SFA kicks off an exciting year

By John Mesko

2010 came into focus for SFA at our 19th Annual Conference: “Sustainable Farming 2020: What does it look like? How do we get there?” It set the tone and agenda for SFA’s year and attendees were brimming with excitement about the possibilities.

The conference was rich with great speakers and educational sessions. Urban farming, sustainable energy, and real-life farming examples were just some of the highlights. The buzz in the hallways and exhibit areas was all about where the movement is going, how SFA and its members (You!) are playing a part, and where we can go if we all work together. In fact the hallway talk seems to be a major part of every conference. The connections made in and around the conference are key to the success and advancement of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota.

Keynote speaker and Minnesota Secretary of State, Mark Ritchie, discussed how the sustainable ag movement in general, and SFA in particular, are models for how society as a whole can make positive changes. He cited the years of effort and drive SFA members displayed when organic and sustainable agriculture wasn’t very popular, as being critical to the formation of today’s popular, trend-setting sustainable ag community.

All of this was a very effective way to kick off 2010 and the entire next decade of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota. We have some exciting challenges ahead of us as a movement and as SFA. With local food and sustainability being some of the hottest topics currently being discussed in our state and our society, SFA is one of the most popular and effective groups to be involved in. Our membership is growing every day, and with that comes both opportunity and responsibility.

Opportunity. SFA is uniquely poised in the sustainable farming movement. As a grassroots, chapter-based organization, we have as a part of our membership and our mission, the key components of sustainability: farms, farming, and food. We have an opportunity to speak to the
More mileage per CP

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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 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15. The CornerPost runs between 24 and 40 pages per issue. CornerPost circulation is approximately 1200.

Here is our fee schedule for CornerPost ads for the 2009-10 fiscal year:

- $500 full page
- $130 quarter page
- $260 half page
- $75 eighth page

We also 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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South Central Chapter

By Katy Wortel

The South Central Chapter (SC-SFA) held their annual meeting on Saturday, March 6, and longtime members were pleased at the number of new members attending. The passing of long-time SFA member Wally Dunn was noted and thanks given for his contributions in promoting a sustainable ethic of the land. During the business meeting, consistent state-wide membership fees were discussed, as well as increasing the percentage of the membership fee that goes to the state office. Board members elected included returning members Wes Tennis and Tracy Skaar, and new members Jill Louters and Pawel Buda.

Following the business meeting, Tom Willette from Winnebago spoke about his experience installing a 10 kW Ventera wind tower on his property. He shared that he had dreamed of doing this for a long time to do his part to fight global warming. He may also install a solar unit in the future. He also noted the inverter installed for the wind turbine was a hybrid, which will allow the solar add-on. The audience learned many of the details of the process, including bumps along the way. Tom noted that he qualified for a 30% tax credit that helped with the cost quite a bit.

Following Tom’s presentation there were several breakout sessions. Future events that the SC-SFA chapter could hold were the discussion at one session. The possible event topics included “re-skilling” workshops such as teaching how to cook unfamiliar fruits and vegetables, how to can, freeze or dry fruits and vegetables, and how to butcher at home. Other
ideas included educating on permaculture, connecting with city folks more, educating community people on their food choices, and assisting local churches in growing community gardens.

Following a delicious homemade lunch, SFA Executive Director John Mesko spoke and engaged in a dialogue with the audience about the future of SFA. Then Julia Olmstead from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy presented the keynote address on Agriculture and Climate Change. Climate change will provide serious challenges for some farming regions, and trying to alter climate change will provide opportunities for other regions. See www.iatp.org for more information.

In other news, chapter members Archie Kluender and Jim Tjepkema participated in a March 22 workshop on Soil Health organized by Rural Advantage, held in Fairmont. They spoke as representatives of SFA and shared farmers’ experiences using cover crops.

For more information on the SC-SFA Chapter contact Chair Jim Tjepkema at (507) 256-4876 or jimkt@frontiernet.net.

State Board Update

By Chris Kudrna

Greetings from your state SFA Board! Here in Central Minnesota we have interesting winter bookends – one of the coldest, wettest Octobers on record and now March is on track to be snow free for the first time since written records have been kept. It does make planning more interesting.

Most of the board activities are covered elsewhere in the CornerPost and there are only two additional items I want to highlight. First, our next state board meeting is Friday, April 16 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre in downtown St. Cloud, MN. This meeting is always open to members and it would be great to have find more room for everyone! A lot is going on right now at the state level and there will be some interesting topics covered. For more information see the SFA web site or call or email me. (320-202-1708 – ckudrna@charter.net)

Second, as most of you should already know, we have been asking for volunteers to help with SFA’s work – both on events and on standing board committees. Response to this request has been excellent and much appreciated. If you are interested and have not received the particulars, please see the web site for more information.

Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter

By Mary Ellen Frame.

Spring got a jump on its “official” beginning—the Vernal Equinox—with gorgeous weather in the first part of March. It brought us all outdoors, to face all those unfinished projects that had been covered by the snow. Now the maple sap is running and vegetable growers are planting in hoop houses and greenhouses. But I think it will be a while yet before field work starts and animals get out on pasture.

Our chapter annual meeting was held on Saturday, January 23, starting with a potluck at noon. Then students from the Carleton College chapter of MPIRG (Minnesota Public Interest Research Group) presented the project they’re working on to try to get Rice County to help support organic farmers by providing tax rebates for five year to farmers who convert to organic production. After the business meeting, David Hougen-Eitzman presented a slide show on his and Laurie’s trip to China in December. They took a group of Carleton Students who had been studying agricultural practices here during fall term and went to look at what kind of sustainable agriculture is going on in China. The government there has been promoting industrial-style agriculture, but there is some organic and sustainable farming also. The Chinese use the land very intensively, and put everything back into the soil, so nutrients are being constantly cycled. Actually, a very small percentage of their land is arable. Everywhere they went they were served wonderful meals, though with some foods that aren’t common here.

On Wednesday, March 10, we had a board meeting at Lori and Allen Callister’s. John Ostgarden reported on the State SFA Board, discussing how the new Charter will affect us took up most of our meeting time. We met again on Tuesday, March 30 to make plans for the Festival of Farms in July. The meeting was held in Rae Rusnak’s sugaring house (a.k.a. garage) where she is cooking off maple syrup.
Southeast Chapter

By Lonny Dietz

All the snow is gone and with the early snow cover there was not much frost, so most of the moisture soaked into the soil. We were fortunate to miss the flooding conditions that they had in other parts of the state and country. The fields are drying and equipment is starting to roll across the fields. It is always fun to watch the woods wake up, the birds migrate, and wait for the first spring peepers to be heard.

We had our annual meeting Saturday, March 20 in Altura, MN. SFA's Executive Director, John Mesko, was there to update us on the state board activities and to lead us in our chapter visioning session. Many good ideas came from that and the two we will start to work on are:

1) Start a speakers group and put together a 30 minute power point presentation that we can take to schools and service group meetings. Using different presentations for different age groups. This could work on a state level to show a different farming option without blasting other farmers who are just trying to make a living. If another chapter is already working on this please let us know.

