The calendar says its SPRING today!
For twenty-four changes of seasons, my work life has revolved around SFA. My family might say it’s been more of my life than work, because I’ve truly enjoyed telling the story of SFA and its members, illuminating the diversity of sustainable farming all over Minnesota, and inviting all to join in our mission to “develop and enhance sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking”.

In 2005, the CornerPost carried my article on The Eye of the Storm that proclaimed “the Sustainable Farming Association has declared a state of peace. We are taking back our food, celebrating its whole, fresh integrity, and actively sharing it with our friends and neighbors….we welcome food citizens to a peaceful and satisfying relationship with sustainably grown food and the people who grow it. Join us this season at field days, farmers markets, online, and at your co-op. Join the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota in this growing eye of peace until the storm is quelled. Food—it’s in our hands, and we offer it to you. Eat and be satisfied, healthy and strong.”

Though the “storm” around us has intensified in recent years into an undeclared food war, SFA remains in a state of peace. We are in harmony with our world and its natural cycles. More than ever it is the right place to be, and every day more people are agreeing with us and looking to connect, not just as customers seeking sustainably produced goods, but to tap into our collective wisdom and learn about
More mileage per CP

Before recycling the CornerPost, please leave your copy at your place of worship, in a doctor’s waiting room, your workplace, your co-op, a place of business, or with a friend or relative. Be a part of spreading the good news about sustainable agriculture while helping to conserve our resources.

Do you need to renew?

Membership in the SFA of MN entitles you to receive the CornerPost newsletter and discounts on SFA Events. Use the form on page 22 or go to www.sfa-mn.org and join or renew your membership today!

CornerPost Ad Policy:

The CornerPost is the official membership publication of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

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

Here is our fee schedule for CornerPost ads for the 2008-09 fiscal year:
- $500 full page
- $130 quarter page
- $260 half page
- $75 eighth page

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

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

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

Thank you for your support of sustainable farming in Minnesota!
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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Chapter Updates

Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

Just as the last CornerPost was coming out we had our annual Chapter Conference at Gale Woods. About 75 people turned out on a raw January day to hear Will Winter, Doug Gunnink, Carmen Fernholz, Audrey Arner, Nick Jordan, Pat and Connie Lahr, Paul Red Elk, Paula Westmoreland, Dana Jackson, Jim Van Der Pol and Dan Halsey talk about different aspects of Restorative Farming.

Mary Jane Miller put together a few pans of delicious lasagna to anchor our traditional potluck dinner. All the food was great. Officers were elected. There was music, a keynote, afternoon sessions, and a snowshoe tour of Gale Woods Farm. Then we all went out and chipped an eighth of an inch of ice off our cars to go home.

The State Annual Conference was outstanding this year, but you already know that since everybody and their brother was there.

We have been having our share of bored meetings. Jerry thinks that I should put the minutes of our meeting in the Chapter Update. So here goes -

Crow River Chapter Meeting – 2/23/09
Jerry calls the meeting to order a little after 11:00 a.m. blah, blah, Bihl’s award, blah blah. Dennis Ingle reported on the strum and drang of the State SFA Board meeting. Garlic Festival Committee, blah, blah, blah. The rest of my notes are covered up by a very elaborate, nearly full-page doodle. Meeting adjourned around 2:00 p.m.

Crow River continued on page 4
Central Chapter

By Sue Peterson

The Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota (SFACM) Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, January 10th in Browerville. Approximately 35 people attended. They enjoyed an uplifting report by Tina Wheeler, Little Falls School District Food Director, about the reception of the Farm to Schools program there. The kids are really learning a lot about how food is grown, and enjoy helping in its preparation. After Tina’s presentation, the annual business meeting was held and board members elected. Unanimous ballets were cast to re-elect Chris Barnier and Kevin Happke, and to elect Mike Stine. Sue Peterson, chapter coordinator, gave a brief overview of the previous year’s accomplishments including: four Orchard Workshops, a fall harvest festival at The Farm on St Mathias, several farm tours, and hosting Grazefest by Solberg’s and Middendorf’s.

Kent Solberg, Jim Chamberlin, and Sue Peterson presented four seminars at Back to Basics in Pine River on January 31st. It was held at the Pine River-Backus High School in Pine River and was hosted by Happy Dancing Turtle. Sue conducted seminars on starting your own orchard and self-sufficiency gardening. Jim presented information on small woodlot management. Kent covered local foods – a farmer’s perspective. All of the seminars were well received. The central chapter also had a display in the exhibitor area promoting SFA.

SFACM, in conjunction with the Crow River Chapter, hosted a booth at the Upper Midwest Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference held in St Cloud. The 100 Orchards Project and the Garlic Festival were both promoted at the booth.

The first grafting workshop of the year was held in Pine River, at the Hunt Utilities Group campus. Frank Foltz taught 18 participants the principles of grafting in the morning. A local sustainable lunch was served, and then the participants got to bench graft their own apple, pear, and plum trees onto hardy rootstock in the afternoon. Evaluations from the workshop averaged 4.5+ (with 5 being the best). Plans are being made to have a pruning workshop in Pine River this summer.

The most recent grafting workshop was March 28th at Camphill Village in Sauk Centre. For more information on future events contact Sue Peterson (320) 355-2980.
Coteau Ridge Chapter

By Dorinda Speh

On December 7, 2008 we had our first Christmas party as a chapter at Sunny Ruthchild place. Our speaker for the day was Jeff Strock from the University of Minnesota Southwest Research & Outreach Center. He spoke about biodiversity, environmental impacts on the land and drainage systems. After the speaker we exchanged “White Elephant” gifts, and had a festive potluck dinner.

On February 7, 2009 the Prairie Coteau Chapter visited French Agricultural Research, Inc. at Lamberton, MN. This company is a private research, consulting and insect rearing business operated by Lee and Joann French. The business does research in efficacy, residue and bioassay thus providing research insects for chemical and seed companies and universities worldwide. They started in 1979 in the areas of agricultural contract research and integrated pest management. Then in 1982 they added the rearing of agricultural insect pests, mainly western corn rootworm. They later added other insect pests that included the European corn borer, southern corn rootworm, and corn earworm. Eventually in 1995 Dr. John Mihm developed a corn breeding station specializing in host plant resistance (field corn, white corn, sweet corn, and popcorn) and other traits (for example developing white corn for food consumption by the Latin population). Today the available insects and larvae include the western corn rootworm (diapausing), western corn rootworm (non-diapausing), southern corn rootworm, northern corn rootworm, European corn borer, black cutworm, tobacco budworm, corn earworm, fall armyworm, beet armyworm, wireworm, white grubs, southwestern corn borer, and Colorado potato beetle.

Another development was to breed for lines of corn that could provide natural dyes. It was over a decade ago when the French’s were exploring the insect resistant potential of non-GMO red maize they began to develop new, natural hybrid lines. It was three years into their research when they connected the chemical properties responsible for the maize’s red color to its inherent human health benefits. This is when they discovered that their red maize contained an extraordinarily high level of anthocyanins, thus a source of natural red dyes. Their discovery and insight promoted the Suntava Corporation, a company that produces natural colorants and functional ingredients for food, nutraceutical and cosmetics manufacturers. Thus Sayela (means “reddish” in the Lakota Native American tribe language) the derivative of Suntava Red Maize was introduced as an abundant source of natural dyes and antioxidants. Sayela as a colorant has a spectrum from red to violet. Sayela extract as a nutraceutical offers a source for antioxidants. Cyanidin-3-Glucoside (C3G), Peonidin, and Pelargonidin. For instance, cyanidin may have benefits for the prevention of obesity and diabetes. In the Journal of Nutrition, Dietary Cyanidin 3-O-β-D-Glucoside-Rich Purple Corn Color Prevents Obesity and Ameliorates Hyperglycemia in Mice, 133:2125-2130, July 2003. Also, the Suntava Red Maize contains starches, gluten, and oils that can be used for by-products. Other lines of corn being bred to produce natural dyes include blue, carotene, and green (in the early stages of breeding development).

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1246 University Ave W – Suite 333, St. Paul, MN 55104

Following our field trip to the French’s we had our annual meeting. We had the election of officers and they are the following: President – Don DeWeerd; Vice President – Sunny Ruthchild; Treasurer – Joe Rolling; Secretary – Dorinda Speh; and State Board Representative – Richard Rolling.

Our chapter agreed to send Sunny Ruthchild and Dorinda Speh to the Organic University about Advanced Fruit Production at the MOSES Conference in LaCrosse, WI. Later this spring Sunny and Dorinda will give a presentation about the information they gained about apples to the chapter members.
Cannon River/Hiawatha
Chapter

By Mary Ellen Frame

Our chapter assisted in hosting the State Annual Meeting at St. Olaf College in Northfield and we were very pleased with the success of the meeting. A new feature was the Friday night “Simple Soup Supper” and discussion of Eating Locally. There was a short presentation by a panel of producers, then it was opened up for a general conversation between eaters and farmers, which covered a lot of important points. There were lots of eaters there, enthusiastic participation and all sorts of questions and ideas emerging.

The number of people attending the conference and general enthusiasm was quite exciting. Joel Salatin’s rousing speech was full of memorable quotes, such as “Food ingestion is not a government event,” “No culture has spent so much money remodeling kitchens and doesn’t know how to find them” and “We have the responsibility to create nobility and sacredness in the act of eating.”

The Cannon River/Hiawatha chapter has tentatively scheduled monthly field days for the upcoming season, the third Sunday of each month, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., including a potluck. Come learn from the hosting farmers and bring a dish to pass. Nothing fancy—just sharing and learning. They will be:

- April 19: Callister Farm, West Concord, MN. E2 Processing Plant & poultry.
- May 17: Old Orchard Farm, Northfield, MN. Certified Organic garden & vineyard.
- June 21: Farm on Wheels, Kenyon, MN. Certified Organic livestock & crops.
- July 19: Finca Mirasol, Northfield, MN. Broilers & black turtle beans.
- August 16: Sunshine Harvest Farm, Webster, MN. Beef & poultry.
- September 20: Open Hands Farm, Northfield, MN. Market garden & hoop houses.
- October 18: Clinton Falls Farm, Medford, MN. Market garden & greenhouse.

For further information contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

South Central Chapter

By Katy Wortel

The South Central chapter held their annual meeting on Saturday, March 14th at Clarks Grove Baptist Church. They were pleased that a number of people new to SFA attended. Jim Tjepkema, Dick Carroll and Wally Dunn were re-elected as board members, re-joining the other six members. We thank them for their past and continuing service to our chapter.

Guest speaker Phil Crosby of Just Plain Talk led a discussion on food and health and the science of nutrition and digestion. The pH in our bodies is more important than we realize, and there is an optimum level for digestion. Contrary to what we believe, some problems are caused by not enough acid, rather than too much. Our fingernails and hair follicles give clues to acidity of the body as well as our general health. According to Phil there are five keys to a healthy life: proper attitude, pure air, good water, good total nutrition, and proper elimination. Most everyone agreed that we have more to learn on the science of nutrition.

