
What is available for dairy farms that don’t want to expand their milking herd? Often we hear the mantra of “get big or get out” parroted by industry, agency and higher education experts. Many farms are perplexed at the changes necessary to get bigger. Many don’t have the labor force to handle getting larger and many don’t have the management skills to accommodate a larger operation.

Basically, over the next ten years, many of these farms will simply close shop and retire. What’s the point when all that happens to many farmers is they become a pass-thru entity doing all the work and taking all of the risk while the bankers and industry companies glean the profit. Top this off with a heavy dose of environmental regulation, I can see why many are fed up with the thought of staying in business much longer.

Even with the pessimism that exists in some segments of the agricultural industry, there are many farmers (mostly younger) who are looking into diversifying their enterprises. Every year there seems to be new niche opportunities for all farm types, not just dairy. Over this next year, I’d like to highlight a few of these farms and the clever things they are doing to make their operations sustainable for future generations. Believe it or not, there are solutions for many problems encountered on our path towards sustainability. It’s often nice to look at farms that are doing innovative things to allow the flexibility to stay the same size they are presently.

One farm I recently visited is looking into adding a U-Pick strawberry patch to their farm. They live near a moderate-sized central Minnesota city and they milk about 50 cows. They have three elementary-aged children to help out as the farm grows. Developing this complimentary enterprise could add several decades to the life of their farm and give their children multiple options once that time arises.

Another farm I visited this winter is certified organic and has a nice stockpile of grains. They were able to save up a bundle of money from their milk sales and are looking at adding a teenage son to the farm operation. They are exploring the best way to invest this capital into the farm to help this transition. A tendency might be to ‘blow’ it on more buildings and more cows, but given their position of power with crops and money in the bank, I recommended spending a fraction of those resources streamlining their existing operation to make daily chore management easier for two people. Namely, update their milking parlor and milking equipment to reduce the time spent milking and feeding. Why not transfer a little of this money into a savings of time spent doing recurring work. Then, slowly build the herd while keeping the best genetics and let the son build wealth organically a little every year as the herd grows.

A major obstacle for many farms is environmental impact. This holds true whether they are ‘sustainable’, organic or conventional. This gives me an opportunity to put in a plug for the new and updated Livestock Environmental Quality Assurance (LEQA) program. To-date, the Minnesota Milk Producer’s Association has been the driver behind the EQA program which targeted only dairy farms. It helped farmers take their environmental pulse and see where they sat in relation to state and federal environmental regulations. An assessment gets accomplished by a certified technician and a score is given in five functional areas. This gives the farmer a baseline metric to use as a measure to see if they need to improve in areas such as water quality, air quality or wildlife habitat, for example.

The new LEQA program is now administrated by Tim Gieseke of Ag Resource Strategies, Inc. Many of you are probably familiar with Tim from his days working for Carver County Soil and Water Conservation District and his consulting work with the Minnesota Project. He has been updating the EQA program to include beef and poultry operations as well as dairy farms. He is a friend of sustainable farmers and has been working on incorporating scoring for pasture-based livestock systems and what they can offer the environment. Please, visit his website at www.agresourcestrategies.com, or call at (507) 359-1889, for more detailed information on the LEQA program. Tim will be happy to help you ascertain
your environmental scoring.

Another problem that haunts dairy farms is a lack of good, consistent and well-trained labor. SFA has worked over this last year in developing a program to help dairy farmers with this problem. Presently, the Minnesota Dairy Labor Development Program is being organized by a consortium of organizations hoping to develop a system of training on-farm laborers who can potentially become skilled herdspeople and eventually farm owners. This is in its infancy and needs funding to continue development. The West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership has graciously granted monies to SFA to have the University of Minnesota’s Center for Small Towns develop and execute a survey of existing dairy farms to ascertain their needs for skilled dairy laborers and survey laborers who are interested in making dairy farming a lifetime occupation.

Potentially, a statewide pool of skilled relief milkers could be developed to help dairy farmers continue their operations and potentially develop some of these workers into skilled herdspeople who could start their own farms in the future. In some cases, dairy farms do not have a transition plan to pass on their farm to someone else. A skilled herdsperson could be just the right possibility for these farms.

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**Swan-Bee Honey**

Beekeeper looking for fields of buckwheat and sunflowers to place beehives for late summer and fall. Honeybees aid in the pollination that lead to increased production and help the honeybees prosper. Also available bulk honey at $2.00 a pound.

Call John at 763-498-4964

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**The Hedquist family at Green Pastures Dairy invites you to join them for the Grand Opening Celebration of their new “On-Farm-Store”**

Saturday, August 2nd 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Catch a horse drawn hay ride to see the pastured cows, pigs, and chickens, sample cheeses, enjoy the pig roast, with music and fun for all ages!

Go to www.GreenPasturesDairy.com for directions or call (218) 384-5413  •  2351 Bromfield Rd., Carlton, MN 55718

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Available July 2008!

at www.mda.state.mn.us or by calling 651-201-6012

Organic production and profitability data from 60+ organic farms

Underwritten by:
Grazefest continued from page 1

networking and a delicious locally-grown, pasture raised evening meal served at 7:30 p.m. (after the evening milking is done!). Exhibits will close at 9:00 p.m. Overnight camping is available for a nominal fee at the England Prairie site.

Grazefest activities continue on Saturday, August 2nd. After a ‘hot-off-the-grill’ pasture-raised breakfast at England Prairie, the Grazefest Minnesota Dairy Bus Tour will depart at 9:00 a.m. The tour will take you to dairy grazing systems in close proximity. You will hear from farmers and graziers, network with grazing specialists, scientists, conservationists, experienced graziers, and enjoy a locally grown and pasture-raised lunch. If your interest is in beef grazing, the Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has an excellent beef tour that will run concurrent with the dairy tour. The beef tour bus will leave Sebeka, MN at 8:30 a.m. on August 2nd. Contact Molly Costin with the SWCD at (218) 631-3195 to register for the beef grazing tour.