2) Expand our field day variety and have at least two this year. Any members with ideas are invited to contact a board member so we can plan our field days soon.Board members are: Lonny Dietz, Roy Michealis, Ray Nelson, Andy Olson (state representative), Kim Olson, Greg Erickson, Eric Klein, and Edgar Hansgen.

We also watched Fresh on a large screen TV and a sound system that was donated for the day by Best Buy and even set up by the Geek Squad. FRESH celebrates the farmers, thinkers and business people across America who are re-inventing our food system. Each has witnessed the rapid transformation of our agriculture into an industrial model, and confronted the consequences: food contamination, environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, and morbid obesity. Forging healthier, sustainable alternatives, they offer a practical vision for a future of our food and our planet. More information can be found at freshthemovie.com.

We finished the day with a presentation by Carmen Fernholz, Madison, MN. He spoke about ways that we can cut the input costs without affecting the profit. Carmen was surprised to see our streams still in their banks and no snow. He had a great presentation and gave our group many good ideas to consider as they finalize the planning for this season.

Central Chapter

By Arlene Jones

The annual meeting for Central Chapter of SFA was held on Saturday, January 9 at Camphill Village, Sauk Center, MN. The keynote speaker was John Mesko, SFA's Executive Director, who shared his message of “The Problem – Industrial production of food and hooking consumers. The Solution – The consumer and its purchasing decisions as the only ones who can solve the problem.” It was a great message, surely lending itself to the bonding between sustainable farming practices, education and living sustainably.

Kent Solberg and Greg Nolan have completed three year terms on the chapter board and per bylaws, were not able to be considered for re-election. New board members were elected as follows: Arlene Jones, Chair; Mel Wiens, Vice Chair; Kevin Happke, Treasurer; Sister Ruth Lentner, Secretary; State Board Representative Chris Barnier; Mike Stine, at large; Larry Skoglund, at large. We wish Kent and Greg lots of luck as they continue to pursue all things sustainable and remain active members of Central Chapter.

The Farm on St. Mathias, owned by board member Arlene Jones, and her husband, Bob, has been selected as the host farm for the Central Chapter Festival of Farms. The farm is located in the St. Mathias region of Crow Wing County and the Central Chapter will be working with other sustainable farmers in the area.

Sue Peterson, longtime chapter member and Central Chapter coordinator has resigned as Coordinator to take off-farm employment. She has assured us she will remain an active member and we wish her well. Also, the position of coordinator is available. Interested parties should contact Arlene Jones, Chair at 612-695-2721 for a position description.
Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

We had our annual meeting on Saturday, January 2. Not the best date for attendance, but it was a thought provoking meeting. The topic was “Sustainable Agriculture, What does it really take?” After the meeting I asked everyone to send me their thoughts. These are the highlights:

Sustainable Farming in Minnesota (from the Gale Woods Newsletter)

2010 began in an inspiring and exciting way when Gale Woods hosted the Sustainable Farming Association’s Crow River Chapter annual meeting on January 2. The energy and enthusiasm for furthering new and innovative systems of agriculture that sustain the land, the farmer and the eater was infectious.

The meeting started with presentations from Greg Reynolds, owner/operator of Riverbend Farm in Delano and John Mesko, the SFA’s Executive Director. Greg’s farm has been direct marketing organic vegetables for nearly 20 years and John has been extension educator and livestock farmer for just as long. Both have seen many economic, climatic and social changes around farming. They shared some sobering facts and anecdotes about the challenges society faces—climate change, peak oil, health care and obesity, unemployment and underemployment—and how the industrial agriculture model is not only unprepared to solve these challenges, but contributes to making them worse.

Luckily, people engaged in sustainable farming are interested in solutions and the rest of the day featured discussions about creating a positive future. Jim VanDerPol, a beef and hog farmer from Western Minnesota inspired us all with a self-reflective look at Pastures-A Plenty, his farm. While most farms are increasing up to and beyond 1,000 acres in size in an effort to support one family (and still require off-farm income and government subsidies), Pastures A’ Plenty has managed to support three families on about 300-acres. All this while minimizing inputs and changing fields of corn and soybeans into rotations with perennial pasture. In spite of this success, Jim acknowledged that they are still striving toward sustainability. Searching for ways to reduce fossil fuel use, improve wildlife habitat on the farm and make the farm more financially viable and attractive for future generations.

A sustainable future won’t be possible without engaged consumers and Barth Anderson of the blog site Fair, Food Fight shared with us the energy for a better agriculture that is present in the young urban crowd. This is being played out in conversations on Facebook, Twitter and in the blogosphere. Hearing a conversation between Barth and Laura Bihl, SFA Farm Emeritus, who is into her 80s and still raising beef cattle, about how to reach consumers by tweeting really highlighted for me one of the most exciting aspects of the new agriculture. A culture that necessarily and enthusiastically embraces young urban hipsters, elder farmers, environmentalists, academics and more in an active effort to create a better future. A future that is healthier for the land, the people and for community. – Tim Reese

What comes to my mind is how incredibly complex the ecosystem is, how little we know despite the vast amount of information and technology available, and how far we are from true sustainability in the environment, community and economy as well as every other aspect of our lives.

We have slipped into complacency with the availability of cheap non-renewable resources. Unfortunately it appears to be human nature to take for granted those things that are so readily available now. We do not appreciate the water until the well runs dry, our health until we lose it and food until the cupboard is bare, etc.

Next Step: We each need to look at our individual systems and determine how sustainable they currently are and what steps should be taken to improve them and become as sustainable as possible. Once we have our own house in order we can better inform others. “We must be the change we would wish to see in the world” to paraphrase Gandhi. – Denny Compton

The most memorable things at the conference were the one-on-one networking and then especially the discussion surrounding the need for action (e.g. health care) and willingness to continually strive for improvement (e.g. Jim VanDerPol in his family’s operation) in the sustainable agriculture community. Also, the recognition of the size of the system we are trying to have a voice in.

The networking is inspiration to keep pursuing farming as an occupation and lifestyle. Being in the position of still trying to find a farm and establish a business, sometimes the call to action in the larger framework of sustainable agriculture is daunting because we’re spending so much time and energy just trying to get started. However, the two go hand and hand and we’re excited to be an active
part of the movement to further sustainable agriculture in our local community and the larger community. There is no time like the present to get involved. – Joan Olson

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It was my first conference as a new member. I found myself uplifted being there and learning so much about so many issues. One thing that stood out to me was the emerging role of the sustainable farmer as educator and teacher. If willing, they will become the teachers of good gardening practices and good food nutrition for urban dwellers wanting to feed their children properly. There is a growing movement for families to go back to eating with farm raised vegetables, meats, fruits and products and to home cooking.