After a delicious meal of homemade soups, breads and desserts, we listened to the afternoon panel of Lisa Lindberg from Amboy Cottage Cafe, Doug Hilgendorf of Whole Grain Milling Company, and Brett Olson from Renewing the Countryside. Brett talked about their radio show and directed us to www.localfoodhero.com to learn more. The panel spoke about the morality of food, not only as producers but also as EATERS, and the slow movement towards sustainability in agriculture. The successful community-based businesses of the Cottage Cafe and Whole Grain Milling give us hope for the future.

For more information on the South Central chapter, contact Jim Tjepkema at jimkt@frontiernet.net or (507) 256-4876.
Lake Superior Chapter

By Nicole Wilde

The Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association (LSSFA) held its Annual Meeting at the Peace Church in Duluth on Saturday, January 31st. It was an exciting day of learning, discussing local foods, and anticipating the upcoming growing season. Over 70 people participated in one of four different workshops, business meeting, soup and bread dinner, and keynote talk by Randy Hanson, “On Bee’s Wings: Growing A Community Food System.”

During the annual business meeting members reflected on the past year of LSSFA activities and approved the annual budget. Accomplishments included another successful Harvest Festival and starting the Lake Superior Farm Beginnings program. Losses include the passing of LSSFA founder and long time member Ken Peterson. LSSFA said goodbye to board members Katie Hanson and Paula Williams and welcomed new board member Barb Adams. We also were able to say thank you to LSSFA coordinator Joel Rosen for a fantastic job this past year. Joel has given a tremendous amount of his time and energy as a long time LSSFA board member, state SFA board member, and coordinator. During the business meeting, Joel passed the torch to new coordinator Nicole Wilde.

The Lake Superior Farm Beginnings (LSFB) program under the leadership of LSSFA board member Cree Bradley is already halfway through its program. LSFB successfully launched a 2009-2010 LSFB program with 22 farm units and 43 energetic individuals in attendance, ages 22 to approximately 60. To date, nearly six fall and winter months have been spent in nine classroom sessions developing skills in business planning, goal-setting, financial management, decision-making, marketing, record-keeping and Holistic Management. Soon the LSFB classroom will move out into the fields with six months of training continued throughout the spring and summer with on-farm field sessions.

By the time this newsletter reaches homes, LSSFA will have held its annual fundraiser - Farmers Take the Stage on Friday, March 27th. This family-oriented evening of music, storytelling, contests and entertainment features a show packed full of unique and unexpected talent from farmers and eaters who live throughout the Lake Superior region. This event is another great opportunity to stay connected to members during the winter months, while raising funds for the Chapter.

Finally, the annual Harvest Festival has been scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2009 – so mark your calendars. The committee is already working on developing new plans, as the event will expand to the entire Bayfront Park grounds.

Southeast Chapter

By Lonny Dietz

The Southeast Chapter would like to congratulate everyone on the fantastic State Annual Conference and thanks to all that were involved in making it a success. As some members wonder if we have out lived our need this seems to show just how much people are looking to the SFA for advice.

We also had a very good meeting that started with a panel discussion of farm transitioning to the next generation which was followed with a very informative talk about stray voltage and the effects on farm animals. We owe Edgar a big thanks for all the work he has done for our Regional Committee over the past three years as the chairman. We voted in a new board of directors and held our first board meeting. Our co-chairs are Jennifer Rupprecht and Lonny Dietz, the Treasurer is Ray Nelson and we are still looking for someone to step forward to take on the Secretary position. Other board members include Ray Mark, Roy Michaelis, Kim Olson, Vic Ormsby, Edgar Hansgen and Eric Klein.

We have not appointed a state representative at this time but will have someone in place soon. Our next board meeting will be April 6th at 12:30 p.m. and be held at the Land Stewardship Office in Lewiston. We will be brainstorming about visioning and goal setting for our chapter. We encourage other members to share their ideas with Jennifer or Lonny before the meeting and would like to invite you to join us if you can. Contact Jennifer at 507-523-2564 or ebgfarm@ridge-runner.com or Lonny at 507-932-5225 or londietz@aol.com
farming sustainably. Many young farmers and thousands of bright, energetic young people are sprinkled all over the Minnesota landscape and our public and private campuses, possessing every kind of needed skill and aspiration, eager to connect with us and with each other to reinvent our food system. It’s been a great joy to meet the generation who will secure our state of peace, making sweet the bitter as I leave SFA in their hands and yours. I have decided to step down as SFA’s Executive Director on June 30, 2009.

Every month SFA “meets someone new” in the CornerPost, to tell some unknown pieces of a person’s life that makes them who they are. In 2003 you met me, and my story revealed that “I enjoy farm life, the change of seasons, local foods and festivals, native prairies and local history, old barns and buildings, farm animals and wildlife, music and rural culture.” I’m happy to say that nothing has changed on my “enjoyable” list, but there are additions to my life’s list that are not as enjoyable, making it the right time for me to re-balance and create the space for our family to heal from the assault of cancer. Our farm and community will be front and center in our healing process, growing more fruits and vegetables, trading healthful foods with our neighbors, and reinventing and strengthening our local food system, one conversation and transaction at a time. You have taught me well, and I will use my education to heal and strengthen to the best of my ability.

In my first CornerPost writing in 2003, I foretold that “my greatest pleasure will be to listen to your (sustainable farming) story. My greatest accomplishment will be to help you tell it.”

I hope that I have told your story with all the authenticity, passion, and depth that it deserves, and that I’ve turned up the volume in a sufficient number of venues to meet the voracity of need for your message. I am filled with gratitude for the past six years, and especially for the people I have been blessed to meet through SFA. Peace to you my friends. I look forward to meeting you again, in another of life’s ever changing seasons.

Mary Jo and Luverne Forbord’s 21 year old son Joraan was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in December of 2008. Updates on his recovery are posted at www.caringbridge.org/visit/joraanforbord.

Cat Wiechmann receives award for SFA internship

Cat Wiechmann, SFA’s first ever farm immersion intern, received the Nancy Pautz Memorial Career Exploration Award for her January 2009 internship. The Nancy Pautz Memorial Career Exploration Award is open to students of all majors exploring vocation through a month long, off-campus, full-time, experience. The primary goal of this program is to help students participating in an Interim Career Exploration engage in substantive reflection on issues of vocation, lives of service and how a person’s career reflects one’s larger sense of self, purpose and contribution to society.

Cat is a senior biology and environmental studies major. Read more about Cat’s internship experiences on page 12.
Milk quality has been a topic of concern for both consumers and dairy farmers for centuries. Milk from cows, goats, sheep, yak, etc... has been part of the human diet for many thousands of years. Only in the last one hundred years, or so, has the debate of good versus bad milk been studied. Most of this questioning has been driven by the advent of modern germ theory and changes in farming processes that have increased the chances of “bad” milk getting into the distribution system.

Some might think I’m going to debate raw versus pasteurized milk. Sorry, I’m not going there. There are plenty of web sites that cover those topics from multiple points of view. I’m only interested in exploring some angles that are not commonly discussed by the general public.

More than one hundred years ago, our food distribution system was more locally based. We didn’t have the infrastructure to transport agricultural goods long distances in short time periods like we have today. This had drawbacks and advantages. Proponents of local food systems today will expound upon the advantages of buying locally grown foods. Freshness, local economy, and carbon footprint are often mentioned. One hundred years ago, if a dairy product had a pathogen problem, it was localized to a farm or farming community for the most part. The damage done was naturally contained by the limitations of the distribution system of the day. Milk seldom was loaded on a train and shipped twenty or even two hundred miles for consumption in a large city. The 20-mile radius was a primary limitation in distribution. Today, we can store and ship dairy and most any food product anywhere on the globe within a relatively short time period. If a food-borne pathogen gets introduced anywhere in the system, it can wreak havoc very quickly if not dealt with appropriately.

Milk is now shipped all over the globe. To increase shipping efficiencies, it does not all come from one farm, but is mixed at local creameries and pasteurized, then processed further and shipped en-masse into the distribution system. Someone pointed out that when one eats a fast food restaurant hamburger, one may be eating bits of meat from over a thousand different cows from many different feedlots. This has been happening with milk for decades. When the consumer buys a gallon of milk from a store, that gallon may contain samples of milk from many cows and many farms. To maintain a consistent product, the milk is mixed, pasteurized and homogenized, hence the common claim that “milk is milk”. In a large-scale dairy system with many farms, large creameries and widespread distribution, there isn’t much difference between one gallon of highly processed milk and the next one in the cooler at any given grocery store.

In this system, there are many levels of grading and testing performed to ensure the milk system stays “unpolluted”. The first stage of grading happens on the farm by breed selection of animal, feed used to feed the animals, milk collection system, etc. This is what gives us the Grade A and Grade B dairy farm designation. Anything not meeting the Grade B, or better, scenario is dumped or maybe fed to other livestock. This can be due to contamination from many sources. Anything not approved by the FDA and USDA that gets into raw milk, requires it to be disposed of. Antibiotics are one such contaminant. Organic systems are also primarily an on-farm grading system. The distribution and processing systems that carry this product need to be certified as

Milk continued on page 10
Milk continued from page 9
well to ensure nothing happens to organic dairy products that doesn’t meet the USDA NOP.

Given this, it is ludicrous to have a website, such as www.milkismilk.com, purporting that all milk is the same as any other milk. Basically, sites such as this one are there to promote conventional over organic or pasteurized over raw milk products. All milk is not the same type and quality. There are myriads of types and for a good reason. Any dairy farmer knows that Holstein milk is NOT the same as Ayrshire or Jersey or Guernsey, etc. Each of these breeds has exceptional milk quality and traits that can be used specifically for different products such as cheese, yogurt, fluid milk and countless other products. If “milk is milk”, then Grade A is the same as Grade B or even worse, goat milk is the same as cow milk. What the “milk is milk” proponents are saying is that the bulk milk that has been denatured and bottled is just as good, or better, than raw, organic, or rBST-free, etc. It’s a marketing battle more than science. You, the consumer and farmer, can do your own math on these battle fronts.

Dairy farmers are paid premiums on certain characteristics deemed “good” by the dairy processors. They can also be deducted if there are characteristics that are considered “bad”. Two common premiums are paid for protein and fat content. A well-managed dairy can make some pretty good bonuses on their milk checks if they pay attention to the details needed to keep these characteristics high. Inversely, if their somatic cell count is too high, they can be penalized and possibly removed from the bulk truck. They end up dumping their milk until they figure out what is causing their problems. Again, if “milk is milk” then why would farmers be paid bonuses or deducted because of these “quality” factors?

Not only is milk graded at the farm level, it is screened at the creamery for any of a myriad of common problems. Many tests are run on milk before it is mixed with another farm’s milk. For one, it is checked for contamination from antibiotics. Traces in the parts per billion will disqualify it from the processing stream. Bacteria counts are taken to determine if the farm has any major health or equipment problems that might introduce bad pathogens into the milk. Keep in mind that one hundred years ago, all of this grading didn’t really exist. It is a recent invention in history. Some of the bacterial tests include the Lab Pasteurization Count, the Standard Plate Count, the Coliform Count as well as the Somatic Cell Count. See www.iandalab.com for more info on these tests. All of these test for varying bacteria or bovine immune-system problems. Farmers receive paperwork from the creameries and testing labs that tell them how they’re doing in regards to these readings and what are acceptable levels to have. Sometimes farms can see seasonal increases and decreases in these counts due to environmental changes and the herd’s reaction to the weather, etc. They also can show the farmer that there is an ongoing systemic problem that exists in their herd or in their facilities or equipment. Improving these counts can be a maddening experience for farmers when cause and effect get confused and there are a million different factors that can play into these readings. In the last issue of the Cornerpost, I recounted the experiences of the Elsenpeters when they installed new milking equipment and saw their plate counts drastically improve. A recent study done by a German scientist analyzed cow and deer herds and found that they align themselves when grazing with the earth’s magnetic poles. When herds were within a certain distance from high voltage power lines, they get “confused” and no longer orient themselves in this manner. See http://news.nationalgeographic.com.