Grazefest Minnesota 2008 sponsors are: Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency of Minnesota, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education/North Central Region, Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, Midwest Organic Services Association, the University of Minnesota, Nature’s International Certification Services/Oregon Tilth Certified Organic, Minnesota Farmers Union and the Land Stewardship Project. Grazefest Minnesota™ is a registered trademark of Eating Fresh Publications. SFA is accepting sponsors and exhibitors through July 18th, so if you’d like to help us spread the good news about grazing, please call Mary Jo 320-760-8732, use the form on page 25 or visit us on the web at www.sfa-mn.org.

Pre-registration is required for all Grazefest activities. Scholarships and family rates are available. Save money with your current SFA membership and by registering early.

SFA hosts Grazefest Minnesota to promote the health benefits of pasture-raised foods, the positive environmental impacts of grazing, and the economic benefits of from locally grown, pasture-raised foods. Grazefest Minnesota highlights well-managed grazing systems that result in healthy animals and excellent living and working conditions for farmers and rural communities. Make plans now to attend Grazefest Minnesota 2008!
**REGISTRATION FORM**

Register for Grazefest Minnesota online at: [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org)

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<th>AUGUST 1ST EVENING DINNER AND PROGRAM at England Prairie</th>
<th>AUGUST 2ND Farm fresh grilled BREAKFAST at England Prairie</th>
<th>AUGUST 2ND DAIRY BUS TOUR**</th>
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*Total $$ Enclosed: __________________________

*SFA Family rate includes all immediate family members. Please list all names and ages of all family members attending.

**To register for the Beef Bus Tour contact Molly at the Wadena County Soil and Water Conservation District at (218) 631-3195 or Molly.Costin@mn.nacdnet.net

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**Please send a check payable to:** SFA of MN, 29731 302nd Street, Starbuck, MN 56381

Name(s): _____________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________ City: ___________________________ State: ______ Zip: _______________

Phone: __________________________ Email: _________________________________
# SFA Membership & Sustaining Contributions

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

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Name: __________________________________________________________________________

Farm/Business/Organization Name: _____________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________

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How would you like your contribution to be listed in the CornerPost?
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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
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**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](http://www.sfa-mn.org).

**Thank you for your support!**
Sponsor & Exhibitor Registration

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking.

SFA hosts Grazefest Minnesota to promote the health benefits of pasture-raised foods, the positive environmental impacts of grazing, and the economic benefits of from local, pasture-raised foods.

We invite you to partner with SFA by choosing a level of support:

- **Grazefest Minnesota Major Sponsor ($1000 or more)**
  The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture are Major Sponsors of Grazefest Minnesota 2008

- **Grazefest Minnesota Sponsor ($250-$999)**
  Land Stewardship Project and Nature’s International Certification Services/Oregon Tilth Certified Organic are Sponsors of Grazefest Minnesota 2008

- **Grazefest Minnesota Supporter ($100)**
  Minnesota Farmers Union is a Supporter of Grazefest Minnesota 2008

- **Friday, August 1, 2008**  
  4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
  rural Verndale, MN

  **Exhibit area at England Prairie (inside)**

Grazefest Minnesota 2008 starts on Friday August 1, at 9:00 a.m. at MiddMinn Dairy near Verndale, MN. Host farm families are Dan & Rosie Middendorf of MiddMinn Dairy and Kent and Linda Solberg of Seven Pines Dairy. Joel McNair, editor/publisher of Graze magazine, is the keynote speaker. Farmers and other distinguished experts will speak on starting a grass-based dairy, low cost parlor design, New Zealand style swing parlors, low-cost/low-labor dairying, selling your carbon credits, pastured egg production, forage production and economics, irrigated pastures and pasture tours.

After a day of experiencing grass-based agriculture at Midd-Minn Dairy & Seven Pines Dairy, join us as we host farmers and organizations working together to advance and promote grazing at England Prairie, south of Verndale, MN from 4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. The evening will feature grazing specialists, grazing information, exhibits, grazier networking, and a delicious locally-grown, pasture-raised evening meal on site. Please see attached map for directions.

Sponsors and Exhibitors are featured in publicity, promotional materials, signage and announcements. All sponsor levels include EXHIBIT space, a 2 ft x 6 ft table, 2 chairs, publicity commensurate with sponsorship level, and an opportunity to market your farm, organization and/or products at Grazefest Minnesota. Your complimentary registration includes both day and evening programs on August 1st, a noon meal, refreshments, and evening meal. Please have displays set up by 4 pm. Exhibit take down is at 9:00 pm.
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Contact SFA at 320-226-6318 or communications@sfa-mn.org for more information.

Please respond no later than Friday, July 18, 2008.

Thank you for your support!
Sustainability is being able to see that everything you do affects everything else you do.”

— Dan Middendorf

Dan Middendorf is a life-long dairy farmer, but he has spent the past eight years farming in an area new to him and his family: Wadena County. He has been operating a grass-based dairy just south of Bluegrass, MN since the spring of 2000, and in eight short years the new farm has become home. Dan is now a believer in the many benefits of dairying in Wadena County and in the community that has welcomed an unconventional, low-input style of dairying.

Midd-Minn Dairy is located on 700-acres of land in the Leaf River Valley. Dan, his wife Rosie, son Joel and daughter-in-law Maureen operate the farm, including a 170-cow milking herd. At one point or another all four of the Middendorf children have been involved with the farm. However, the farm is currently in flux as Joel is ready to start his own farm and Dan’s son-in-law is ready to step in as Dan’s farm and business partner at Midd-Minn.

Some may see Midd-Minn Dairy as unconventional because of its low input, grass-based system, but it may be the way of the future. However, it is also just the way that Dan likes to dairy farm. Dan aims to produce cheap milk, but also ends up producing high quality milk. He is able to accomplish this through several means. First, his cows have only outdoor housing, except for calves born in the fall. In the summer, all of the animals are on grass, moving about every twelve hours. There are 70-acres of irrigated pasture, which is important in this part of the state because of the sandy soils. In the winter the cows reside in a pasture/lot with a windbreak. In truly inclement weather, the cows do have access to an open shed. However, they typically only need it for about eight days per winter. The first time most cows see “inside” is when they are milked. Dan’s cows appear to be thriving with this housing system. Two-thirds of the milking herd’s diet from May to October is grass, and the youngstock eat grass exclusively. However, he is not afraid to supplement the cows diet with a little corn – he grew 80-acres last year.