The small and medium farmer, not tied to food corporations, has a large opportunity to play a very important role in families concerning their food nutrition everywhere, not just in the rural setting. And that is very exciting to me. – Lynne Cason

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The question that I’d like answered is why do the people in the city not know how to contact someone in the country about getting natural foods? That seems pretty silly if people can’t find the contact information for local farmers. Thanks! – Peter Widin

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Last week a student from the University of Minnesota that attended the Crow River Chapter Conference came to my office to discuss what students could do to move the sustainable agriculture/food issue forward. I suggested that they consider taking action on issues that are currently affecting their lives. I suggested they consider evaluating the possibility of adding local food to the U’s current restaurant and food service menus and also explore the possibility of starting a local food restaurant in the two U of MN Student Unions. I also suggested that they explore the exclusive deal the U of MN has with Coke Cola that allows them to sell their products exclusively to students. I also indicated that I would work with them to connect with U of MN faculty that can teach them how to organize to accomplish their goals. I’m excited about getting our young people more involved I enjoyed being with everyone at the conference. Thanks – Don Wyse

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Most memorable to me was the question from Don Wyse about the lack of discussion of food within the health care debate. I was sufficiently moved by the question that I wrote an essay for the Populist on the subject and will be considering how to include it in my presentation to the Wisconsin Grazing Conference next month. And this is the next step. It needs to be included in our talk about agriculture. It will, at the least, mark us off from conventional agriculture. – Jim VanDerPol

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It was certainly a thought-provoking day. We feel very passionate about what we do and feel that we need to have a political presence to represent issues of concern to sustainable, local farmers...the intricacies of how are a bit overwhelming. All of us need to become better leaders and organizers—no one will do it for us. I left last Saturday with a strong desire to engage in some sort of leadership training. What if our chapter could sponsor a workshop on leadership and political advocacy regarding sustainable, local ag? There is ag leadership training, but it is wholly focused on conventional, commodity farmers. We need a similar program designed for organic/sustainable agriculture.

The National Young Farmers Coalition that I mentioned was announced in the Greenhorn’s newsletter: http://foryoungfarmers.wikispaces.com/Greenhorn+Circular+Greenhorns website: www.thegreenhorns.net – Laura Frerichs & Adam Cullip

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Based on the premise that the insurance industry is not going to change and the government is not going to get much changed anytime soon, what if we started our own health insurance company for organic farmers, small home producers, people in the environmental or resource protection fields and renewable energy fields. The company would be set up as a non-profit with strict limitations on pay to someone who will have to manage this entity. Pay may even be set by some average or something of our incomes so as to reflect the overall financial situation. The focus is on healthy living, not on fixing problems caused by eating bad foods and living an unhealthy life style such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, weight issues, lack of exercise, etc. – Mike Lilja

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I felt that the social networking talk by Barth Anderson was particularly interesting, as I believe consumers are the solution to the problems we identified that day. Barth showed us one way of getting in touch with them. As an organization, I think SFA should pursue as many consumer-types as we can. Obviously, we are a local, farmer-to-farmer network at some level. However, the solutions come from folks who don’t farm making choices. We need to influence them… – John Mesko

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1. Most memorable for me was listening to Don
Wyse speak. I don’t think he was totally correct in his assessment of sustainable farmers not jumping into health care reform politically. There actually were sustainable farm groups like NSAC and other advocates trying to muscle their way into the health care debate, but it was such a scrum, their voices got drowned out quickly. I think there are great opportunities for SFA-MN to get involved in issues pertinent to members and would love to help in that regard, if y’all want that from me.

2. The conference had a huge impact on me personally. I was jazzed by it and made great connections with John Mesko, Jerry Ford, and others. I hope to stay involved with SFA-MN in the future.

3) Next steps for me are to (a) join the group (b) continue building ties between myself and individual SFA-MN members (3) find ways to activate this group on issues that could raise membership and also help sustainable farmers statewide and nationally.

4) I think I’m getting my questions answered. I’ve met with John Mesko a couple times already and hope to meet with Jerry Ford, too, about continued involvement with the Crow River Chapter.

It was like a giant shot of espresso for me and I’m still buzzing from it. – Barth Anderson

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We enjoyed our FIRST conference. I really didn’t know what to expect. Having the Fair Food Fight blogger come and talk was really interesting. It was my first foray into the blogger world, interesting blog site. Meeting everyone was great. Nice laid back atmosphere, good discussions.

– Kathi
Minnesota Dairy Initiative Update

By Jeremy Lanctot

The winter edition of the CornerPost had some information about local dairy pilot plants. I concentrated mostly on the University of Minnesota’s dairy pilot plant on the St. Paul campus coordinated by Ray Miller.

This time, I’d like to move the spotlight westward to Brookings, SD, where the University of South Dakota (USD-B) has a dairy pilot plant that is working with several Minnesota dairy producers in developing marketable dairy products. Not only will the USD-B pilot plant help you develop recipes and products using your milk, they have a storefront where they sell products they produce using milk from their own dairy herds. Their specialty appears to be ice cream. Rumor has it that the USD-B pilot plant was the original inventor of Cookies-n-Cream ice cream.

Sundown Creek Farm of Springfield, MN has produced a private label goat cheese with the help of the USD-B plant. They’ve been able to develop their product, packaged and labeled, ready to market without the large capital expense of an on-farm dairy plant. Eventually, they would like to build their own on-farm production facility and produce a farmstead product, but, in the meantime, they can market a finished product and develop their market-share before committing to a $100,000+ production facility. This is a winning situation for everyone. Only produce enough products to meet sales needs. Cheese stores rather well, so it can be produced in batches and eventually sold when demand is there.

The really amazing fact is USD-B will do the product test batches for FREE! You get your milk there and they’ll work with you to develop cheese, milk, yogurt, ice cream or whatever you want to try. They begin charging fees when you start producing product for market.

If this is of interest, visit them online at http://dairysci.sdstate.edu/DepartmentInfo/Facilities/DairyPlantandsalesbar/dairyplant.htm or call them at (605) 688-5420.

I can personally recommend Sundown Creek cheeses. They produce about six varieties. If you would like to learn more about their cheese and how they got it produced, email Marty and Mary Larson at sundowncreek18638@yahoo.com. Tell them I sent you.

SFA SUMMER 2010 INTERNSHIPS

Grazefest Internship

If you really want to get your hands dirty on sustainable farms, then check out the Grazefest Internship. You’ll work with livestock on 4-6 farms across the state that use sustainable grazing practices—everything from 8-pound chickens up to 1,000-pound cattle. Plus, you’ll help plan and run Grazefest events at Mill City Farmers Market and at a group of farms out in the country.

Includes room and board, $1,500 stipend and mileage reimbursement.

Garlic Festival Arts Internship

As the Garlic Festival Arts Intern, you would be involved with the premiere local foods and sustainability event in the state. Throughout the summer, you would direct art workshops for kids. In these workshops kids will create pieces based on the theme, “What is your vision for the future of rural Minnesota?” and the artwork they create will be entered in the Youth Arts Competition 2010. This competition culminates in a judged exhibit—which you would direct—at the Garlic Festival.

Includes a $1,500 stipend and mileage reimbursement.

Details and Applications: www.sfa-mn.org/internships.php or contact Jerry Ford, jerry@sfa-mn.org, (320) 543-3394

Application deadline: Tuesday, April 20, 2010

For More Information Visit www.sfa-mn.org
CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LAND:

Carbon Sequestration

By Jim VanDerPol

This article originally appeared in Graze magazine. You can get a sample copy of Graze at: PO Box 48, Belleville, WI 53508; graze@ticon.net, (608) 455-311.