This begs the question of what influence stray voltage and proximity to power lines have on systemic milk quality problems on farms? Many farmers swear that stray voltage is the source of many milking problems. Cow sensitivity to electrical and electromagnetic forces commonly get rebutted by the Establishment. The word from the trough is this is a real problem for many dairies.

So, for the consumer, what really matters for milk quality? There is much polarized arguing about what is really healthy to consume. I can see and agree with many points of view on what is important to safe and healthy milk. In summary, if milk is collected in bulk and mixed with many other farms, transported for thousands of miles and stored for lengthy periods, I can see the merits of our present system of ensuring milk safety. Please, don’t confuse safety with healthy, though. These often are in inverse proportion with each other. More safety...less healthy; more healthy...less safety. I don’t believe that this has to be true, but it often is for many foods.
The SFA Annual Conference of year 2020 was a colossal success! The conference this year was held at the SFA’s new warehouse and office in St. Cloud. The first ever central office location for SFA was purchased a year ago along with two smaller locations in North Branch and Fargo. The St. Cloud location has an educational garden for students to come and learn about agriculture and participate in farming. There are two full time workers at each location - a coordinator and a communications/publicity director. Each building has three SFA chapters associated with it, and has been working as a central point to funnel questions, hold meetings, classes and other activities like the SFA state conference!

At the conference, we used compostable plates, silverware and cups made out of dandelion fibers provided by a local St. Cloud company. The food was outstanding and brought by all of us! About 80% of the dishes were vegetarian with some wonderful pasture raised meats brought by some of our favorite farmers. The Shovel Girls performed their hit songs and some new ones for the event including “I’ll Grass-Feed Your Beef”.

There were over 2000 people at the Conference with relatively balanced attendance from all the SFA chapters. According to records from 10 years ago, there is a 500% increase in people under 40 at this year’s conference! With the Young Farmer Bill passed in 2011, which granted farmers under 35 small parcels of land with financial help from the government, land has become more accessible to new farmers. We all remember in 2010, when the YESA (Youth Experiencing Sustainable Agriculture) created a petition about the inaccessibility of land for these young farmers, and therefore a crisis in the growth of small-scale farming. With over a half million signatures and collaboration with young people and politicians interested in sustainable farming and local food all over the states, the petition eventually became a bill, went to the senate and a year later, was passed. Because the house market had been so slow, development of rural areas started to plateau, so a large portion of the land given to these new farmers is land that was zoned for development but companies couldn’t afford to develop them. Farmers must present a strategic 10 year plan, practice sustainable farming philosophy and have a certified farm mentor to rely on for questions and issues. With this bill, land became available for young people who are passionate and serious about farming.

Also, a triumph for the SFA: The state of Minnesota presented an award to the organization for its ambitious and organized action to educate transitioning farmers over the past decade. Starting in 2009, a committee was started to create policy for local and sustainable food in Minneapolis. Initially, the lack of farmers on the committee left a lot of questions unanswered, but eventually the group was made up of a myriad of people who cared and had input about the issue, including farmers. One major problem seemed to be a lack of diverse growers in the area since so many were still planting commodity crops for mass distribution, so even if institutions like schools wanted local and organic goods, it was not available in the quantity asked for. At the same time cheap energy was becoming less available, oil prices skyrocketed. The end to cheap petroleum led to the decreased use of petroleum based fertilizers and pesticide and farmers began searching for alternate strategies. This is when many transitioning farmers really started reaching out to groups like the SFA to learn more about what it means to farm with a sustainable philosophy and also turn a profit. They wanted to know the weed control strategies and natural pest remedies. This is of course when SFA collaborated with LSP and MISA, to do the Circle of Life Project. The project worked with the state to connect buyers with producers providing locally grown food for schools and businesses. Knowledgeable, sustainable farmers from these non-profits volunteered to teach classes to these transitioning farmers. The non-profits catered to these farmers by bringing the sessions to their area. Other farmers also hosted visits at their farms and the non-profits provided funds for the farmers to do day visits on a bus to the SFA member farms. All the funding for the project was given by the MN Garlic Festival, who dedicates over half their earnings back to the SFA to allocate to different projects.

SFA in 2020 continued on page 34
The Adventures of the Farming Gypsy!

By Cat Wiechmann, Gustavus Adolphus College

My name is Cat Wiechmann, and I spent the month of January 2009 living and farming with SFA farmers. Some of you may have met me, and maybe some of you were spared. The goal of my internship was to immerse myself in sustainable farming so I could discover some new things and have some fun, both of which I did successfully. Through some sustainable agriculture work I did previously in Ecuador, sparked interest from my majors in biology and environmental studies at Gustavus, and my recent endeavor to start a sustainable, student-run farm at Gustavus, I was led to further explore the sustainable agriculture world. I specifically wanted to know who was farming, what they were raising and why they were farming in order to better understand the faces behind sustainable agriculture. I believe that tackling issues in the food system is an effective way to confront many larger environmental issues such as pollution, world-wide poverty and globalization, loss of global biodiversity, urbanization and health issues.

Diving into the world of farming is an absolute adventure for someone who has never been heavily exposed to it. I found it ironic that I had lived so close to farming my whole life in the Midwest, but did not understand it thoroughly. This month gave me the opportunity to live and work side by side with some of the most progressive, successful, and knowledgeable farmers in Minnesota. Farm terms that I previously never understood were interpreted for me – like that the word “cow” actually refers to a female that has had a calf, not just the entire species.

Every day was exciting and different on the farms. All this gave me powerful insights into the hard work farmers do, the obstacles they face, the close relationships they have with their land and animals, and the fulfillment they get from their work. Besides the physical labor, I asked questions and we conversed constantly. Sometimes we would stay at the dinner table for hours talking about gardening strategies, their farm and family history, agribusiness, government policies and anything else that came up. Throughout the month I also got to see how a non-profit functions and the importance of non-profits, like SFA, as a networking system, an educational resource and platform for action in sustainable agriculture.

Here are some stories from my travels around Minnesotan farms!

The Kreitlow/Ford Farm

My first farm! I would be staying with Jerry Ford for a few days so I could get on track before I became the Farm Gypsy for awhile. I was informed that on Sunday we would do two sets of chores at 6:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. To me, this sounded incredibly exciting - get up early and feed all the animals?? Ok! When 6:30 a.m. rolled around the first day, I was up and ready to go with my new flannel lined Carhartt overalls, Carhartt jacket, Carhartt hat and Carhartt gloves. I practically jumped when I looked in the mirror before I went out the door as I did not even recognize myself under all this gear, but I
felt some pride at how “farm girl” I looked. The cold air bit my face when we went outside because I didn’t have anything covering it. Jerry explained to me his and Willard’s routine – Willard is the man behind the whole operation and Marienne Kreitlow’s father. I followed Jerry around like another one of the farm dogs, causing him to step on me when he quickly changed directions. It was a little surreal to be quietly feeding these large animals in the dark on a cold winter morning when I would normally still be snuggled in my bed.

After feeding the heifers behind the house, we drove over to Kevin’s property (Kevin is their neighbor and the dairy farmer that owns the heifers at Jerry’s), where Willard and Jerry daily feed his calves and young heifers, and in return Kevin plows the driveway, lends tools and is a loyal, dependable neighbor throughout the year. My hands started throbbing from the cold, but the animals needed their food! I had my first experience breaking a hay bale and pouring grain for cows and was thrilled about it! The glow from the sun illuminated the sky a fluorescent pink and blue color. As Jerry and I walked up to the cattle, they eagerly stuck their heads through the bars to get their goods. The brightly lit milking parlor had a line of cows with full udders ready to empty their milk inside. There was serenity in the routine that morning.

We finished our chores and drove home. As I sat with my hot cup of coffee in both hands watching the sun continue to rise above the horizon, my straw laden overalls hanging by the door, I could not have been more satisfied with my first morning’s work.

**Pastures A’Plenty, VanDerPol Farm**

My time at Jim and LeeAnn VanDerPol’s was quite memorable. Not only did I enjoy their company and conversation immensely, but I was enjoying the work and captivated by all these noisy hogs. One afternoon, Jim turned to me and said “You feelin’ ambitious?” “Mmm,Yep” I answered. With a smirk on his face, he said we were going to clean out a hog barn. I shrugged my shoulders, “What’s the big deal?”

Ohhh, I found out the big deal. As Jim’s grandkids started removing the frozen layers of manure and hay, the most ferocious smell was released from what was under the frozen cover. I could hardly hide my reaction as I was scrunching my face and saying “WHAT THE…..”. The kids just stared at me like, “What is your deal?” I was so thankful when Jim came over with the Bobcat, requiring us to get out of the barn. I watched as he maneuvered around inside removing layers of pig poop and bedding. Soon enough it was time for his crew of workers to go back in and get what he couldn’t.

Eventually the grandkids all wandered back home, it was just Jim, me and that dang barn. My new strategy was to take a giant breath of air before entering, and not breathe until I couldn’t stand it, then I would endure the smell and steam of ammonia and pigs; then I would sprint out of the barn thanking the heavens for fresh air. I couldn’t believe it when we were done. I said to Jim, “That smelled”. He just laughed, “Yep, those barns sure don’t smell pretty.” When we got inside the house, I stripped off my Carhartts at turbo speed and got in the shower before LeeAnn even knew I was in the door. But, man, I actually was starting to feel like a farmer!

Farming Gypsy continued on page 14
Farming Gypsy continued from page 13

Rising Moon Farm, Melissa Peteler and Catherine Friend

I spent a lot of time with both Catherine and Melissa, but when it was work time, it was just Melissa and I. Melissa is wonderful, always telling a story or talking to an animal or figuring out some problem, muttering under her breath. The day I got home from visiting Lorentz Meats, I got directly back in work clothes and helped Melissa with feeding. I jammed myself in the tractor with her to ride over to the sheep barn. Melissa had snowplowing to do so she said “Hey Cat, how about you just go on and start feeding the sheep and llamas!” Ohhhh boy. These are living animals! They are not mine and what if I totally screw up?! When I was doing them with her the day before, I was not mentally preparing myself to do the chores alone! But, no one had asked me to do chores individually yet and I wanted to impress Melissa!! “Of course!” I followed the rations that each group of sheep should get. “Ok 23 pounds for the ram lambs, ok put the bucket under this auger thing and I guess I press this on/off switch, ok Oh my god! Oh my god! The corn is going everywhere, off!!! OK. Now there is 23 pounds of corn on the ground, not in the bucket. Good job, Cat. Try again. Clearly, I need to guide this pseudo tube made out of an old pair of jeans so that it does not take on a life of its own and swing around the room. Ok, much better, the corn is going into the bucket.” One by one, I filled the appropriate troughs and buckets and in filed the groups of sheep. While they ate, I grabbed a pitchfork and turned up their hay a bit (hard work!) and then filed them all back to their areas. When it was all said and done I had got some corn on the floor and overfed the llamas a tad, but everyone survived! I acted nonchalant about it to Melissa, but in my head I was patting myself on the back. Before going in, Melissa and I enjoyed a screech owl spotting in the barn while the sun was setting and the animals were full and happy.