The farm’s breeding program is designed to produce a short, wide, efficient grazing cow. The cows are a mix of many breeds, including Ayrshire, Normande, Milking Short Horns and Jersey, with a bit of Brown Swiss, Dutch Belted, Norwegian Red, New Zealand Jersey and Friesian in the mix. The result of this breeding program is a sturdy red and white cow that is resilient and long-lived. A twelve-to-thirteen year old cow is not unusual at Midd-Minn Dairy; this is much longer than the industry average. The farm uses labor efficiently, too. According to Dan, “We don’t get a lot of milk, per cow, but we get a lot of

Middendorf's continued on page 28
Middendorfs continued from page 27 milk for two people.” The numbers come out at about one million pounds per worker, which is appropriate for the low-labor philosophy of the farm.

Another variable in the low-labor equation is an efficient milking parlor. The Middendorfs have a 16-unit New Zealand style swing parlor. The milking time, from feeding the cows to washing the parlor, is only 1.5 hours for 170 cows. One of the secrets for moving the cows through quickly is that the only way they can get back to their feed (the pasture) is by going through the parlor. If the milking took longer than this, Midd-Minn Dairy would need to start hiring help.

Another key to Dan’s low-cost dairying system is location. The farm he grew up on in Stearns County, just south of Interstate 94 in Freeport, MN, now has commercial buildings and a baseball park. His previous farm in extreme southwestern Todd County was land locked because one farmer owned all of the surrounding land. The farm site also had stray voltage problems. That particular location did not hold much of a future for expansion or for Dan’s sons who wanted to farm. He looked for a new farm for five years and found his current farm in Wadena County through an advertisement in Hoards Dairyman magazine. The Middendorfs went to see it in January of 2000 and moved on Palm Sunday of that year. Almost everything except the house, out buildings and parlor moved with them. This resulted in many trips back and forth with a fifth wheel trailer, an experience that Dan doesn’t want to repeat. At the new farm, they used the existing parlor until they were able to build a New Zealand-style swing parlor in the winter of 2001-2002. The Middendorfs and the cows have been happy and at home on the new farm ever since.

So why operate a dairy farm in Wadena County? One reason is the area’s relatively inexpensive land prices compared to many other parts of the state. There is also an acceptance of animals and dairy – the Middendorf’s neighbors like seeing the cows out on pasture. Their township has five dairies and there are 70 dairies total in Wadena County. The roads are good, there are veterinarians who are willing to work with small dairy farms, and there are dairy supply stores, too. The county’s residents also seem to be open-minded about unconventional ways to dairy farm. Additionally, the capability for forage production in this northern county remains the same as further south, despite a growing season that is two weeks shorter for row crops.

Dan Middendorf’s low-cost, low-labor grass based dairy works for him and can work for others. It’s a system that will become even more applicable as energy and feed prices rise. While there are long days on the farm, especially this time of year, low-input dairies offer another benefit – Dan says that through their system, “Farming is our living, but not our life.”

Dan hopes that Grazefest Minnesota 2008 attendees will learn many things about low-input dairying, such as: how to inexpensively feed cows; that grass really does work, but that irrigation is important; ideas for fast, low-cost milking parlors; and examples of outdoor housing for cattle. To see Midd-Minn Dairy’s system in person, come to Grazefest Minnesota 2008 on Friday and Saturday, August 1-2, 2008. It may just change your life – or at least give you an unconventional outlook on dairy farming.

Garden Gnome Seeks Garden Diva

DWM, 49 y.o., 230#, non-smoker, 5’ 7”, rural Esko (near Duluth, MN) seeks S, D or WF with high self-esteem and good sense of humor for LTR and farming partner. Position comes with a new house, eventually. Um, I could use some help building it. I don’t have kids, but I like kids, and pets. I am starting a fruit/veg/flower/livestock CSA. Looking into winter harvest of hardy greens, terra preta, mobile hoop houses, plum orchard, meat goats and bunnies. Hoping to find another couple to live the dream with us. The “farm” is near a small city with lots of cultural opportunities, a big ol’ lake you can surf on (with a wet suit), a wild woods with cougar & moose sightings, a beautiful state park, has not too bad growing soil. I could relocate if you’ve got something better. I enjoy sharing canoeing, riding, xc skiing, growing plants and consciousness, Buddhism, community building, making music, cooking, dancing, & fulfilling your every wish. References from exsignifs available. Excerpts: “Fixer-upper with potential.” “He’s trainable!” Send replies to kellythegreenman@yahoo.com.
The unlikely dairy farmer: 
If Kent Solberg can do it, so can you

By Anne Borgendale

To see Kent Solberg now and to hear him talk about his love of dairying, you would think that he has been a dairy farmer his entire life. However, he only started dairying four years ago at the age of 40. You could call him an unlikely dairy farmer, but he is proof that if you really want to dairy, even if you didn’t grow up on a farm, there are ways to do it and be successful. In addition to being willing to work hard, Kent’s story shows that it helps to have a mentor, an accepting community and to realize there are low-cost, low-labor solutions to dairying.

Kent grew up in the suburbs of Minneapolis. He hated it with a passion and longed to be out of the city. As a young adult he was in the field of agro-forestry, then he moved into the fencing business and eventually got a few beef cattle. However, in 2004 Kent had to make a decision. The bottom had fallen out of the fencing business because of high steel prices. He faced the question, “What will you do now?” By then, Kent was Dan Middendorf’s neighbor and had witnessed the benefits of Dan’s way of dairy farming. He had discovered the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota and the Land Stewardship Project and had read Joel Salatin’s book “You Can Farm.” The regularity of a milk check also looked good. Kent came to his answer: he would be a dairy farmer.