One of the truly frustrating aspects of the conversation in official agriculture circles about climate issues lately is the way in which grazing systems get overlooked in any conversation about carbon sequestration in favor of chemically supported no-till systems of crop production. This shouldn’t be surprising, I suppose, since one of the real successes of the grazing movement so far has been its ability to maintain a steady focus on the concept of lowering production costs, thus creating no great profit opportunity for any of the corporations that are pretty much in charge of our agricultural thinking.

Consider the progress made in grazing so far. Since its rebirth in the United States following the appearance of Alan Savory and his concepts of holistic management twenty or so years ago, graziers have moved from talking about planting nothing but posts the first few years to considering the grasses and legumes commonly available and then looking abroad for a few more exotic forages to plant. This was accompanied by a relatively short love affair with all things New Zealand until many of us began to figure out that New Zealand’s maritime climate and regular and steady rainfall meant that many of the practices there could not be transferred wholesale to the severe continental climate of our American Midwest.

We began to talk about swards of grass, forbs, and legumes and discuss issues of durability and adaptability of various mixes to various farms and to milking cows, or beef cattle, or sheep, or stockers, or (horrors) even hogs. We started to focus on what we needed to get through the year, or at least the grazing season. Annual crops were considered again for grazing and achieved a regular place on some of our farms, to fill in the flat spots. We began to modify some of the first fences; those of us who milk cows built lanes and good user friendly milk parlors. We got water to the pastures. We started to persecute the Universities about the lack of good up to date forage development and research.

We figured out ways to use the buildings we had left over from the old confinement days. As these wore out or were outgrown, we thought of hoops for winter protection. Some of us went to bale windbreaks for winter “housing”. Trees came into real importance again here on the prairie and many windbreaks and rows of bushes were planted on our grazing farms as we noticed that animals don’t like wind so much. Many farms began feeding hay on the pastures, figuring that it was best to drop manure where it needed to be rather than be stuck with moving it to the fields all spring.

And then we turned our attention back to the grazing season and worked on extending it well beyond the growing season. Talk turned to stockpiling grass for after season use, and getting the use of the neighbor’s corn stalks for late season grazing. Rape came into the discussion, as did turnip. Work was done on many farms with small grains and turnip or rape as well as field peas for October and November grazing. A few farms are making these seedings work in some years by putting them after the harvest of the spring seeded grains on the same ground. Some northern farmers with stock cows started looking to Canada and their idea of seeding small grains in midsummer, and then timing the swathing so that the swaths were soon covered with snow, keeping them in good condition for the cows to dig them out all winter. And the latest discussion is about height at grazing, grazing period and timing of return during the growing season itself, with more of us becoming aware that the answers to these questions are going to have to do with what animal enterprises we run and what our goals

VanDerPol continued on page 12
VanDerPol continued from page 11
with it are.

We clip pastures, or some of us do. But most of us are
talking about how many weeds in the sward we can live
with and what livestock species like to eat what plants.
When we get sick of sitting on the mowing machine, we
tend to think about donkeys and llamas and goats. We
have been listening to a woman who claims to be able
to teach cows to eat thistles. We have noticed that if
we rotate a little haymaking across the pastures we can
achieve a good bit of noxious weed control by making
the hay. If we feed the hay later in the grazing season or
in winter right where we made it up, we have not hurt the
fertility.

Folks, none of this gladdens the heart of the salesman.
Sure, I am interested in a tractor with front wheel assist
and a good cab for winter feeding like most graziers, but
no machine salesman is going to winter in Texas on what
he sends to my farm on the implement flatbed. Then
think of the combine to harvest that, the trucks to haul it
to town, the chemicals and fertilizer for the tanks and the
seed bill, complete with tech fees. This is a no brainer,
really. The folks who make their living by farming the
farmer are hoping our idea doesn’t catch on. We don’t
offer enough return to their efforts. So we are probably
going to have to get used to being passed over in the
carbon sequestration conversation. That is alright though,
because that game is an illusion.

What is not an illusion is that we are getting ready,
whether we often think of it or not, for a very real future.
That one is about who wins when the commodity markets
have fractured due to customer distrust, when the fuel is
short in supply due either to a real situation on the ground
or banker games, when transportation doesn’t work well
and steel is too high priced to use carelessly, when labor
is more available than credit, and when our bankrupt
government cannot make the hand out check good.
Grazing farms sequester more carbon than anybody.
But that is never going to be the important question.
Durability is.
Festival of Farms™
Fundraiser

Saturday, May 8
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Ten Thousand Villages, Richfield, MN
Minnesota West Temporary Store
(Kensington Park shopping complex, 7630 Lyndale Ave South, Suite #400)

From 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. 20% of the proceeds of gross sales (less Minnesota sales tax) at the Ten Thousand Villages, Richfield, MN will be generously donated to SFA to support the first annual Festival of Farms™.

Ten Thousand Villages is a fair-trade retailer of handcrafted goods. Ten Thousand Villages works with over 130 artisan groups in more than 38 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East to bring you fair trade jewelry, home decor, gifts and more. As one of the world’s oldest and largest fair trade organizations, they build long-term relationships with artisans that are based on mutual understanding and respect. Fair trade enables artisans to earn a fair wage and provides the opportunity for a better quality of life. For more information visit www.tenthousandvillages.com/.

SFA farmer members will have displays with pictures and information telling the stories their farms. At 2:00 p.m. there will be a program highlighting SFA while also telling the story of World Fair Trade Day. Learn about the connections between caring locally and globally and see how the producers of our food and the producers of other artistic products need to be put first as we consider how we spend our dollars. Finally, learn more about the upcoming Festival of Farms™.

For more info on Festival of Farms™ and the fundraising event visit www.sfa-mn.org
Jim Tjepkema honored with SFA Distinguished Service Award

By Anne Borgendale

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s 19th Annual Conference honored Jim Tjepkema with the SFA Distinguished Service Award. The SFA Distinguished Service Award is for a farmer or non-farmer who has shown a high level of dedication, commitment, service and perseverance in supporting sustainable farming in Minnesota. Jim merited this long deserved honor because of his extended commitment and strong representation of the South Central Chapter and the SFA state organization, as well as for his persistent fundraising efforts.

Jim has been a part of SFA since the beginning. He attended some of the first SFA meetings, which were held by the Land Stewardship Project office in Lewiston, MN. At that time he had a small crop consulting business. Some of his customers were ridge till corn and soybean growers. They belonged to a group of farmers from both Minnesota and Iowa who shared information on ridge tilling. Shortly after that, in 1988, some of the interested people in south central Minnesota decided to form their own SFA chapter and he became active in this new chapter, the South Central Chapter.

He has also been a supporter of sustainable farming education, research and practices. After his work as a crop consultant, he also was the coordinator of a ridge till project with the Rodale Institute for five years. In the early 1980’s, he became an active member of Seed Savers and has a collection of “one of a kind” rare vegetable seeds.