Cedar Summit Creamery, Dave and Florence Minar’s

My first milking day! I walked over to the milking barn around 6:45 a.m. and met Cat and Jim who were to be my new mentors. As I stepped into the milking pit, I felt like I was in a different world staring at all these bony legs and veiny udders from a whole new level. Jim instantly showed me the process of covering the udder with the prep, stripping the cow (milking each teat manually) and then wiping them clean and attaching the milkers. The cows kicked and squirmed as they felt my inexperienced hands awkwardly squeezing their teats. I improved though, and after a couple rounds of cows, I was feeling pretty confident. Then I got to one cow whose udder had a big hole in the side. I asked Cat and Jim what the heck was going on. They explained that sometimes when there is some bad Mastitis, the udders will rupture just to relieve some of the junk and that the cow was fine. Then Cat proceeded to push underneath her udder, causing white, curdled, smelly milk to explode out the side. Though this was pretty nasty, I was hanging in there, but then two cows on either side of this cow started pooping, and before I knew it, half my face was covered in cow manure. To add to this milk-poop mayhem, the barn cats came up and started slurping up the Mastitis milk curds. Wow, I thought, now we are seriously getting down and dirty on this farm. Jim and Cat laughed at the expression on my poop covered face. I laughed too, and then I returned to milk with them every day I was there. Who would miss that excitement?!

**I want to thank the SFA for giving me the opportunity to do this internship and provide funds for me to attend two different conferences, the Crow River Conference and the Minnesota Organic Conference. I also want to thank all the farmers I met, whether I lived with you, visited you or just met you; I cannot explain in brief all that I have learned and benefited from your knowledge and experience. Now that this knowledge and enrichment is in my hands, I promise I will do something valuable with it!

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. Don’t miss out on any great events! To subscribe: email Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org with “Subscribe to biweekly email” in the subject line.
Ask not what you can do for your pig, but what your pig can do for you

Applying the practices of Joel Salatin to the prairie

By Jim VanDerPol

The genius of Joel Salatin’s farming is the evidence it shows of careful observation of nature and his attempts to frame the farm on natural linkages. His presentation about pigs at SFA’s Annual Conference on Saturday, February 21st needs to be understood in this context in order for us and others from other geographies and climates to apply and profit from his insights. Salatin’s Polyface farm is a grass farm linked with a forest in a wooded/savannah geography. As I understand it, the first linkage Joel pursued was between grazing cattle and chickens, which symbiosis still forms the core of the farm. The pigs were added to the mix both because the customer base called for pork and because Joel saw a use for the rooting omnivore in lessening work and dependence on fossil fuel in dealing with the winter cattle pack.

Joel’s pig presentation started with just this connection, showing how he baits the cattle pack all winter with corn in lessening amounts as the winter goes by. The pigs are acquired in the spring and taken to the pack when the cattle leave it for the pasture. Joel showed how they are penned in a relatively small area in small groups and left to feed themselves by digging out the corn and other nutrients from the cattle manure. The pigs are pretty well grown before coming into the work, at about 150-200 lb and are expected to maintain and grow on what they find.

It is useful to consider here that the idea of pigs running with cattle is not new. It is, rather, a pretty common kind of farmer knowledge, at least in the group of retired farmers. But what is different here is the spreading of the corn as bait rather than feeding it to the cattle and the timing of the two species so that they follow one another rather than living together. The reason for not feeding grain to the cattle is obvious to anyone up on the “ruminant as grass eaters” thinking, though some still do grain their cowherds through the winter. The biggest difference is really the point of the operation. The hogs must work on the manure. That is why they follow the cattle. Joel is considering the importance of the manure in his farming, the simplest and most economical way of handling it, of preparing it for spreading and improving its usefulness to the land. The pork produced is pretty much a byproduct and a very nice one at that. For a few dollars invested in corn, he gets composted easy to manage manure, and a pretty valuable product (pork) to sell. A pretty idea indeed.

Next we saw how Joel is converting trees and brush into useable pasture by break grazing/feeding pigs across an area for several seasons in a row, and were able to see the conversion of brush into a savannah like vista which looked pretty inviting to anyone used to grass and

Pigs continued on page 16
Pigs continued from page 15
grazing animals, which is its intended use, long term. As
a livestock farmer myself, I especially liked how he built
a “driver” into the operation in that he sets out one ton of
feed at a time for a certain number of hogs on a certain
sized paddock and makes it a rule that when the feed is
gone, it is time to move the hogs. I like this because I
know the need of necessities in kicking certain operations
into gear (if it can be put off it will be, especially when
we are busy) and because the amount of feed consumed,
which is necessarily linked with the size and appetite of
the pigs and the availability of grass, is then a control on
amount and to a certain extent, time of animal impact.
There is a sense in which this kind of rule can be used
to delegate a certain amount of farm management to the
situation itself.

Joel finished with a few slides on the newest part
of his hog farming efforts which involve fencing large
wooded areas off for finishing of the pigs in the fall. The
idea here is that the pork responds to mast feeding, and
that the stands of oak will benefit in terms of their health
from a certain level of regular animal disturbance. He is
hoping to bring back better acorn production while using
the existing production along with various roots and
other tidbits that nothing is better than a hog at finding
to provide a marketable product from the animals doing
the work. I had the feeling here that part of this effort
was pretty theoretical yet and that there is a certain need
to see how it works out. Nevertheless, it was obvious
that the thinking had been a part of the effort from the
beginning, that the process was going along by careful
observation of what was happening and by attempts to
understand that in terms of what would be happening if
the hogs were not there.

Joel said nothing about the sow or female side of
the business. Little of what he said of the use of pigs to
control trees and brush is going to be directly applicable
to a farm like mine where trees only grow with the
utmost of human care and patience. Pigs cannot be fed
on acorns on land that refuses to grow oak trees. They
probably won’t do well on hickory nuts or locust pods
here either.

But my farm grows grass like a pig produces dandruff.
My farm too, is a grass farm and one of the grasses it
produces on a few acres most years is corn, which pigs
love. This farm is diversified, home to two other species
besides the hogs. The female side of the hog business
is potentially the kind of profit center that Joel has with
his beef/chicken symbiosis, or that a grass dairy has with
milk. The soils here are deep, not at all droughty and the
surface of potential production through grazing on deep
prairie soils has not even been scratched.

So that is the point. To listen to Joel Salatin’s
presentation on hogs for specific practices, and take them
home to apply on a prairie farm would be disaster. But
to listen to the same presentation for ideas, and for the
attitude about seeing what nature has going and thinking
about framing the farm around those principles, that is
the point. I came home with much from that session,
some of which I had already thought and some not. The
basic challenge for any of us prairie farmers is the same
as that facing Joel on his savannah. We should look
at the farm and then the hog, that sturdy opinionated
omnivore capable of reproducing itself fifteen times
in one year, and ask what it can do and wants to do for
us and the land. Then we should let it do that without
interfering too much. It is all about the approach and
attitude. That is what brings about development of the
proper and sustainable practices.

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All about SFA: Who we are, What we do

By Mary Jo Forbord

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota is a nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1988. SFA’s mission is to develop and enhance sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking. SFA provides year-round high quality, farm and family-centered programs, tours, field days and events to educate and demonstrate the depth and diversity of sustainable farming systems.

SFA Annual Conferences

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

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

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

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

In 2008, Local Foods: The Next Step featured advances in local food production, distribution, and marketing.

In 2009, Sustaining our Farms: Pastures, Produce and Perseverance at St. Olaf College in Northfield broke all previous attendance records.

Grazefest Minnesota

Grazefest Minnesota brings farmers, graziers, grazing specialists, chefs, processors, conservationists, and consumers together for learning and information exchange, grazing systems tours, and top notch speakers.

Grazefest events include on-farm field days, bus tours, and demonstrations that highlight the nutritional benefits of pasture-raised foods, as well as the benefits of pasture-raised systems to animal health, human health, the environment, and profitability.

On Saturday, June 20, 2009, SFA brings its 5th Annual Grazefest Minnesota to the Mill City Market in downtown Minneapolis, and features farmers teaming up with premiere chefs to cook up mouthwatering pasture-raised recipes for tasting and consumer education. A Grazefest Minnesota farmer and grazier focused field day and bus tour will take place in Carlton County of northwest Minnesota and is scheduled for Saturday, July 18, 2009.

Minnesota Garlic Festival

A flagship SFA event and outreach

All about SFA continued on page 18
All about SFA continued from page 17 program, Minnesota Garlic Festival uses family-oriented entertainment to educate about the benefits of sustainable agriculture, connect farmers directly with the public, and share farmers’ experience of working conscientiously with the land. Nearly 2000 people attended Garlic Festival in 2008, and was SFA’s first ‘zero waste’ event.

The 4th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival will feature vendors of local, fresh, organic and/or sustainable foods, unique arts and crafts, farm products, chef demonstrations (and of course, lots and lots of garlic), and will be at the McLeod County fairgrounds in Hutchinson on August 15, 2009.

**Minnesota Dairy Initiative**

For more than a decade, the goal of SFA’s Minnesota Dairy Initiative (MDI) has been to assist organic and grass-based dairy farmers in making well-informed decisions to enhance profit, quality of life and benefit to the environment. SFA connects dairy farm families to customized resources and information to start, transition to, or improve any aspect of grass-based and organic cow, goat and sheep dairies. Under the direction of Jeremy Lanctot, SFA’s MDI coordinator, SFA contributes to the success of many dairies in Minnesota, especially those who wish to add value to their dairy products, diversify, cut costs, and increase and/or improve pastures and grazing.

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

**Organic Dairy 101: Workshops for Dairy Support Professionals**

SFA worked with partners, to expand the organic dairy professional resource pool by educating veterinarians, vet students, lenders, nutritionists, crop consultants, dairy inspectors, agriculture instructors, and agricultural reporters about organic dairy systems. Four workshops were offered in four locations across Minnesota in 2008, funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Professional Development Program, and under the direction of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

**CornerPost Newsletter, SFA Website and Communications**

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

**Youth Sustainability Confabulation: Your Voice, Our Future**

A Confabulation, or Confab, is a multi-faceted interactive learning and informal yet structured discussion among college students, farmers, and others about food and farming system sustainability issues. Topics addressed are climate change, food, technology, rural communities, farming, renewable energy, and policy. SFA and Gustavus Adolphus College will host the 2nd annual Your Voice, Our Future Confabulation on April 4th, 2009. SFA also organized mini-Confabs at the University of Minnesota-Morris and Minnesota State and Technical College/Fergus Falls campus.