He and his wife, Linda, were not originally going to operate a dairy on the farm property they had. They wanted to sell their existing farm and move to what they thought would be a more conducive site. However, the farm didn’t sell. Still wanting to dairy farm, Kent brought a few experts to the farm and they said that he could make it dairying at a certain size – so that is what he did. There was a building on the farm site where he could put a milking parlor, and they could add irrigation to their pasture. The cows would be housed outdoors.

That is how Seven Pines Dairy started. Today, the farm consists of 80-acres that the Solbergs own and 80-acres that they rent. There is a 45-cow milking herd. The cows are a mix of Milking Short Horns, Jersey, Holstein, Norwegian Red, Normande, Ayrshire and Brown Swiss. The farm is a conventional dairy, but management intensive rotational grazing is key to the farm’s success. Another important component is outdoor cattle housing. The cows are on pasture all summer and in the winter they have a natural windbreak and a bedding pack. The cows look good and sound good on this system. There is an extremely low calf mortality rate and Kent says his cows and calves have zero respiratory problems. The out-wintering also helps to increase soil fertility and provides efficient manure distribution. The parlor set up and fencing system also work well for Kent.

One of Kent’s primary goals with Seven Pines Dairy is to be an example for other people that would like to get into dairying, but don’t know how or where to begin. He hopes his farm can be a place of learning, production, hospitality and sustainability. Kent wants to show people that you can both make a living off a small dairy and Solbergs continued on page 30
Solbergs cont. from page 29 leave the land better than when you found it.

Like Dan Middendorf, Kent has found many benefits to dairying in Wadena County. Kent traveled most of Minnesota in his previous jobs and saw drawbacks to dairying in other parts of the state, such as: lack of dairy support and resources; lack of support for grazing; and development pressure near population centers accompanied by high land values. For small scale dairies, Wadena County offers reasonable land prices, good veterinary services for dairy, dairy supply stores, hardware stores, social acceptability, neighbors that dairy, implement dealers and service from multiple milk haulers.

While Kent is passionate about what he does, there have been some setbacks. The soil on his farm was previously over-used, so he’s had to slowly work on building up soil fertility. He is also somewhat land locked on his farm, which can pose grazing challenges. The past two years of drought have also made things difficult, especially on a farm with sandy soils and soils that have low organic matter. Finally, last fall he had a farm accident in which he sheared off his kneecap. Looking on the optimistic side of things, Kent is hopeful that he and Linda are past some of the most difficult years involved with starting a farm. However, he also acknowledges that the farm will always be a work in progress.

Kent is looking forward to Grazefest Minnesota 2008. He is excited to have people visit his farm and Dan Middendorf’s farm to see what is possible. According to Kent, “I spent a lot of my life being told that I couldn’t do this.” However, he has shown what can be done: “This is where we want to be and what we want to do. Grass-based farming has a future. More people should consider this if they live in a rural area, especially if they have access to land.” Kent encourages people to attend Grazefest and to “Come and see passionate dairy farmers in action.”
Conversations with the land:
A NEW CORN PARADIGM

by Jim VanDerPol

This originally appeared in Graze, and you can get a sample copy at PO Box 48, Belleville, WI 53508; graze@ticon.net; 608-455-3311.

Corn was selling for $5.60 per bushel locally here in western Minnesota in mid April. Soybeans were at $11.25, and soybean meal $355/ton.

Hogs, meanwhile, fetch $34 per cwt., which creates some interesting math indeed. Four pounds of feed per pound of hog sold is pretty standard for the industry. This ratio takes in the entire farm enterprise, not just the feeding/finishing part. So a 250-pound market hog, which is worth $85 on the market, represents 1,000 lbs. of feed.

In a somewhat older feeding regimen before the advent of synthetic amino acids in hog feeds, we would say that nearly 200 pounds of this feed is soybean meal, and nearly 800 pounds is corn. The remaining few pounds is a vitamin/mineral premix that typically goes for about $20/ton, or $10 in this example. Thus, the corn to produce a market hog is worth $80 and the bean meal $35.50. Add in the premix, and our $85 pig represents $125 worth of feed. (Our ultra-modern feeds with engineered amino acids would come in a few cents cheaper, but not enough to make a big difference.) Bad news, and a sure sign that commodity pork prices are going to rise substantially in the near future.

Those of us producing hogs in alternative systems should be able to do better, right? Not really. From what I see, most alternative hog production has always had to do with producing hogs in fewer and cheaper buildings. It has concentrated largely on capital cost reduction, rather than feed costs.

Many alternative markets pay at least 45 cents per pound; our meat business pays our farm 50 cents. Most of these pay prices are on the way up. Let’s assume 48 cents, which makes a 250-pound animal worth $120. This does not cover feed costs at current prices. At 55 cents we would have $17.50 per head to pay for labor and general overhead.

At 60 cents, we have $25 per head over feed cost. But it is not smart to think that we can survive by continually increasing our prices.

A competent alternative hog farm that knows to pasture the sows all year, with two months off for mud season, can reduce the gestating sow feed costs by perhaps 40%. In the above example, this will reduce the total feed cost to about $120 per finished hog.

This is not enough. It seems obvious now that the government has moved from supporting the big livestock integrators with cheap feed, to encouraging the fuel-from-corn lobby.

For hog farmers, the whole world has shifted. Compared to ruminant agriculture, it is not as easy for a hog farm to adjust to such a radical change. But we need to change, and in a big way. We need to think of the entire chain from sun to money, as the Holistic Management students are fond of saying. Even with our closely held marketing business, we can make better progress by thinking about the solar chain and trying to improve thrift and efficiency in production than we can by simply jacking up prices on the retail meats.

So we are changing what we do on this farm. When we started grazing 20 years ago we put the cropping side of the farm — about half our total acreage — into a rotation of small grains and hay. This produced winter cattle feed, some grain for the calves, and much of the sow herd’s ration. We have been purchasing conventional corn and bean meal for the finishing hogs, which are not sold as corn continued on page 32
Organic. We considered the purchased grain to be an investment in whole-farm fertility.