Jim has worn many hats for SFA. He has served as the South Central Chapter board president, South Central Chapter coordinator, and former SFA State Board Representative. On the SFA State Board he served for a time as the chair of the Fundraising Committee. Previously, SFA had not done a coordinated fund drive. However, Jim started making the phone calls to ask for donations, writing the letters for contributions, and persisting in his efforts to get the rest of the board to fundraise as well. He is a great advocate for the work of the SFA and can communicate this ardor when talking to donors.

In February, Jim decided to step down as the SFA State Board Representative for the South Central Chapter. Jim commented, “I found that I was taking on too much by trying to be both the state representative for the South Central Chapter and the chair of the South Central board. Also, South Central does not have a chapter coordinator and I have been doing a lot of the coordinator work. I needed to cut back some place and I didn’t want to drop the work I do to keep our chapter active. Also, Kelly Firkins, who is in our chapter, was already on the state board as an at-large member and has been able to switch over to being our chapter representative, which makes room for another person to serve on the state board as an at-large representative. I think both chapter work and state board work are important and I will continue to take an interest in the work of the state board and support Kelly in her efforts to serve as our representative to the

Tjepkema continued on page 29
Grazefest Minnesota 2010 at
Mill City Farmers 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
• Music, food, entertainment and fun!

Admission: Free to the Mill City Farmers Market.

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.

Join the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota for a celebration of the sun, grass and pasture raised foods!

www.sfa-mn.org
www.millcityfarmersmarket.org

Stay tuned for more information about on-farm Grazefest happening in September!
Mesko continued from page 1
issues that matter to our world today – food and energy, land and environment, healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy communities. These are ideas and topics which our culture is finally embracing as more important than consumerism and material wealth. The opportunity for SFA members to address these issues and ultimately shape our world is real. The things you do as an individual member of SFA matter to the organization, but much more importantly, they matter to Minnesota and the world. Taking care of the environment, producing food and consuming food sustainably (things you already do) are going to make a better world for our children and grandchildren.

Responsibility. With great opportunity comes great responsibility. As a member of SFA, you are looked upon as a leader in sustainable agriculture. Everything you do, from attending an SFA-sponsored event, to serving on the SFA board of directors, is important to the future of the organization. Here are some specific actions you can take that will strengthen SFA, and strengthen our movement.

• Tell a friend about SFA. Surely, some of your friends are interested in food, people and land. Let them know about SFA and what we do. Invite them to the SFA related events you are going to be a part of.
• Consider a contribution to SFA. The continued success of our organization is increasingly dependent on a diversified stream of revenues from grants, membership and individual donations. If you have questions, please call me at 763-260-0209.

• Get involved. Check out our website (www.sfa-mn.org) for events information and make yourself seen! Throughout the growing season, we have several great events including:
  • GrazeFest at the Mill City Farmers’ Market on Saturday, June 19, 2010
  • The Festival of Farms on Saturday, July 10, 2010
  • The Fifth Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival on Saturday, August 14, 2010
  • The hands-on, on-farm version of GrazeFest will take place in September with the exact date and location yet to be determined
  • Events in your local chapter as well

Make sure to mark your calendars for SFA’s 20th Annual Conference on Saturday, February 19, 2011, location TBD. This milestone conference may just be the best one yet! Thank you for your membership in SFA, and thank you for being a part of the future of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota!

An afternoon with farmer Joel Salatin
Sunday, April 18 :: Bell Museum, University of Minnesota

Author and American farmer Joel Salatin will speak on ecologically beneficial and sustainable farming practices at this special event. Salatin was featured in Michael Pollan’s The Omnivore’s Dilemma and in the documentary film FRESH.

Three events to choose from!
• “Can you feed the world? Answering elitism, production and choice” 3:00-4:30pm. $25
• VIP Reception: A reception to raise funds for FRESH’s ongoing efforts. The reception will feature food by the Birchwood Cafe. 4:30-5:30 pm. $50. Limited to 50 people.
• “The sheer ecstasy of being a lunatic farmer” 6:00-7:30pm. $25

Tickets to any of these events includes a pass to see FRESH at the Riverview Theater, April 20-22.

Registration is required and tickets can be purchased in-person at the Birchwood Cafe (3311 E 25th St, Minneapolis, MN) or at www.freshthemovie.com. This event is co-sponsored by the Bell Museum, the Birchwood Cafe, the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program, and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture.
University of Minnesota Extension is coordinating several “Farm to Cafeteria” workshops on bringing local foods to community cafeterias around Minnesota in late April. Community cafeterias are those found in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, colleges or similar institutional settings. Producers, food service staff, parents, teachers, Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) coordinators, non-governmental organizations, and other community members interested in supporting the local foods movement in their region are encouraged to participate.

Overview Session & Panel Discussion
An afternoon session will feature a panel of producers, food service staff and educators with hands-on experience selling local foods to institutions and others involved in local foods. Panelists will share their expertise on rules and regulations, how to get started and overcome barriers, and how to identify resources.

Two sessions are offered in the evening:

Farmer Track: How do you develop a food safety plan for your farm to market to institutions?
Fruit and vegetable growers—do you have a food safety plan for your farm? Do you need one? Some wholesalers and institutional buyers are asking farmers for their food safety plan—so having one could be a marketing advantage! Michele Schermann, University of Minnesota Agricultural Health and Safety Research Fellow, will give a brief overview of fresh produce microbial hazards, explain the GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) audit process, and provide resources and templates to create a food safety plan.

School Track: How can we create a Farm to School (K-12) plan for the 2010-11 school year?
Join SHIP coordinators, food service directors and other community experts for more in-depth discussion, Q&A and strategies for menu planning, procurement, and working with schools. Participants will begin drafting a farm to school plan utilizing a planning guide and the Minnesota Farm to School Online Toolkit (www.mn-farmtoschool.umn.edu). This session is facilitated by Lynn Mader from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). IATP is providing technical assistance to the Minnesota Department of Health, SHIP grantees who choose to work on Farm to School.

Networking Supper
The evening meal will offer a time for networking to make connections to sell/buy local products. This will be an opportunity for you to make new connections and build new relationships while enjoying a locally produced meal. Farmers are encouraged to bring their business cards and farm brochures to exchanged with food service directors.

The workshop is a collaborative effort among the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, University of Minnesota Extension, the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the Statewide Health Improvement Program, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minnesota Grown, and Renewing the Countryside.