**Youth Experience in Sustainable Agriculture**

A major priority for SFA is working to expand, connect, and improve access to learning, internship, and volunteer activities for youth interested in sustainable agriculture. SFA offered three internships in 2008, and collaborated with faculty on college campuses to offer service learning opportunities to students. SFA is developing more opportunities for youth to connect with SFA, farmers, and sustainable agriculture. Our on-campus and on-farm efforts catalyzed an online network of young people communicating about sustainable farming. SFA has developed a thriving presence on Facebook, a next generation communications mode for sustainable farmers and food citizens.

**SFA Governance**

The board of directors recently affirmed and clarified SFA’s strategic direction by updating and revising SFA’s strategic plan. (You can find the strategic plan on pages 23-27.) Successful fundraising drives make SFA operations and programs possible, thanks to the leadership of Fundraising Committee Chair Jim Tjepkema, and an increasing number of generous, philanthropic farmers and food citizens. The board restructured to allow for more efficient and effective operation by utilizing working committees and inviting non-board participation on committees. To explore leadership opportunities in SFA, please contact one of our board members listed to the right.

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**State Board Members**

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</table>
Organic transitions have slowed considerably over the last few years. Now, with organic premiums pushing the $30 cwt mark and conventional prices dropping below $10 cwt, one would think that transitions would be a more popular subject again. Unfortunately, organic processors are not looking for more milk. In fact, they appear to be looking for excuses to remove farms from the bulk truck. This may not be true everywhere, but I’m hearing more talk of enforcement of milk quality standards. Those that do not meet them may have nowhere to sell their organic milk.

There is continued interest in on-farm processing. Cheesemaking is turning into a cottage industry. I think we need more buttermakers personally, but that doesn’t appear at the top of interest for most seeking information about on-farm processing.

Goat dairy continues to be a growing industry even though there is a huge distribution problem in Minnesota. Most goat milk goes to Wisconsin, presently. That is way too far to transport small quantities of milk from the western half of Minnesota. The cost of trucking negates the reason to milk. Even though this is the case, I still get calls that go something like this. “I’m expanding my goat herd and need to find someplace to sell the milk.” It’s amazing that this problem doesn’t thwart the stouthearted farmers who are going to farm even if there isn’t a market for their goods. I wish the best for them. Even if you’re located closer to Wisconsin, there is quite a waiting list at the processors of goat milk. New people will need to curb their desire to expand.
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

Sustaining Fund

Dear CornerPost Readers,

More than 60 contributors have given nearly $6,000 to the SFA Sustaining Fund since the start of the 2008/2009 drive. We have set a goal of raising $15,000 before the drive ends on June 30, 2009. A form is included in this issue of the CornerPost, which can be used to make donations. You can also contribute online at www.sfa-mn.org.

SFA has been engaged in pioneering efforts to promote and advance sustainable agriculture for more than 20 years. With our history of bringing farmers and their supporters together to make these pioneering efforts, we are well positioned to respond to an increased public interested in sustainable agriculture. With your support we can move forward with programs designed to meet this increased interest in a better approach to agriculture that does more to sustain our land and communities.

Please help us reach our goal of raising at least $15,000 by June 30th. The money that comes to us through contributions to our Sustaining Fund is of vital importance because it supports programs that lack other sources of funding. Please join the contributors listed below who have generously given their support to our fundraising drive.

Gratefully yours,
Jim Tjepkema, Joe Gransee-Bowman, and John Ostgarden
SFA Fundraising Committee

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota thanks these contributors:

Steve Adams
Leif M. Arnsten
Rebecca Baumann
Tommy Bonner
Chris Barnier
George Boody
Diane Borgendahl
Curtis Bush, Blueberry Bush’s
Paul Conklin
Jamie DeRosier
Atina and Martin Diffley, Organic FarmingWorks
Lowell and Audrey Dittberner
Erica Dolven-Kolle
David Engel, Nature’s International Certification Service and Oregon Tilth
Tom Ehrhardt, Albert Lea Seed House
Jerry Ford and Marienne Kreitlow
Mary Jo Forbord
Mary Ellen Frame
Dan and Julie Gieger

Dan and Gilda Gieske
Tim Gieseke, Ag Resource Strategies
Joe and Michelle Gransee-Bowman
Dan & Terese Hall
Mary Hanks
Edgar Hansgen
Dennis & Karen Ingle
Chris and Joanne Kudrna
Linden Hills Food Coop
Jeremy Lacetot
Mary Jane Miller
Dave and Flo Minar, Cedar Summit Farm
Joe and Tom Molitor, Molitor Organic Farms, Inc.
Laura and Connie Mobry-Bathke
Victor Mrotz, Hope Creamery
Helene Murray
National Farmers Organization
Mett Nielson
Denise Olson
John Ostgarden
Greg Reynolds

Richard and Andrea Rolling
Mike Rooney
Dorothy Rosemeier
Joel Rosen
Stacy Salvevold
Mary Ann Scharf
Kerry Skelton
John and Bev Sluss
Paul Sobocinski
St. Peter Food Coop
Deon Stuthmann
SunOpta
Jim Tjepkema
Rich VanderZiel
Leann and Jim VanDerPol
Ben Wagner
Lucia Watson, Lucia’s Café
Bill Wilcke
Brett Wilson
Whole Foods Coop
Dan Woodbeck
Ann Ziebarth

www.sfa-mn.org
## Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

**Membership & Sustaining Contributions Form**

www.sfa-mn.org

### Sustaining Contribution:
- $50
- $100
- $250
- $500
- Other: $____________

(Tax Deductible)

### SFA Annual Membership (for a family): $30
(Not Tax Deductible)

### SFA Annual Youth/Student Membership (for one student): $10
(Not Tax Deductible)

### Member Interests (Optional):
- Chef/Cooking
- Consumer
- Crafts
- Distribution
- Education
- Energy Production
- Entrepreneur
- Environment
- Events
- Exhibitor
- Farmer
- Food Production
- Garlic Festival
- Grazefest
- Health
- Marketing
- Policy
- Processing
- Sponsor
- Youth

### Please make your check payable to: SFA of MN. Mail form & check to:
SFA of MN, 7356 Cable Rd, Little Falls, MN 56345-5433

Thank you!
## Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota 2008/2009 Strategic Plan

**Mission:**
We support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.

**Vision:**
Rural communities and economies are rebuilt and flourish through farm family employment and an ambitious locally grown food distribution network. Minnesota citizens demand and purchase sustainably-produced food, fiber and energy. Eating more healthful foods will decrease disease, health care costs, and improve the quality of life for all citizens. Sustainable agriculture is valued and supported locally, statewide, nationally, and globally in both policy and in the marketplace.

### Goal 1: Mentor and encourage farmers, especially the next generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Design and implement internships for SFA projects, farms and organizations. Development framework of internships programs, identify specific internships, research colleges for interns and internships, conduct exit interviews, and evaluate internships for continuous improvement.</td>
<td>Events &amp; Youth Outreach Committee and E&amp;YO Cood.</td>
<td>Bush Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Hire a youth director/events coordinator</td>
<td>Executive Director (ED)</td>
<td>Bush Foundation - need $ to sustain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Partner/work with other organizations to mentor and support beginning farmers</td>
<td>Events &amp; Youth Outreach Committee and E&amp;YO Cood. and ED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Match farmer mentors with beginning and aspiring farmers and pay them to mentor.</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Fundraising Comm. and E&amp;YO Comm.</td>
<td>Chapter members and Bush Foundation plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Expand MDI work with organic/grazing -- hold strategy session to organize work to support expansion of organic dairying in Minnesota.</td>
<td>MDI Coordinator, Communications Coordinator and ED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 Actively recruit younger and next generation board members</td>
<td>Nominations, Recruitment &amp; Succession Comm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7 Serve as a “matchmaker” for on-farm internships and apprenticeships</td>
<td>E&amp;YO Coord. - dev. Survey with partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.8 Bring out inner city and suburban youth for farm tours and demonstration</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Fundraising Comm. w/ED and E&amp;YO Comm.</td>
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### Goal 2: Enhance and expand SFA's communication, education, and information network.

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<tr>
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<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Revise and augment SFA's online function</td>
<td>ED and contractors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Recruit paid mentors to moderate and advise on specialized online topics</td>
<td>ED and contractors</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Online “webinars” (off of growing season) on cheesemaking, beekeeping, rotational grazing, etc...</td>
<td>ED and contractors</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Improve information flow throughout the organization including both chapters and members
Note: Clarify responsibility of the delegate to communicate with chapter; delegate should have place on chapter board meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and Chapter Development; board delegates. Need whole board input on Solutions to communication problems.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Centralize SFA membership database

| Training and chapter development committee | | | |
| | | | |

2.4 More press releases and editorials

| Communication contractor and chapters; ED represents our policies; board develops written policies on current issues; policy resolutions to board | | | |
| | | | |

2.5 Refine on-farm educational experiences, field days, etc. into the “SFA brand” preferred for authentic balanced information

| E&YO, ED, Training and chapter development | | | |
| | | | |

Goal 3: Research, market, and promote sustainable agriculture practices and products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek effective ways to create partnerships with other organizations for sustainable agriculture. Create a unified voice for sustainable agriculture in Minnesota by working with other groups, emphasizing SFA as the only state organization of farmers working on sustainable Agriculture, i.e. State ag officials, SAWG, Sustainer’s Coalition, other nonprofits, ag organizations in other states, faith communities, partner with Farmers Union on more things</td>
<td>ED, board members, and SFA members with connections to other organizations</td>
<td>We will increase collaboration with Farm Beginnings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct a database of resources within our membership about farming practices, market techniques, etc... that our members do or know about; put on internet and have paper versions</td>
<td>Training and Chapter Dev. Committee; chapters; staff</td>
<td>We will develop and get forms to chapters to use for member renews so that we can get info that matches what we want in the database</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a marketable version of the farming system we envision, such as “The truly modern farm” (to stop the criticism that we are nostalgic, non-scientific, etc...)</td>
<td>Exec. Comm., Youth/Events/ communications staff</td>
<td>The Exec. Com. will develop a description of a program to designate farms in each chapter as sustainable demonstration farms and to hold a “Tour of Farms Day” next Sept. This plan to include what info is needed about farms to be nominated by the chapters. The chapters would nominate and describe farms. Tours publicized jointly to raise awareness of SFA and chapters</td>
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</table>
### Goal 4: Increase farmer participation and profitability in developing and expanding community-based food systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Who</th>
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<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Serve local food meals for government agencies and university staff at all functions where SFA has influence or control over the food served.</td>
<td>ED; Events Coordinator and committee; chapter events coordinators</td>
<td></td>
<td>This has become symbolic of our organization and we will continue to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Promote local food consumption and sales in health care, schools, businesses, and faith communities.</td>
<td>ED; Outreach and event coordinator and committee</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Note: From Goal 5 including meeting with health care professionals with possible joint seminars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal 5: Inform and educate consumers about healthy food and farming practices that yield a diverse array of sustainably produced food, fiber, and energy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Develop and present high profile, successful statewide events that will educate and excite consumers.</td>
<td>ED; Events and Youth Outreach coord. and com.; Communications Coord.; chapter hosts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Chapter priority for this whole goal may vary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Encourage and assist chapters to publicize farm tours to food customers (see 3.6)</td>
<td>Communications Coord.; chapter development com.; E&amp;YO Coord. &amp; Com.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Internal Goal 6: SFA will become financially sustainable with adequate funding for staff and programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Acquire and retain local private donors both small and large</td>
<td>Finance Com. Fundraising Com.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fundraising com. is actively pursuing donors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 State board will continue the responsibility to appoint and oversee a fundraising committee.</td>
<td>Directors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fundraising com. is actively pursuing donors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Internal Goal 7: Organize for optimum function, efficiency and effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 7.11 Review the strategic plan annually and update the strategic plan at least every three years. The following language was incorporated into the new 7.1. 7.1 Develop a clear direction and organizational alignment to achieve our mission and goals. 7.4 Finalize, refine and endorse the strategic plan. 7.1.1 7.3 Base policy and operating decisions on the strategic plan. 7.1.2 7.4 Link the strategic plan to other planning documents, including budget grant applications, fundraising initiatives, annual reports, and programs of work</td>
<td>Executive Committee does yearly review to present to full board; Full board does three year updates.</td>
<td>Continue work on strategic plan and agreement on clear goals and strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Develop a strong and strategic partnership between the staff, board, chapters and organizational members.</td>
<td>Steering Comm.; Training and Chapter Development Comm.; need an “ambassador” to work as liaison between state and chapters.</td>
<td>Steering Committee is addressing this through proposed by-law and policy changes. Note: develop guidelines for choosing delegates to the state through a clear statement of duties and description of state to chapter relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Improve structure so that state and chapters can communicate needs and requests so that appropriate responses can occur. State board responds to needs/requests</td>
<td>Training and Chapter Development Comm.; Executive Comm.; directors</td>
<td>Note: This strategy may need some work on wording.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Minnesota's Best Stinking Event Moves to McLeod County Fairgrounds