But last year we planted corn again. We manured 40 acres of third-year hayfield, tilled half in fall '06 and the rest in spring '07, disked twice, and planted late last May. We spent $30/acre for seed, and nothing on chemicals and fertilizer. It was a dry year, which is particularly tough on a crop planted to tilled hay ground, so in late October we were happy to harvest 98 bushels per acre from this field. We are confident we can grow 125-150 bushels with this practice in a more ordinary year. The fertility is there in the tilled sod, and the weed control is easy: we cultivated only once. The farm management system numbers for 2007 show seed costs for conventional local corn operations at double what we spent, plus chemical and fertilizer costs totaling $100/acre. So we are pleased despite our relatively poor yield.

Our land is certified organic because we graze heifers for a certified-organic producer, so we sold our corn at the organic price, and bought back conventional at a better than two-to-one advantage.

With this experience, I am beginning again to consider ley farming. We find it difficult to get oats and barley seeded on our farm, with its deep, black, wet and slow to warm-up grassland soils. We have been disappointed in the yields. It is also difficult to pasture for more than seven months a year, especially with dairy heifers. We rarely turn out before the first of May. We thus keep a significant number of acres (about 80) in hay in cover our needs.

If we rotated these 80 hay acres into corn and then soybeans, we could then return with two or three years of hay. The idea is that the grazing animals, with a little help from purchased feed run through the hogs, provide the fertility for several grain crops. Maybe the time in hay needs to be longer. The system would have to be learned, but it should provide about 80 acres of row crops each year.

To paraphrase freely, Holistic Management teaches the need to ask the farm what it wants to do. What this farm wants to grow, in no particular order, is grass, alfalfa, corn, Canada geese and pocket gophers. It is not so good with clover, grain and potatoes.

The key to profitability is figuring out how to get out of the farm’s way. One of the tools we need to do this is a good improved grass for our area that persists under grazing and partners well with alfalfa for hay. (Improved orchardgrass varieties do pretty well with alfalfa as hay, though there is always room for improvement. To my thinking, a grass added should improve quantity of feed as well as quality, and currently we are not seeing that. We simply do not have a good pasture grass yet. Orchardgrass is perhaps best in our dryer sites, but it does not form enough of a sod. All the others such as brome, timothy and canary grass put all their production into early summer and then go to sleep.)

There is a tight linkage in this (ley farming idea for us.) Enterprises lean on each other. Without the hay crop necessary for the cattle and the manure the hogs produce, the corn production suffers. The organic certification necessary for the cattle increases the corn sale income. The cattle maintain on corn residue for a portion of the fall. The corn feeds the hogs, or is swapped for other corn because of a price advantage. The hogs supply the meats company, which provides major employment so that more people are available part time to run the farm enterprises. This farm/business system provides many of its own necessities, and we start to close the loop and lessen dependence on agribusiness.

In the hog business, it is also becoming necessary to re-think capital costs in comparison to feed costs. It is difficult to argue against a seasonal system for hogs on a northern farm. Gilts are bred and kept in the winter for a spring pasture farrowing, and all sows are sold in summer to avoid breeding them for a fall farrowing and winter pig production.

Crops and pastures are hogged off by the pigs. New gilts are kept to start the process over the next year. The seasonal feeding system, especially if it includes hogging off, can really shine in terms of reducing crop machine costs.

One weakness is that the sows are sold in a low-priced summer market. Perhaps more importantly, rising grain prices dictate that it costs far more to bring a gilt to her maiden litter than to feed a sow for her second, third or fourth litter. About 1,260 pounds of feed, or $126 worth at 10 cents per pound, is required to take the gilt from six to ten weeks old to farrow. In comparison, a sow will come from one litter to the next in winter at a cost of 600 pounds of feed, or $60. This is a significant cost against the gilt system.

But farrowing multiple times a year, as we do, is also costly — particularly if we continue to think of both corn and sows to be kind of disposable, which we did in the cheap corn years. When you are feeding a sow that will

Corn continued on page 39
A Taste of European Artisan Cheesemaking

By Anne Borgendale

For eight years, Joy Hedquist has been creating farmstead artisan cheeses for Green Pastures Dairy in Carlton, MN. Aside from a few workshops and classes, she is primarily self-taught in the art and science of making cheese. This year, she decided to expand her cheesemaking knowledge and skill set through an apprenticeship.

After exploring her options in the United States, Joy concluded that an educational cheesemaking trip to Europe would provide her with the most readily available opportunity to apprentice with other artisan cheesemakers. For seven weeks in March, April and May, Joy studied artisan cheesemaking in Ireland, England and the Netherlands. However, instead of encountering major differences, she saw many similarities to her family’s farm and gained the experience and insight into artisan cheesemaking that she was looking for.

Green Pastures Dairy, Joy’s home base, is a small, grass-based, family farm. The operation includes 30 cows, an artisan farmstead cheesemaking plant, and a newly opened farm store. While in Europe, Joy found that the farms she worked at and visited were also small and family run. All of the farms were grazing operations that, at most, only feed a small amount of grain. It is generally acknowledged in Europe that the best milk comes from grass-fed cows. Most of the farms produce a raw milk cheese, and these cheeses can be sold shortly after being made. The law does not require that raw milk cheeses by aged for 60 days as is required in the U.S.

The marketing of the cheeses is also different. A number of European farmstead cheesemakers have farm stores. In the Netherlands – in an effort to draw more customers to the farm – the cheese is always the cheapest at the farm store and more expensive at other retail outlets. In Ireland, much of the cheese is sold at farm markets. Green Pastures also employs these marketing tactics: they sell their cheese at their new farm store and at farmers markets, in addition to restaurant, retail and internet sales.

After her time apprenticing abroad, Joy isn’t bound to any specific list of skills that she acquired on her trip. Instead, she feels that just being able to work side by side with skilled artisans benefited her learning the most. For instance, in the Netherlands the practice of artisan cheesemaking is passed down through families that have been making cheese for years. As a result of her trip, Joy was able to experience a small piece of this legacy. For her, it was nice to have someone to learn from for a change, to be able to ask questions and see and touch the cheese at each step. This was important because virtually all farms in the Netherlands use the same Gouda recipe, but each cheesemaker has their own way of making it.