For more information on the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu. For more information on Extension, visit www.extension.umn.edu.
Southwest Minnesota Farm to Cafeteria Workshop

Tuesday, April 27 – 2:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Shalom Hill Farm, 42194 County Rd 3, Windom, MN (www.shalomhillfarm.org)
(Space is limited at the Southwest Workshop; register early to reserve your spot)

This workshop open to the public and a $10 registration fee covers the cost of a locally-produced meal. Pre-registration is required by April 23. To register online, visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu and click on “Farm to Cafeteria,” or contact Anne Borgendale at communications@sfa-mn.org or 320-226-6318. - www.misa.umn.edu/SW_Farm_to_Cafeteria.html

Southeast Minnesota Farm to Cafeteria Workshop

Wednesday, April 28 – 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Ironwood Springs, 7291 County Rd 6 SW, Stewartville, MN (www.ironwoodsprings.com)

This workshop are open to the public and a $10 registration fee covers the cost of a locally-produced meal. Pre-registration is appreciated. To register online, visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu and click on “Farm to Cafeteria.” - www.misa.umn.edu/SE_Farm_to_Cafeteria.html

Northeast Minnesota Farm to Cafeteria Workshop

Thursday, April 29 – 2:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Cloquet Forestry Center, 175 University Road, Cloquet, MN (http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu)

This workshop are open to the public and a $10 registration fee covers the cost of a locally-produced meal. Pre-registration is appreciated. To register online, visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu and click on “Farm to Cafeteria.” - www.misa.umn.edu/NE_Farm_to_Cafeteria.html
Farm to Cafeteria Resource Websites:

Farm to Cafeteria:
Farm to School: Minnesota Toolkit for Food Service - http://www.mn-fartoolkit.umn.edu/
National Farm to School Resources - http://www.medusa.umn.edu/
Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) - http://www.farmtoschool.org/
Health Care Without Harm - http://www.noharm.org
IATP Local Foods - http://www.iatp.org/localFoods/

Farmers:
Marketing Local Foods - http://www.misa.umn.edu/Marketing_Local_Food2
Food Safety Plan (templates) - http://www.safety.cfans.umn.edu/FSP4U.html
National GAPs Program, Cornell University - http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/
USDA audit checklists and score sheet - http://www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp
RSDP Local Foods - http://www.localfoods.umn.edu

State Health Insurance Program (SHIP):
SHIP nutrition interventions for School and Community
http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ implementation/nutritionindex.html

Who can help?

University of Minnesota:
Stephanie Heim, UM Ext. Farm to School Coordinator - heim0106@umn.edu – 507-319-0263
Linda Kingery, NW RSDP Executive Director - kinge002@umn.edu – 218-281-8697
Beth Nelson, MISA Information Exchange - schre002@umn.edu – 800-909-6472
Michele Schermann, Agricultural Health and Safety Research Fellow - scher019@umn.edu - 612- 624-7444

Minnesota Department of Health and SHIP:
Lynn Mader, Farm to School Specialist, IATP - lmader@iatp.org - 612-708-8635
Your local SHIP coordinator

USDA NRCS:
Your local USDA Service Center

Others:
Anne Borgendale, Sustainable Farming Association and Buy Fresh Buy Local of the Upper Minnesota River Valley – communications@sfa-mn.org - 320-226-6318
What I’ve learned about implementing energy conservation and production on my farm. Small farm energy independence for the everyday person.

I started my foray into alternative energy in 1972 when I personally lobbied the newly-elected freshman Representative, Jim Oberstar. I was eight years old. For some inexplicable reason, I loved the idea of solar power via photovoltaic cells and water-powered (hydrogen) cars. I reasoned with Honorable Mr. Oberstar that nuclear power was a problem waiting to happen and solar power had more long-term merit. Where did I come up with these ideas? I’m not certain, but I suspect my parents had something to do with it. They’ve always been forward thinking and progressive. Organic gardening, Mother Earth News, you get the picture…

Since 1972, I’ve done a lot of research into how I can implement energy conservation in my own life and work. I am a bit pragmatic, however. I’m not going to spend money without some hope of payback. If an energy conservation system doesn’t pay itself off within ten years or less, I generally don’t consider it. I’ve had energy audits and engineering analysis done on my farm in recent years and have come to some conclusions about alternative energy. In a nutshell, it boils down to one simple practice. Use less energy.

Isn’t this the stupidest thing you’ve ever heard? What kind of rocket scientist developed this sophomoric conclusion? I’ve spent too much time AND energy figuring out that no one has enough money to install an alternative energy system in their residence or farm that will cashflow when there is too much energy used.

No, I’m not going to suggest composting toilets and homemade wind turbines, though these are just fine for those who have more time than money. I love homesteading magazines and do-it-yourself seminars, but these are often over-the-top and not very practical for most of us who really need to farm. Many farms (not mine) use tens of thousands of kilowatts of electricity every month and thousands of dollars of propane to heat barns and/or greenhouses. This is a stark reality for many livestock producers.

Over the last few years, I’ve made some foundational changes to my farm to prepare for complete energy independence. This concept is somewhat elusive like ‘sustainability’ but I think it’s doable over time with proper planning.

First, I have strategically reduced my heaviest electrical loads. It’s those heavy amperage devices that suck the most power. Yes, I have a few for backup, but eventually, my goal will be to go most of the calendar year without ever turning them on.

I received bids for installation of geothermal (ground-source) heating and cooling. Two majors factors eliminated that from my long-term strategy. One, it needed two 50 amp circuits (or more). Second, the $60,000 installation cost. We simply couldn’t afford it. Geothermal got crossed off my list, though I like the concept tremendously. I substituted that with an air-source heat pump that only uses one 40 amp circuit. Someday, I dream of disconnecting from the grid for good. Those high amperage appliances are like a ball and chain to the power company and their ever increasing rates and base charges. Even if I don’t use a single kilowatt hour of power, my base charge is almost $50 per month just to be connected to the power line. Ouch!

Secondly, I worked on making my heat transfer medium – glycol water. Why? Because I can heat glycol water with nearly any heat source. Remember my love for solar power? I don’t think solar PV is really economical for northern climates, but solar hot water has to be one of the quickest payback systems one can install. You can invest in the SRCC-rated systems and pay top dollar or you can build your own for about one quarter the cost.

Solar hot water systems are great, but you can’t use them exclusively. They’re a great boost on a sunny day, but then there’s the long winter night, plus cloudy days. Once a glycol-based hydronic system is started in your residence and/or out buildings, you can use any number of heating sources. Boost your solar hot water system with an insulated heat storage tank sized accordingly and a primary heating source for those long winter nights.

Alternative Farm Energy continued on page 24
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota:

STANDING AT THE FOREFRONT OF SUSTAINABILITY IN MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE

You can be a great encouragement to everyone involved in the effort to make a difference for sustainable farms and local food in Minnesota. Through SFA, farmers have the opportunity to be part of events like Grazefest Minnesota, Minnesota Garlic Festival, and new this year — Festival of Farms™.

In the past, SFA has conducted these programs by depending heavily on our granting partners. As we move toward 2020, we expect grant funds to become less reliable than they are today. We hopefully anticipate that contributions from supporters like you will move SFA toward a financial sustainability based solely on members.

Would you consider donating our 2010 Fundraising Campaign? Our goal is raised $20,000 by July 1, 2010. A gift from you in any amount will further our ability to make important programs available. Please fill out the enclosed contribution form and include it with your donation. You can also contribute online at www.sfa-mn.org. Just click on the piggy bank.

SFA stands at the forefront of agriculture, expanding opportunities for youth and beginning farmers, providing educational seminars for sustainable farmers, and connecting the sustainable farming community within Minnesota. Please partner with us for sustainability.