**4th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival**

**Saturday, August 15, 2009 • 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

The 4th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival is moving to a new, larger, centrally located venue at the McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson, Minnesota. The state’s most fragrant and family friendly festival will commence on August 15, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., concluding at 7:00 p.m. The Minnesota Garlic Festival is sponsored by the Crow Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

A fun day for all at the festival will include watching celebrity chefs demonstrating specialty garlic fare, and enjoying a variety of unique entertainment, including the Mu Taiko Drummers, magic, music and dance. And, of course, shopping for locally grown goods and environmentally friendly products are all part of the festival. Chef-prepared specialties will be served at The Great ‘Scape Cafe in the air-conditioned kitchen. And what garlic festival would be complete without the infamous garlic ice cream?

All-inclusive kid’s activities include kite making and flying, vegetable bowling, cow milking, and other fun activities that make this a fun and affordable family-friendly affair.

Sustainable farming and environmentally-friendly products will be showcased, along with “Ask the Expert” presenters who will answer questions about a wide variety of subjects, from gardening tips to helping the environment, to natural health care, and, of course, growing and using the King of Herbs: garlic. The all-new “Peculiar Pragmatic Promenade” steps out precisely at 12:37 p.m. Think cakewalk with an environmental twist. Entries are welcome, no prior registration is required, and fabulous prizes will be awarded. Admission is $5 for adults and $3 for kids under 12. No pets, please.

Be sure to reserve August 15 for a trip to the Minnesota Garlic Festival in Hutchinson, (just over an hour from the Metro area), located off Highway 7. Turn South on Hwy.15 through town, and the fairgrounds are two blocks east on Century Avenue. For further information and updates on the 2009 festival, please visit www.sfa-mn.org/garlicfest.
New online tool helps compare conservation program options

Minnesota farmers and landowners can now use a new online tool to get key information about financial assistance for conservation projects. Developed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the new Minnesota Conservation Funding Guide is a “one-stop” resource for information about agricultural and natural resource conservation practices, programs and payments.

The Conservation Funding Guide is comprehensive yet easy to use. The guide provides quick access to overviews of more than 50 soil conservation, water quality, feedlot management, wildlife habitat and other practices, with side-by-side payment comparisons by program. The guide will help users find practices and programs that match their land management goals.

MDA Commissioner Gene Hugoson says the Conservation Funding Guide was developed to help landowners more easily find the programs that will work for them. “There are many different conservation programs and it can be difficult to keep up with the changes in requirements and funding,” Hugoson said. “We hope this online tool will help answer landowners’ questions and encourage them to establish these conservation programs on their land.”

MDA Conservation Program Specialist Barbara Weisman says the Conservation Funding Guide is designed to help landowners research conservation programs on their own prior to seeking advice from local, state or federal conservation experts. “Farmers and landowners usually have lots of questions about conservation programs,” said Weisman. “This new online guide is a great place for them to start. They can first research the programs and then call a specialist.”

Conservation program payment details and eligibility requirements will continually be added to the tool to reflect recent and pending changes in federal and state conservation programs. Find a link to the Minnesota Conservation Funding Guide on the MDA website home page at www.mda.state.mn.us.

HECUA and SFA present:
Environment and Agriculture: Sustainable Food Systems
A May-Term Program Based in Minnesota

Understand sustainability through the lens of the U.S. food system. Utilize a diversity of theoretical tools in a range of disciplines (ecology, agronomy, philosophy, economics, and sociology) to analyze the environmental, economic, and quality of life issues that define modern farming. Learn from the experts on the ground. Visit a wide variety of farms, a research lab, a meat-packing plant, a creamery, and a cultural arts center. Spend 3 days on a farm of your choice helping with planting, milking, and caring for animals. Learn about the complex ecological and economic decisions that go into farm planning.

Should You Join Us? Are You Eligible?

This course is designed for upper level students who have completed introductory work and are prepared to engage in critical reflection using an integrated and interdisciplinary approach. We hope to create a learning community in which students from agronomy and environmental sciences will teach as well as learn from students in liberal arts disciplines such as history and political science.

Dates = May 16th, May 25th-June 6th & June 13th, 2009
Cost = $2000 (In 2009 we have a grant to fund a number of deep scholarships.)
To apply email jnerbonne@hecua.org or call (651) 287-
Conversations with the Land:
Standing beside the archer

By Jim Van Der Pol

The powerful national and increasingly international economy is pretty good at posing as your friend. They work at it. Wal-Mart has your neighbor’s eighty year old father saying hello to you as you walk through the door and pushing a cart into your hands. Monsanto commiserates with you as “dumb” urbanites and consumers criticize you for using Posilac and Roundup Ready. The tractor company thinks your life ought to be made easier by purchase of their product and the computer industry shakes its electronic head and clucks sympathetically over the idea of anyone getting dirt under their fingernails.

Everyone hails you as “salt of the earth” and “the original environmentalist” while they help themselves to the lion’s share of your profits. We are living into the modern rural version of an old philosophical chestnut about the falling tree in the forest. If a barn burns and no one is there to see it go, does it really burn?

This whole argument is going to lead to the drawing of some lines. There will be aspects of our lives where it is pretty hard to do that, where we are going to fall on opposite sides of a decision from each other. But there are some easy areas. We have evolved to the point where we no longer stoop over to pick up a penny, but think nothing of driving twenty miles to save a nickel. We need to question that tendency, which I found in full display at the farm/fleet store where I asked for Epsom salts, having a calf that needed its foot soaked. Now this store is part of a small upper Midwestern chain of stores where I have gotten pretty used to shopping. These stores tend to close up when Wal-Mart, Home Depot or Lowe’s move into town.

The fellow I asked about the Epsom salts said he didn’t have any but that I should run down to the Wal-Mart (about a mile distant) where I could get a four lb box “real cheap” I said we would pick it up instead at the grocery store next door where we were headed anyhow. He told me they probably had it but warned me that I would pay more. I bought the box in the grocery store for $2.39. How much cheaper could it have been at the other place? A nickel? Someone needs their head examined in this story and it is not me. The idea of doing business with friends has some very difficult aspects but this is easy stuff. At a minimum we need to get these things right.

We need to internalize a set of sorting questions that we run through mentally as we do our business. These questions have to do with who benefits from the transaction, how much of the benefit is local, and how much undesirable stuff (ecological, social, agricultural) cannot be separated from the thing being purchased. For instance, one of my own sorting questions has to do with whether I want my money to be making dreams come true in Arkansas or New Jersey or Saudi Arabia or Texas. The answer is no, I do not, but that doesn’t mean I don’t buy petroleum or too much cheap Chinese imports or insurance. What my own voice accomplishes by inserting that question into my brain like a lush bull thistle each time I buy one of these things is to make me edgy and uneasy about it. This uneasiness is going to keep me looking for alternatives and will predispose me to seeing such alternatives when they show up as well as creating a few myself.

I am a patriot of western Minnesota. These prairies where I have spent my life and done my work are the landscape that is for me both home and homeland. I realize I have used several words here that are conventionally loaded with sentiment and violence, so let me be clear. I think one can only be patriotic toward that Archer continued on page 35
Grazefest Minnesota 2009 at Mill City Market Highlights:

- Meet Minnesota Farmers growing pasture-raised foods
- Learn from Minnesota Chefs preparing delectable dishes using locally grown, pasture-raised foods
- Sample delicious, locally-grown, pasture-raised fare
- Learn about the benefits of pastured egg, pork, dairy, beef, goat, and sheep production
- Farmers who graze are invited to “test drive” meeting customers and marketing products
- Bus Tour to grass-based farms producing pasture-raised foods
- Music, food, entertainment and fun!

Admission: Free to the Mill City Farmers Market. Farm Tour Bus Reservations are required through the Mill City Farmers Market website www.millcityfarmersmarket.org. More details available May 1st.

Location: Mill City Farmers Market, 704 2nd Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55401
Chicago Avenue and 2nd Street South between The Guthrie Theater and Mill City Museum

Parking: Two parking ramps are conveniently located directly across the street with additional ample street and ramp parking. Early bird rates apply before 8 a.m.

Saturday, June 20, 2009

7:59 am  Locally Grown Food Champions Megan O’Hara and Minneapolis Mayor RT Rybak serve up the first 100% GRASSFED MEATBALLS to open Grazefest Minnesota at the Mill City Farmers Market

8:00 am  Mill City Market Opens with a full array of vendors PLUS pasture-raised foods, samples, farmers, music, information on pasture-raised production, and the Sustainable Farming Association’s Meet the Farmers Booth

10:00 am -12:30 pm  Four Pasture-raised Cooking Demos featuring Four of the Twin Cities’ Best Chefs pair up with Four Farmers who produce pasture-raised foods

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm  Farm Tours leave by bus from the Mill City Farmers Market and return at 5:00 p.m.
Friday & Saturday,
July 17th and 18th

Carlton County, northeast Minnesota featuring:
Farmers, Graziers, and Grazing Specialists

Keynote Speaker **Greg Judy**, grazier & featured writer in The Stockman Grass Farmer
Author of **NO RISK RANCHING**—Custom Grazing on Leased Land and
**COMEBACK FARMS**—Rejuvenating Soils, Pastures & Profits with Livestock Grazing Management

---

**GREG JUDY**
Grazefest Minnesota 2009 Keynote Speaker

Greg and Jan Judy of Clark, Missouri run a grazing operation on 1400 acres of leased land made up of 10 farms. Greg and Jan went from near bankruptcy in 1999 to paying off a 200 acre farm and house in 3 years with custom grazing on leased land and are completely debt free. Today they own 3 farms and lease 7 farms. Holistic High Density Planned Grazing is used to graze cows, cow/calf pairs, bred heifers, horses, and stockers. They also own a 250 head grass genetics cow herd, a 300 head hair sheep flock, a goat herd, and graze Tamworth pigs. They direct market grass-fed beef, lamb and pork. Greg is absolutely convinced that there is no better way to get into the grazing business then to lease some fallow land, employ high density grazing, and use other people’s livestock to do it. Since switching from Management Intensive Grazing to Holistic High Density Grazing 3 years ago, the results have been breathtaking.