Ideally, Joy would have liked to have completed a six-month apprenticeship instead of just seven weeks, as Hedquist continued on page 34.
repetition is important in refining cheesemaking skills. However, as an adult in the real world she had responsibilities to return home to. To make up for her lack of time, she took pages of notes and collected the email addresses of the cheesemakers with whom she worked. She plans on writing to them with her questions as they arise.

Joy isn’t currently planning on introducing new cheeses to the Green Pastures line. Instead, she is incorporating what she learned in Europe into her existing recipes. She won’t immediately know if her changes were successful because the cheeses she produced this past May are raw milk cheeses that need to age, and they won’t be ready to check until July.

Not surprisingly, Joy was eating cheese in addition to making it while in Europe because tasting is an important part of the learning process. There were two distinct cheeses that she particularly liked: a nine-to-twelve month Gouda and an English cheddar. The cheddar was quite different from American cheddar. It was white, firm (not hard) and wrapped in cloth. The recipe was also significantly different, impacting the taste. Compared to typical American cheeses, they were very flavorful – not strange or strong flavors, but just more flavorful. However, Joy believes that the American palate is ready for such a distinct cheese.

Despite the fact that she was learning abroad, language was not a barrier for Joy. She found that many Dutch speak English and speak it well. Her primary language challenge was understanding the thick accents in Ireland. Another cultural difference she encountered actually aided her learning. The Dutch farmstead cheesemakers she worked with were very confident in their cheesemaking skills and were not threatened by another cheesemaker. This camaraderie fostered a spirit of cooperation that helps all to succeed.

Joy also found that Dutch farm family she stayed with was very warm and open. They carry this attitude over into their farm operation through agritourism, in addition to artisan cheesemaking. Farms all over Europe are more open to having people visit them. Green Pastures also wants to encourage people to visit their farm. They hope their new farm store will promote this, as it is a goal of Green Pastures to bridge the disconnect most Americans have about where their food comes from.

Green Pastures is also considering offering farm and cheesemaking apprenticeships. This could be in conjunction with a college program.
MOSES Summer 2008 Field Days in Minnesota

MOSES is holding a number of organic farming field days this summer in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Field days are held at certified organic farms where experienced organic farmers will showcase their farming operations and offer tours of their fields.

The field day at Paul and Amy Primus’ farm, Melrose, MN on June 25th will focus on managing a forage-based organic dairy farm including crop production, animal health, rotational grazing, and the use of organically produced products. Paul and Amy Primus are Horizon Organic dairy farmers. They were recognized by Horizon as “National Quality Award Winners” in 2007 for running an outstanding dairy farm that produces exceptional milk. Paul, Amy, and their four children farm 120 acres, and milk a herd of 27 Jersey/Aryshire crosses. Paul believes big is not necessarily better and is developing a system that produces a satisfying living for he and his family without a lot of capital inputs. The Primus cows are outside year round, and are protected by windbreaks planted in the pasture areas. The water tank is on a wagon, moved from pasture to pasture during the grazing season. Paul encourages birds and keeps honeybees in his pasture, which improves the biodiversity of the environment and offers good insect control. Each of the Primus pastures contains a diverse mix of grasses and legumes.

The second in the series will be at the Jon Luhman Farm in Goodhue, MN on July 22nd. This field day will focus on soil building, crop rotation, and weed and insect management in an organic system. Different fields have different rotations depending on terrain, soil balance, weed pressure, fertility, and crop needs. Jon and his three boys live and work on their 580-acre farm with permanent pasture. The Luhman’s raise organic grass-fed beef and lamb and grow organic corn, soybeans, oats, wheat and forages. Using a diverse rotation and a variety of mechanical techniques for weed control, they produce feed for both their own livestock and for sale to other organic farmers in the region. Jon raises Red Angus cattle and hair sheep and sells both as breeding stock and grass fed finished animals. The cattle are rotationally grazed and moved every three days. Jon had been a grass based dairy farmer until 2000 when he moved back to his home farm and began beef production with his father. Moving to organic from a grazing system was an easy and natural progression. An experienced grazer, Luhman is a beef supplier for Thousand Hills Cattle Co. in Cannon Falls, MN. His farm is certified by NICS.

Join us at John and Jane Fisher-Merritt’s organic vegetable farm on September 20th in Wrenshall, MN. You will learn about their energy efficient root cellar, fall organic vegetable production and their season extending greenhouses. John and Jane love to share their knowledge with others and enjoy having a strong connection to the land and consumers. This field day is for all farmers interested in organic and sustainable vegetable practices. Since 1988, John, Jane, their three children and David Hanlon, have grown organic vegetables on their farm just south of Duluth, MN. Using organic methods and building a sustainable business are the hallmarks of this diversified farm. To meet the challenges of growing crops in their short northern growing season, John and Jane have developed improved season extension and storage techniques. These techniques help supply fresh vegetables to their CSA and the Duluth Food Coop.

RSVP for directions and to help us plan for the number of attendees (walk-ins welcome). Please RSVP for directions. Call or email MOSES at jessica@mosesorganic.org at (715) 772-3153 to RSVP or for more information.

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Hedquist continued from page 34 or in a less structured form. Currently, they are unsure about what form it would take, but Joy would love to see more cheesemakers in Minnesota. The demand is growing for more artisan cheese and cheesemakers are needed. For the benefit of all cheesemakers and consumers, Joy would like to see Minnesota’s community of cheesemakers grow. This would aid in the sharing of skills and the transfer of knowledge. Cheesemaking is an art, and a cheesemaker can always learn more.

Join Green Pastures for their farm store grand opening on Saturday, August 2nd at their farm near Carlton, MN. For more details, see their ad on page 21 or visit www.greenpasturesdairy.com.
**Summer Events Calendar**

For more details visit: www.sfa-mn.org/calendar. If you would like to add an event to the SFA Events Calendar contact Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

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**Jul 8**  Ken Meter Local Foods & Economic Development Tour – Willmar, MN. For more info on the Willmar presentation, contact the Willmar Area Food Shelf’s Christie Kurth at (320) 235-2641 or wafs@willmarnet.com.