– The SFA Fundraising Group

Support SFA with a Sustaining Contribution

☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500  ☐ $1000  ☐ Other: ________

Name: ____________________________________ Business/Org/Farm: _____________________________
Address & City: ____________________________________________ State: ________ Zip: _____________
Phone: __________________________________ Email: ________________________________

Please make checks payable to: SFA of MN. Mail the form and check to: SFA of MN, 7356 Cable Rd, Little Falls, MN 56345-5433. You can also contribute online at www.sfa-mn.org. Just click on the piggy bank.

Thank You!
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

Date:

SFA Annual Membership (for a family)  $30  (Not Tax Deductible)
SFA Annual Youth/Student Membership (for one student)  $10

Name 1:  First  Last
Name 2:  First  Last

Farm/Business/Organization:

Address:
Address Line 2:
City:  State:  Zip:

Country:

Home Phone:  Work Phone:
Mobile Phone:
Email:
Website:

Chapter:

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

Would you like to receive SFA's biweekly Events Email?  Yes  No

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

Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
www.sfa-mn.org
(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
- Other
- Policy
- Processing
- Sponsor
- Youth

Thank you!
Help SFA reach our fundraising goal!

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s fundraising goal for fiscal year 2009/2010 is $20,000. Each cow below represents $1000. We’ve already raised almost $12,000. With your help we can make our goal.

Thanks!
Alternative Farm Energy continued from page 20 and cloudy days. Some could use propane to heat their hydronic system, but I suggest investigating a wood gasification boiler. Check out www.cozyheat.net for a good starter on gasification boilers.

I’m not talking about those smoky brutes that sit out in your lawn belching greenhouse gases. The newest gasification boilers can sit inside your house or shop and are better than 90% efficient. They produce very little, to no, smoke and they use half, or less, the wood other outdoor boilers use. Just think if you use 10 cord of wood per year today, these new units could reduce your wood usage to 3 or 4 cord per year. For many farms, a decent-sized heating system could be installed for less than $20,000, which includes a wood gasification boiler, solar hot water and a heat storage tank. Many farms are spending $2000 to $5000, or more, per month on energy bills. It would take only a couple of years to pay back a hydronic system like I’m proposing.

The neat thing about making a hydronic system the main backbone of heat generation is the very low electricity usage. There are only a few circulation pumps and fans to move the glycol water and blow air through radiators. Next, install a small solar PV or wind turbine system to carry the load of those pumps and fans. Now, we can see a payback for the solar PV and wind systems, since they are very modestly sized and can be installed yourself. Don’t forget that solar and wind systems need batteries for electricity storage. These should be the new absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries. They don’t require maintenance and they are rated to last over ten years.

In summary, this is what I’m suggesting:

- Reduce or eliminate high amperage appliances (I’m talking of stuff that’s greater than 30 to 40 amps).
- Convert your heat transfer medium to glycol water (hydronics) whenever possible.
- Install a wood gasification boiler and insulated heat storage tank.
- Install a solar hot water system connected to the same hydronics system.
- Install a small solar PV or wind turbine system to power the circulation pumps and fans.

I’m not giving the system details and where to shop and buy everything. This should really be designed by a knowledgeable heating engineer to factor in all loads, sizes and other complexities. If you keep some higher amperage appliances like I have, then at least take advantage of your power company’s off-peak hookups. Over time, these systems will be my backups, not my primary. I still like the idea of being able to take a two week vacation in the winter time and not have to worry about the house freezing.

Today, 38 years later, Jim Oberstar is still a Minnesota congressman and I’m still pursuing alternative energy independence. With God’s help, maybe I’m almost there. I think every farm should be capable of energy independence as a national imperative. Maybe I’ll lobby my congressman about that… Well, I suspect this is best implemented at a grassroots level. Feel free to email me with your thoughts. mdí@sfa-mn.org

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**Minnesota Garlic Festival**

“Family Friendly, Fun Filled and Fragrant!”

**August 14, 2010**

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

McLeod County Fairgrounds
Hutchinson, MN

(all weather event)

www.sfa-mn.org

Sponsored by the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

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Accepting New Vendors!

**Farmers, Artisans, Nutrition & Health Professionals:**

Here’s an opportunity to market your products & services in a large-crowd setting that is all about sustainability, local foods & environmental stewardship.

Contact Dennis Ingle,
Vendor Coordinator, (320) 583-7987
inglefarm@hutchtel.net
Your Vision for the Future of Rural Minnesota

Contact
Jerry Ford, SFA of MN
Events & Youth Outreach Coordinator
7616 25th St SW
Howard Lake, MN 55340
jerry@sfa-mn.org
(320) 543-3394

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

☐ Age 6-9  ☐ Age 10-13  ☐ Age 14-18

Media:  
Painting  Drawing  Sculpture  Photography  Mosaic

Title: _______________________________________________________

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

2010 Entry Form
(One entry per category per person)

The Minnesota Garlic Festival Presents:
Youth Arts Competition 2010

Fifth Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival
Saturday, August 14, 2010
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
McLeod County Fairgrounds
Hutchinson, MN
www.sfa-mn.org

Sponsors
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
Minnesota Garlic Festival

Supporting organizations include...
Submit your artwork
On the theme: “What is your vision for the future of rural Minnesota?”

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

Cultural and biological diversity in rural areas
New or alternative energy sources to run farms and small towns
A new generation of farmers; the future of Minnesota communities
Healthy, locally produced foods
Living in harmony with nature
Sustainable family farms

Published

Rules & Regulations

The artist must be a Minnesota resident.

Age Groups

- Age 4-11
- Age 12-13
- Age 14-18

Entering artwork:

artwork may also be delivered in person to the McLeod County Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 14, 2010 from 8:00am-10:00am. Please will all artwork prior to the fair. Artwork may be returned if the artist provides a return shipping container with pre-paid postage on Sunday, August 15, 2010 from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

Eligibility

The artist must be a Minnesota resident.

Awards

There will be one best-in-show prize and one winner per age category. Winners will be announced at the Minnesota Garlic Festival main stage on August 14, 2010. Winners will be one person-per-show prize and one picture per person.

Delivery & Pick up

Artwork may be shipped to Minnesota Garlic Festival, 7616 25th St SW, Howard Lake, MN 55349. Artwork may also be delivered in person to the McLeod County Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 14, 2010 from 8:00am-10:00am. Artwork may be picked up at the fairgrounds from 6:00pm-8:00pm. Artwork may also be delivered in person to the McLeod County Fairgrounds on August 15, 2010 from 6:00pm-8:00pm.
Spring Events Calendar

Apr 10 Youth Sustainability Confabulation – Gustavus Adolphus College (Jackson Campus Center), St. Peter, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or SFA’s YESA Facebook page.

Apr 10 Urban Farming Workshop – Minneapolis College of Art and Design. For more info visit www.pricoldclimate.org/event/urban_farming_production_skills.

Apr 10 Growing Fruits in the City – St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, 2742 15th Ave S., Minneapolis, MN. For more info call The Minnesota Project at (651) 789-3324 or email Fruits@mnproject.org.

Apr 10 One Book, One Community – Slow Food Lake Superior Event, Peace Church, Duluth, MN. For more info: slowfoodlakesuperior@gmail.com, www.slowfoodlakesuperior.org.