The Judy’s now use no lime, no fertilizer, no seeding, no chemicals, and no equipment. The Judy’s focus solely on increasing animal density with high animal performance, and long grass recovery periods between grazing. Plant diversity has exploded, with increased grass quantity each successive year, combined with increased profit.

**Grazefest Minnesota 2009 in Carlton County Highlights:**

- Grazer’s Forum - Friday, July 17th :: 5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- Tour three innovative operations
- Experience pastured, egg, pork, sheep, goat, dairy and beef production.
- Innovations in cooperative marketing
- Mob grazing—will it work for your?
- Delicious locally-grown, pasture raised foods
- Afternoon Bus Tour to Green Pastures Dairy, a diversified pasture-based farm owned and operated by the Hedquist family, featuring on-farm cheesemaking and a farm store.
- Forage production and economics.
- Build your own low cost parlors, feeding systems and safe handling facilities with recycled materials.
- Tour a dairy barn converted to lambing facility with an indoor fenceline feeding system.
- Extraordinary networking opportunities for graziers, grazing specialists, grazing suppliers, and educators.

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Greg Judy continued on page 39
Grazefest Schedule:

Friday, July 17th 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Grazier Forum with Greg Judy & Minnesota Grazing Specialists

Saturday, July 18 8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Morning: Salzer Tour, Keynote Greg Judy and lunch at Sandy Hills Ranch
Afternoon: Bus Tour to Green Pastures Dairy and Tour of Fleece Force Flocks

Grazefest Minnesota 2009 Sponsors:
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Mill City Farmers Market, Minnesota Dairy Initiative, University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Farmers Union, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education-North Central Region, and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture.

Admission and Registration to Grazefest-Carleton County: Due to limited space and the popularity of this event, walk-in admission cannot be guaranteed and pre-registration is required. Registration opens May 1st. For more information and to register online, go to www.sfa-mn.org or call (320) 226-6318.

Attention farmers with pasture-raised food products! “Test Drive” your products and marketing skills at Grazefest Minnesota. SFA offers you FREE* space at our Mill City Farmers Market booth. Feature and sell your products, offer samples, talk with food citizens, distribute educational materials, connect with chefs and customers. Space is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. No electricity is available. *You must be a current member of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota to be eligible for this offer. Pre-registration is required by June 1st. Use the form on page 34 to be part of SFA’s booth space.

Grazefest Minnesota 2009
Host Families:

SALZER FAMILY of Sandy Hills Ranch
Sandy Hills Ranch is located approximately 6 miles east of Barnum, MN. Troy Salzer and his wife, Chris and their 3 children, Cameo-9, Max-7 and Murray-3, live on a 120 acre farm and lease another 5 farms. They have 80 Angus-Gelbvieh breeding cattle, custom grazing another 100 stockers in an eleven paddock system where they graze on native pastures, field corn and legumes. Most of the calves are in a value added program and marketed through the Central Minnesota Premium Beef Alliance. They also direct market beef, pork, and vegetables. Troy is very interested in research and is currently involved in a re-establishment of winter feeding areas study with the University of Minnesota Extension beef team.

HEDQUIST FAMILY of Green Pastures Dairy
The Hedquist family’s Green Pastures Dairy is a small, family-owned, grass-based farm producing “naturally healthy” Minnesota Farmstead™ Cheeses & Meats. The Hedquist family includes store manager KenMarie, Dairy Manager Will Jr, Cheese Maker Joy, Esther in charge of Packaging and Shipping, and a host of qualified young assistants. In July, Green Pastures Dairy will be in full swing, making cheese and pasturing cows, pigs, and poultry.

JELINEK FAMILY of Fleece Force Flocks
Carol and Pete Jelinek and their boys, Nicholas-14 and Nathan-12 live on about 25 acres and raise 30 cross bred and purebred ewes and Nubian goats. Their flocks stem from a showing flock to an extended crossbred flock to more fully utilize their grazing pastures, where they rotationally graze. They have modified their old dairy barn to build a low cost fenceline feeding system and integrated livestock handling system. This enables them to easily handle their vaccinations, shearing or any other livestock chore.
You can also register online at www.sfa-mn.org. For more information visit www.sfa-mn.org or contact Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318. SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE for young & limited resource farmers!

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**Total Fees Enclosed** (Sum of rows 1-8)

Name(s) of attendees ________________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________ City __________________________ State _____ Zip ___________

Phone ___________________________________ Email _________________________________

Please send a this form and a check payable to SFA of MN, 29731 302nd Street, Starbuck, MN 56381
Grazefest Minnesota at the Mill City Farmers Market on June 20th:

Names(s):

Farm Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Describe products and/or information you will sell, sample, or distribute:

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**Membership and Sustaining Contribution Form**

Become a member...or renew your membership! If you join or renew now, your membership will be current until 2010! Your Sustaining Contribution will accelerate our progress toward a more sustainable food and farming system. To “keep you posted” of interesting events and happenings in sustainable agriculture, you will receive a year’s subscription to the CornerPost, SFA’s quarterly newsletter. SFA of MN membership must be current to register for Grazefest Minnesota 2009 at the reduced rate. You can also become a sustaining member & contribute online at the SFA of MN web site: www.sfa-mn.org.

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<td>SFA Annual Youth/Student Membership (for one student)</td>
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<td>Sustaining Contribution</td>
<td>Amount of your choice</td>
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<td><strong>Total SFA Support</strong> (please list this total in row 8 on the front side of this page)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to receive SFA’s bi-weekly events email (If “yes,” please list email address):</td>
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I designate that my membership goes to:

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

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

**Thank you for your support!**

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SFA in 2020 continued from page 11
This led to the governor naming the SFA “The Sustainable Non-Profit of the Year,” with a $30,000 award for creating the Circle of Life Program and for supporting the education of these farmers who will serve for the better of local communities’ health and economy.

A controversial session at this year’s conference was lead by a U of M grad who developed a coffee bean suited for Midwest, but was not yet marketing the bean. With the major inaccessibility of oil and therefore overseas transport, there has been much less availability of exotic foods, which has lead to changes in people’s diets and lifestyles. With the Midwest coffee bean being commercialized it would be one luxury item that could be back into Minnesotans lives! Some people think that it is unnatural and goes against sustainable practices, but some find it hard to argue with being able to drink coffee again. SFA’s curmudgeon emeritus, Jerry Ford, said, “Local schmocal – I want my damn coffee.”

Once again, the SFA is bettering itself because of the support of its members and non-profit partners. We will be donating half our proceeds from the conference to the Renewable Energy on the Farm (REF) project that SFA, LSP, WEI, and the newly formed student activist group, BREAKWIND, collaborated on beginning in 2012. This past year we put in 20 small-scale wind turbines and 12 methane digesters; the unfortunately acronymed Farmers Advocating Renewable Transportation converted four diesel tractors to run entirely on liquefied methane. We hope to do even more this coming year!

Thanks for your support and come back next year!

Archer continued from page 29
part of Creation he is familiar with and has made himself at home in. It is just this being at home that enables anyone to assume that others might feel the same way toward their homes. And, in a similar vein, patriotism toward the nation can only be built on the patriotism felt for the part of it that is right outside each of our doors. We cannot care for our nation without caring for our part of it.

Thus it makes a difference where the goods and services come from, for each of us. I can sit here in Chinese jeans typing on a computer made in Taiwan, invented in California and transported with fuel pumped from the ground in Texas or the United Arab Emirates because our national economy has set it up that way. That economy has done so as a method of collecting maximum wealth into as few pockets as possible. But the other economy, the one right outside my door, suffers and dies for lack of useful and meaningful work to do. As long as this is so, it is a marker for what we have yet to learn, and the size of the changes yet to be made.

Many of the harder decisions have to do with technology because we are so accustomed to it and because so much of it is imported from outside our neighborhoods. I have been on a number of grazing farms and I hope to visit many more and what strikes me always is that the farms can be quite different, but the impulse is the same. That impulse is to make a living out of not fighting nature as much. Some farms have most of the latest technology, particularly in the animal handling and service areas, and some are old fashioned, to the point of being operated mostly by hand. These, of course, require less in the way of size or gross income. I will not speak against technology, but I will say this. Rural areas have suffered from technology’s tendency to replace humans for the last half century at least. I think one question about technology needs to be about what we plan to do with the labor that the technology replaces. This is the Japanese style of thought. What can we do with people who have been replaced by technology that will result in more economic power being retained by our local economies rather than less? This question, should we be able to sort out some positive answers to it, holds more promise for our rural places than any of the national economy’s bill of goods.
Chris Barnier honored with SFA Distinguished Service Award

By Anne Borgendale

Being the treasurer for a non-profit like SFA is not a glamorous job, but someone needs to do it. When asked to become the treasurer several years ago, Chris Barnier accepted the job and has been diligently serving SFA ever since. He has brought a business-like nature to accounting, transparency for all in the organization, documentation of expenses and income and a system of continuity. He was recently honored for his work with the 2009 Sustainable Farming Distinguished Service Award. This award honors a farmer or non-farmer who has shown a high level of dedication, commitment, service and perseverance in supporting sustainable farming in Minnesota.

Mary Hanks, SFA’s state board secretary, presented Chris with this honor at SFA’s 18th Annual Conference in Northfield, MN on February 21. Mary was also the person who nominated him for the award. According to Mary, “Chris has given many years of service to SFA both in his chapter (Central) and the state. He brings his tremendous experience and knowledge of finance to the organization, setting up our books and the reporting system. In addition he has given many hours of volunteer time over the past two years to get the financial system loaded and getting the necessary reports out. He has also taken care of our federal and state reporting requirements including those responsibilities involved with staff withholding, unemployment insurance, etc. He has been exceptionally reliable and committed to the SFA and someone you can trust to do anything he says he’ll do. He’s kept us on track both financially and philosophically.”

Chris was well prepared for the treasurer position from his many years of working with the Farm Service Agency (formerly know as the Farmers Home Administration – FHA). “A big part of my job (with FSA),” Chris explained, “was meeting with farmers and going over their finances and trying to project whether they had the ability to borrow money and pay it back.” He gained a lot of practical experience with tracking expenses and projecting income and he become quite familiar with accounting terms. He noted, “This was a pretty good background to dive into Quickbooks with.” In addition to keeping SFA’s internal books, he is also in charge of government reporting and payroll. “I’ve also been filing the IRS forms – the famous 990s.” He’s also developed a

Chris Barnier recipient of the SFA Distinguished Service Award and Laura & Marv Bihl recipients of the Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award. Read more about the Bihl’s in the Summer 2009 CornerPost.
Spring Events Calendar

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

Apr 3-4 Shepherd’s Watch – Gale Woods Farm, 7210 County Road 110 W, Minnetrista, MN. For more information or to register, please call (763) 694-2001.