**Jul 8**  Ken Meter Local Foods & Economic Development Tour – Clinton, MN. For info on the other events in the region, contact Land Stewardship Project’s Terry VanDerPol at (320) 269-2105 or tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org.

**Jul 8**  Ken Meter Local Foods & Economic Development Tour – Clear Lake, ND. For more info on the other events in the region, contact Land Stewardship Project’s Terry VanDerPol at (320) 269-2105 or tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org.

**Jul 9**  Ken Meter Local Foods & Economic Development Tour – Montevideo, MN. For more info on the other events in the region, contact Land Stewardship Project’s Terry VanDerPol at (320) 269-2105 or tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org.

**Jul 9**  Wheat Field Day 2008 – 3rd Crop Walk & Talk – Waseca, MN. For more info or to register please call Rural Advantage at (507) 238-5449.

**Jul 10**  Organic Field Day at Southwester Research and Outreach Center – Lamberton, MN. This is free and open to the public. For more info, visit: www.organicecology.umn.edu

**Jul 11**  SFA Western Chapter Farm Tour Friday at Pastures A’Plenty – Kerkhoven, MN. For more info contact Anne with SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

**Jul 14**  Peddling Pickles Safely II Workshop – Waite Park, MN. For more info contact the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association at (763) 434-0400 or info@mfvga.org.

**Jul 16**  Alternative Hog Production Workshops – Redwood Falls, MN. To reserve a spot contact the Land Stewardship Project’s Amy Bacigalupo at amyb@landstewardshipproject.org or call 320-269-2105.

**Jul 17**  2008 Sustainable Agriculture Field Day – Belle Plaine, MN. Learn more about the diversified harvest of integrated species. To confirm and for directions contact Joe Gransee-Bowman at (952) 873-3998.

**Jul 18-20**  Seed Savers Exchange 28th Annual Convention – Decorah, IA. For more info call 563-382-5990 or visit www.seed savers.org.

**Jul 20**  Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Field Day at Simple Harvest Farm – Nerstrand, MN. It will feature poultry beef, goats, sheep, etc. A potluck will follow the farm tour. For more info contact Kathy Zeman, (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

**Jul 20**  Intro to Permaculture Farming – Mark & Jen Shepard’s farm, Viola, WI & Dave & Erin Varney’s farm, LaFarge, WI. For more info visit: www.midwestpermaculture.com.

**Jul 22**  MOSES Summer Organic Livestock Feed Production Field Day - Luhan Farms, Goodue, MN. To pre-register and for directions to the farms, call or email Jessica Tupa in the MOSES office at 715-772-3153 or jessica@mosesorganic.org. For more info visit at www.mosesorganic.org.

**Jul 22**  2008 NPSAS Summer Symposium & Farm Tour - Wilcox Farm & Johnson Farms, Madison, SD. For more info visit www.npsas.org/event or call NPSAS at 701-883-4304.

**Jul 25**  Tour of Lorentz Meats – Cannon Falls, MN. To register for the tour contact Heather Flashinski at the Land Stewardship Project at (715) 289-4896.

**Jul 27**  Callister Farm Open House, Tour and Dinner – West Concord, MN. For more info email henhouse@clear.laks.com.

**Jul 28**  Alternative Hog Production Workshops – St. Charles, MN. Contact Land Stewardship Project’s Amy Bacigalupo at amyb@landstewardshipproject.org or call 320-269-2105.

**Aug 1, 15 & 31 2008**  Sustainable Agriculture Field Day – “Aerial Seeding” To confirm and for directions contact Andy Hart at (507) 876-2256.

**Aug 1**  Grazefest Minnesota 2008 – Verndale, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or contact Anne with SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

**Aug 2**  Grazefest Minnesota 2008 Beef & Dairy Bus Tour – Verndale, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or call (320) 226-6318.
Aug 2 Vineyard Establishment – Pemberton, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Aug 4-8 The 21st North American Prairie Conference: The Prairie Meets the River – Winona State University. For more info visit http://bio.winona.edu/NAPC.

Aug 5-7 Agripreneurship Pavilion – Morgan, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Aug 9 Small Fruits, Nuts, and Wetland Restoration – Belle Plaine, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Aug 10 Advanced Permaculture Farming Techniques Farm Tour – Mark & Jen Shepard’s farm, Viola, WI. For more information visit: www.midwestpermaculture.com.

Aug 15 Bioenergy Crops and Water Quality - Windom, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Aug 16 Minnesota Garlic Festival – Howard Lake, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or contact Jerry Ford at (320) 543-3394 or jerry@marienne.com.

Aug 17 Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Field Day at Loon Organics – Farmington, MN. It will feature CSA and produce. A potluck will follow the farm tour. For more info contact Kathy Zeman, (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

Aug 20 2008 Sustainable Agriculture Field Day – Madison, MN. Learn more about determining more environmentally and economically sound ways to deal with phosphorous levels in various cropping systems including organic systems with and without animals. To confirm and for directions contact Carmen Fernholz at (320) 598-3010.

Aug 22 A Whole-Systems Approach to Bioenergy - Benson, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Aug 22 SFA Western Chapter Farm Tour Friday at Prairie Horizons Farm – Starbuck, MN. For more info contact Anne with SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

Aug 30 2008 Sustainable Agriculture Field Day – Victoria, MN. Learn more about introducing cold-hardy kiwi fruit in Minnesota. To confirm and for directions contact Jim Luby at (612) 624-3453.

Sept 4 Miscanthus Day - Luverne, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more information or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Sept 6 15th Annual Lake Superior Harvest Festival & 3rd Annual Energy Fair – Bayfront Park, Duluth, MN. For more info visit: www.lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Sept 6 South Central Chapter of SFA Organic Field Day – Yokiel & Lutteke Farms. For more info contact Jim Tjepkema at jimkt@frontiernet.net.