Apr 4 Youth Sustainability Confabulation 2 – Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN. For more information visit www.sfa-mn.org.

Apr 4 Spring into Farming – Gale Woods Farm, 7210 County Road 110 W, Minnetrista, MN. For more information or to register, please call 763.694.2001.


Apr 8 Urban Agriculture Classes: Biointensive Growing – Minneapolis College of Art and Design. For more info and to register, go to http://www.pricoldclimate.org/.

Apr 15 Energy Smart Workshop – Lac qui Parle Valley High School, rural Madison, MN. For more info call 320-598-7976 or email eda@lqpc.iso.com.

Apr 15 U of M ‘Pickle Bill’ Workshop – Milan Community School, Milan, MN. For registration info call Dorothy Rosemeier at 320-760-3735 or contact the University of Minnesota Extension at 888-241-4591.

Apr 16 Healthy Soil… Food… People Workshops – Earthrise Farm, Madison, MN. Topic: soil amendments and soil health. For more info (320) 752-4700 or erfarm@hotmail.com.

Apr 17 Home Grown Economy Meeting – ITV downlink locations: Bemidji, Crookston, Marshall and Morris. To RSVP or for more information call 218-253-4356 or via email at JoAnn.Zutz@mail.house.gov.

Apr 18 2009 SFA Spring Social -- Traditional Foods Nosh & Barndance – Minneapolis, MN. Reservations are required – to RSVP contact Jerry Ford at jerry@marienние.com or (320) 543-3394.

Apr 18 Urban Soils – Minneapolis College of Art and Design. For more information and to register, go to http://www.pricoldclimate.org/.

Apr 18 Spring into Farming – Gale Woods Farm, 7210 County Road 110 W, Minnetrista, MN. For more information or to register, please call (763) 694-2001.

Apr 18 Poultry Workshop – Community Resource Bank, Northfield, MN. For more info, contact Wayne Martin at 612-625-6224, or at marti067@umn.edu.

Apr 19 Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Sunday Farm Tours & Potluck – Callister Farm, West Concord, MN. E2 Processing Plant & poultry. For further information contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

Apr 25 Raising Chickens in Your Backyard – Gale Woods Farm, Minnetrista, MN. For more information or to register, please call 763.694.2001. $6/person.

Apr 27 Gardening in Small Spaces Seminar - Rice, MN. For info contact Stearns County Extension at 320-255-6169.

Apr 30 Healthy Soil… Food… People Workshops – Earthrise Farm, Madison, MN. Topic: garden growing basics. For more info contact Kay or Annette at (320) 752-4700 or erfarm@hotmail.com.

Apr 30 & May 1 Organic Processing Training for processors – Medina, ND. Visit www.farms.org or call 701-486-3569.

May 2-3 Community Food & Farm Festival at the Living Green Expo – St. Paul, MN. http://www.livinggreen.org/.

May 4, 11 & 18 Living on the Land Livestock Workshop Series – University of Minnesota, St. Paul. For more info contact Wayne Martin at marti067@umn.edu or (612) 6224.


May 14 Healthy Soil… Food… People Workshops – Earthrise Farm, Madison, MN. Topic: “How does your garden grown?” For more info contact Kay or Annette at (320) 752-4700 or erfarm@hotmail.com.

May 16-17 Nature’s Nest Art Fest/Farmers’ Market – Montrose, MN. For details, e-mail Catherine Rose cathy@naturesnestfarm.com or call 763-972-6891.

May 17 Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Sunday Farm Tours & Potluck – Old Orchard Farm, Northfield, MN. Events continued on page 38
Barnier continued from page 36
systematic checklist for the payroll process.
 Sorting out SFA’s books and implementing business-like, transparent procedures with the proper documentation has taken several years. In spite of the scope of this work, Chris would do it all over again. “It was a challenge that I enjoyed and I enjoyed taking it on. I’m proud of the result. Our books are now in good order.” However, when his tenure as treasurer eventually ends he wants some continuity and a smooth transition. Chris stated, “I’ve had it on my mind that one day it will be handed off to someone else with a minimum of interruption; very much with the idea that it’s business-like.”

Chris has been actively involved in SFA at both the chapter and state levels, serving in many leadership roles. Mary explained, “Chris has really volunteered a lot of time and talent – if he hadn’t volunteered, the SFA would have had to hire a bookkeeper for many hours to set up the system – Chris understands the organization AND finances so he could design our system to fit our needs.”

Chris grew up in Anoka, MN. His primary exposure to farming came through a couple of great uncles in Iowa – Gilbert and Floyd. He would visit and work on their farms a little each summer as a kid. After high school, he became part of the back-to-the-land movement in the ’70s. He, his brother and a friend bought a 20-acre farm in Winona County. The 1920s farmhouse had no electricity, no water, no plumbing and no telephone, and was one mile from the mailbox. They moved in and started fixing the place up. They didn’t do much farming there, but they became self-taught on carpentry, plumbing and electrical work. Chris also worked as a precision machinist and at NSP building and fixing transmission lines.

Eventually, he finished his college degree in Ag Business Administration from the University of Minnesota and started at the FHA in 1978. He was in the Slayton and Bemidji offices for a few years, and then came to Little Falls as the FHA Office Manager, where he stayed for the next 25 years. In the early 1980s, Chris and his wife Claudia bought an 80-acre farm near Little Falls. The farm was certified as organic in 1991 and primarily produces small grains, soybeans and hay. After retiring from FSA, he worked for three years with Organic Land Management and is now an independent organic inspector contracted through MOSA (Midwest Organic Services Association).

Chris first got involved with SFA in the mid-1990s. He had given a talk to the Central Chapter as a representative of the USDA, and felt a kinship to the group. Chris explained, “I stayed involved with the SFA because I find the people in sustainable and organic agriculture to be sincere, interesting, and creative, and that makes it a great place to find friends and fellow travelers.” SFA was a good place to learn technical information concerning organic and sustainable farming, but it was also reassuring to know that others faced the same problems he did. “The networking provides immediate information, but it is also long term reassurance – to know there are people to talk to if you need to and to know that they are facing their various challenges the same way I am – its reassuring to have that,” Chris stated. He also finds that SFA provides a support system: “SFA is like having neighbors.” He continued, “In some ways the SFA networking has substituted for what farms in the 1940s had from their neighbors.”

Chris will continue on as SFA’s treasurer and the Central Chapter Board representative. He is honored that his friends and neighbors think this highly of him, and of what he has accomplished for SFA. The plaque he received will hang on the wall in his little home office as he continues to file the proper paperwork and track SFA’s expenses and income.

Events continued from page 37
Certified Organic garden & vineyard. For further info contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

**Jun 2-3 Symposium on Small Towns – Communities 2050: Building a Livable, Renewable and Responsible Future – University of Minnesota, Morris.** For more info visit www.centerforsmalltowns.org or call (320) 589-6451.

**Jun 20 Grazefest Minnesota 2009 at the Mill City Farmers Market – Minneapolis.** For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or call (320) 226-6318.

**Jun 21 Cannon River/Hiwathla Chapter Sunday Farm Tours & Potluck – Farm on Wheels, Kenyon, MN.** Certified Organic livestock & crops. For further info contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

**Jul 14 2009 Inaugural North Dakota State University Organic Farming Field Day – Dickinson, ND.** For more information contact: Patrick Carr at (701) 483-2348 xx143.

**Jul 18 Grazefest Minnesota 2009 – Carlton County.** Keynote speaker will be Greg Judy. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or contact Anne with SFA of MN at communications@sfa-mn.org or (320) 226-6318.
Meet Dennis Ingle

Growing up, my maternal grandfather, Ted Hauptli, owned a 40-acre farm near Wabasso, MN. I always loved visiting the farm. At age thirteen, I enjoyed a whole summer working with my grandfather. Later, in high school, my family moved to the Wabasso area, where my brother and I helped Grandpa all the time. The experience planted a seed deep in my heart, which bore fruit thirty years later. Grandpa’s vocation spanned horsepower, the Depression, chain-drop corn planters, and the transition to 30” rows (seems wide nowadays). His stories are my connection to the soil.

Currently, my family and I live near Dassel, MN. My family of farmers consists of my lovely wife Karen and children Jeffrey, Benjamin, Christine, Timothy, and Deborah. We have a value-add enterprise selling bottled herb vinegars under the Heartsease Farm label. In the past we have sold salad greens and produce at farmers markets and we have run a small CSA. Thanks go to them for eating salad greens even after cleaning endless tubs of them for market day and for putting up with the smell of vinegar. All the land we cultivate is lent to us by good friends; this means we commute to do field work. In addition to the herb vinegar business I also help out part-time at Gale Woods Farm in Minnetrista.

I was asked to join the Crow River Chapter Organizing Committee after volunteering at the first ever Minnesota Garlic Festival in 2006. The SFA mission fit well with my farming philosophy and my belief in the importance of passing on our passion through education. I’m currently the Crow River chapter representative to the state SFA board.

Sustainable farming is a popular term today. The concept harkens back to the beginning of creation when God told Adam and Eve to tend the garden. It must have been a joy to garden without weeds. For me, sustainability is about being a good steward. Stewardship is an old-fashioned term. Its religious connotations often make people nervous. But the spiritual part of life cannot be excluded from good farming. The soil is not mine to abuse, but rather it is God’s and I am to nurture it. I believe our urban culture’s growing interest in farming is a response to an untouched part of people’s hearts: a desire to connect with the land. SFA is helping people make that connection to soil, plant, and animal. Our lives are enriched as we wisely steward what has been entrusted to us.

Greg Judy continued from page 31

Greg authored “NO RISK RANCHING, Custom Grazing On Leased Land” in 2001. The book details a complete breakdown on the methods they used to build their operation from scratch. His latest book is “COMEBACK FARMS, Rejuvenating Soils, Pastures and Profits with Livestock Grazing Management”. This 2008 publication covers all the methods they use with Holistic High Density Grazing, multi-species grazing, grass finishing animals, and eliminating costly inputs. Greg is a popular speaker all over the United States on the benefits of Holistic High Density Planned Grazing, leasing land, multi-species grazing and custom grazing. The Judy’s hold Holistic High Density Grazing Schools at their farms and teach the principles of HHDG, and Greg consults for people interested in setting up HHDG grazing systems.

A high achiever by any measure, we proudly claim Greg Judy’s northeast Minnesota roots. He was born in Minnesota and spent his early years on his family’s dairy farm near Pine City before his family moved to Missouri when he was seven years old. Sustainable Farming Association is pleased to bringing him back to his first home, and we are confident that Greg Judy’s advice, experience and innovation will inspire our progress in designing and improving our grazing operations. For more information about Greg and Jan Judy’s grazing operation and techniques, visit their website www.greenpasturesfarm.net
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

29731 302nd Street
Starbuck, MN 56381

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www.sfa-mn.org

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mission: we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.