Sept 7 Heritage Acres 3rd Crop Demo Plot - Fairmont, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Sept 11 University of Minnesota’s Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) Open House - Waseca, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Sept 12 SFA Western Chapter Farm Tour Friday at Moonstone Farm – Montevideo, MN. For more info contact Anne with SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.

Sept 13 Hazelnuts for Food and Fuel - Lake City, MN. Part of the 2008 3rd Crop Walk & Talks. For more info or directions contact the Rural Advantage office at (507) 238-5449.

Sept 20 Organic Vegetable Field Day – Food Farm CSA, Wrenshall, MN. For info Jessica Tupa in the MOSES office at 715-772-3153 or jessica@mosesorganic.org. For more info visit at www.mosesorganic.org.

Sept 21 Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Field Day at Sunshine Harvest Farm – Webster, MN. It will feature pastured meats. A potluck will follow the farm tour. For more info contact Kathy Zeman, (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

Sept 26-28 Tri-State Meat Goat Conference – Alexandria, MN. Brought to you by the Cooperative Extension Services of South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota Universities.
Meet Chris Kudrna

Growing up I was indirectly involved in agriculture. Both my parents were raised on farms in western North Dakota. I was raised in the Dakotas and Montana, where most of the small prairie communities exist to support local farmers and ranchers. My father worked for Farmers Union Insurances all his life and I spent many hours in Farmers Union classes after school and going to Farmers Union camp in the summer. In some ways the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA) reminds me of my early Farmers Union instruction: A strong farmers’ cooperative is both important and necessary to a healthy rural community.

My first exposure to SFA came through Jerry Ford, President of the Crow River Chapter of SFA. My youngest daughter has been involved with GREAT Theater at the Paramount Theater in St. Cloud, MN. Jerry often does sound for these shows and she has served as Jerry’s assistant many times. We came to know Jerry this way and learned about his farm and interest in sustainable agriculture. When Jerry heard both my wife and I were business consultants he tried to get her to consider serving on the SFA board, but had to settle for me. Fortunately that’s been a good thing for me – it’s been both a real pleasure and an honor this past year to have served on the state board and begin to get involved in SFA. I’ve been learning about the organization, its purpose and how it works. Right away the board assigned me to a committee that is working to improve the structure and operation of the overall organization.

Since 1994, I have provided business consulting services to both for profit and nonprofit businesses. The past five years I have done that work exclusively here in central Minnesota. In addition to my consulting business, I serve on the boards of two family businesses here in St. Cloud: KEEPRS, a state-wide provider of police, fire and EMS duty gear and St. Cloud Windows, a manufacturer of commercial windows.

I have also been involved for the past five years with the Anderson Center here in St. Cloud, both as a program manager and board member. The Anderson Center exists to help businesses in outstate Minnesota grow and prosper. Finally, I recently became a SCORE counselor providing advice and help to start-up and small businesses. Since farms are truly the original small business, in some ways I feel I’ve come full circle to my early Farmers Union roots. I’d be delighted to talk with any farmer that wants advice or help with the business side of his or her operation. There are several dozen SCORE counselors here in central Minnesota (mainly retired business people) that are eager to share what they know about how to run a business.

My family and I have lived in St. Cloud, MN since 1999. Several years ago we purchased 34 acres south of here and rent that land to a young, local farmer. Gradually I have been planting shelterbelts – 250 spruce trees went in two years ago just before two of the driest summers on record. And I have been exploring small-scale production of fall crops – squash, pumpkins and potatoes especially. With no electricity on site, my hobby lately has been studying solar energy and well digging. I’m eager for advice, especially on the well digging.

My wife of 27 years also provides business consulting here in central Minnesota and has served many years on the board of the Great River Regional Library. Our eldest daughter just finished her second year of a three-year
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Gestation about 300 days each year, wasting a pound of feed each day really adds up. This easily happens when we overfeed the majority of the herd to assure getting enough feed into the 30% that are smaller and timid.

This is typical of the kinds of choices we lower-input hog farmers have made, and with cheap corn it made sense, as a little extra corn saves a lot of capital spending. But at current corn prices, saving a pound per head each day would pay for a decent set of come-and-go feeding stalls in as little as three years. And if the fighting and bossing encouraged by the group-feeding system causes a dozen or so sows not to breed back or to go down, they will need to be replaced by those expensive-to-raise gilts. More and more, prosperity comes from a long-lived, healthy sow herd.

We need to get our calculators out. For years we used cheap grain as a cure-all. That world is gone. Now we must ask if we can save enough on sow feed or improve enough on longevity to justify a set of feeding stalls. We need to see if a sow is burning through a lot of high-priced grain trying to maintain herself in winter on a muddy lot, and check the price of some simple housing. We also need to improve in getting more pasture into her for more of the year.

And then we can carry the calculator over to the finishing area, and ask how long a 10% feed waste at these prices needs to go on to justify a new self-feeder. Our whole world has shifted, the cost-benefit ratios are different, and we had better be light on our feet if we are going to stay in business, no matter what our market.

It is doubtful that our hogs will be profitable this year. The cattle grazing (will be ok on the deeded acres.) But the organic cropping shines. This will keep changing as we go. But if we work at considering the whole, including the peculiarities of this farm, in the long run we will do all right.

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The purpose of the “Farm Tour Fridays” is to share information with each other, but it is also to support each other. As many farmers may know, it is easy to feel alone in rural America today.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their children. There will be lawn games set up for the kids. The farm also has a few “farm picture boards” that you can put your head into and have your picture taken, so bring your camera.

The farm is located at 4075 & 4077 110th Ave NE in Chippewa County (the address is for Kerkhoven, MN). Directions: The farm is 8 miles north of Clara City, MN on Chippewa Co. Rd. 2 or 1 mile south of State Hwy 40. From Willmar we are 14 miles west on State Hwy 40.

The two final “Farm Tour Fridays” for SFA’s Western Chapter will be on Friday, August 22nd at Luverne and Mary Jo Forbord’s Prairie Horizons Farm between Benson, MN and Starbuck, MN (see page 7) and Friday, September 12th at Audrey Arner and Richard Handeen’s Moonstone Farm near Montevideo, MN.
mission: we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.