Apr 11 Crow River Chapter 2010 Spring Social: Urban Farming and Gardening – 340 Summit Ave, St. Paul, MN. For more info and to RSVP contact Jerry Ford (jerry@sfa-mn.org or 320-543-3394).

Apr 11 Coteau Ridge Chapter Meeting on Organic Lawn Care – Tyler, MN. For more info contact Sunny Ruthchild at 507-629-8276 or sruthchild@redred.com.

Apr 13 Farm to School: Planning for the 2010-11 School Year - Chippewa County Courthouse, Assembly Room, Montevideo, MN. To register RSVP to Cindy Skulstad (cskulstad@countryside.co.swift.mn.us or 320-564-3010. Questions: Contact Lynn Mader (lmader@iatp.org or 612-708-8635.)


Apr 16 SFA of MN State Board Meeting – Paramount Theatre, St. Cloud, MN. (12:30pm – 5:00pm) For more info contact Chris Kudrna at 320-202-1708 or ckudrna@charter.net.

Apr 17 Growing Fruits in the City – Dodge Nature Center, West St. Paul, MN. For more info call The Minnesota Project at (651) 789-3324 or email Fruits@mnproject.org.

Apr 17 Renovating Old Fruit Trees – Dodge Nature Center, West St. Paul, MN. For more info call The Minnesota Project at (651) 789-3324 or email Fruits@mnproject.org.

Apr 18 Organic Greenhouse Management Workshop – Gardens of Eagan, Farmington, MN. Please pre-register by April 12 by contacting Parker Forsell at 507-523-3366 or parker@landstewardshipproject.org.


Apr 18 Joel Salatin VIP Reception: A reception to raise funds for FRESH the movie’s ongoing efforts – Birchwood Café, Minneapolis, MN. More info at www.freshthemovie.com.

Apr 22 Community Eco Fair 2010 – Woodland Elementary School, 1410 S. McKay Ave, Alexandria, MN. For more info visit www.alexandria.k12.mn.us/ecofair.

Apr 23 Horticulture Day – University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center – Lamberton, MN. For more info visit http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu.
Apr 24 Permaculture Design Certification Weekend Courses – Minneapolis, MN. (First of five weekends). More info at www.pricoldclimate.org/event/permaculture_design_certification_course.

Apr 27 Southwest MN Farm to Cafeteria Networking Meeting – Shalom Hill Farm, Windom, MN. For more info visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

Apr 28 Southeast MN Farm to Cafeteria Networking and Planning Meeting – Ironwood Springs, Stewartville, MN. For more info visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.


Apr 29 Northeast Minnesota Farm to Cafeteria Workshop – Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, MN. For more info visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

May 1 Outdoor Food Workshop – Moonstone Farm, Montevideo, MN. Space is limited. To register, email Audrey Arner at audrey@moonstonefarm.net.

May 1-2 Living Green Expo - State Fairgrounds, St. Paul, MN. For more info visit www.livinggreen.org.


May 16 Slow Food Minnesota Event: Where the Wild Things Are – Ralph Lenz Farm, Lake City, MN. For more info visit www.slowfoodmn.org/events.html.

May 20 Greening Transportation – Northstar Rail – Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) – MN Pollution Control Agency, Baxter, MN. For more info contact Stephen Mikkelson at 1-800-657-3864.


Jun 17 Training the next generation of green workers (and a few old dogs too) - Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) – MN Pollution Control Agency, Baxter, MN. For more info contact Stephen Mikkelson at 1-800-657-3864.

Jun 19 Grazefest @ the Mill City Farmers’ Market – Minneapolis, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org or www.millcityfarmersmarket.org.

Jun 22 Agronomy Field Tour – University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center, Waseca, MN. For more info visit http://sroc.cfans.umn.edu/.

Jul 10 Festival of Farms – Minnesota. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org.

Jul 11 Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Farm Tour - Mary Ellen Frame’s farm, Northfield, MN. For more info contact CR/H Chapter Coordinator Kathy Zeman at kzeman@kmwb.net or (507) 664-9446. (Bad weather backup date – July 18)


Aug 14 Fifth Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival – McLeod County Fairgrounds, Hutchinson, MN. For more info visit www.sfa-mn.org.
Tjepkema continued from page 14

state board. Of course, I do plan to continue to be very
active at the chapter level.”

Concerning SFA’s place in the future of agriculture
in Minnesota, Jim thinks SFA is evolving. He stated, “I
think SFA should continue to grow and should become
an even stronger voice for sustainable ag, which can
play a large role in advancing sustainable ag to the
point where it is practiced by everyone. SFA is in a
good position for bringing together farmers and others
interested in improving agriculture. The changes needed
in agriculture will probably only come if people work
together to make these changes.”

Jim also feels that SFA needs to continue its
fundraising efforts. He commented, “I do hope that
the CornerPost readers will respond to the requests for
donations to the Sustaining Fund.” He continued, “We
need to support the efforts of our new Executive Director,
John Mesko, because he took this job even though we are
short on funds, and he is working very hard to keep our
work on track. I think we should show our support for
him by making donations to the Sustaining Fund.”

In spite of being a person who is not big on
awards, it is an honor for him to be recognized. Jim
commented, “I am not a great one for giving out or
getting awards. However, I am pleased to get this award
because I am very much a supporter of SFA and have
been active in the organization almost from its start. I
have been active both on the state board and at the
chapter level. Somehow I have been able to find time to
be very active in SFA, but I think the support SFA gets
from other members who don’t have as much free time as
I have should also be recognized. All the contributions
made by many people to SFA are important to keeping
it going and that is why I am not sure any one should be
picked out to get a special award.”

Beyond SFA

While both of Jim’s parents came from rural
agricultural backgrounds, he was raised in the city. His
family had a fairly large garden and his mother did some
canning and food preservation. He also received some
experience with milking, haying and fieldwork on an
uncle’s farm during a few summer vacations.

Instead of the on farm experience leading to an
interest in sustainable agriculture, it instead started
with his interest in insects. He began to study insects
at Michigan State University (MSU) in the Entomology
department, which is in the School of Agriculture. While
at MSU he worked
on pest and disease control in the summer for the
Michigan Blueberry Growers Association and did a
Masters thesis on nematode pests of blueberries.
Nematodes are not insects, but they were included in the
Entomology department. He continued his nematode
studies at Purdue University. He stated, “I did basic
research on them, but I also received some agricultural
training. At that time I developed an interest in soil
biology and the ideas of E.F. Schumacker on the use of
appropriate technology for rural development. I also
began gardening and sold vegetables at a local farmers
market.”

Jim has lived in Clarks Grove (near Albert Lea)
since moving to Minnesota to work for a small private
agricultural research and consulting company. Before
moving to Minnesota, he was involved in agriculture
through his work with a small crop consulting company
in Indiana. Following his job for the consulting company,
Jim started his own small crop consulting business.

In his consulting work Jim started out scouting fields
for corn and soybean growers, and later specialized in
consulting with potato, carrot and onion growers. He
has done some work in county extension offices and in
a conservation office. Jim has also had a little direct
experience with “big business” agriculture from doing
quality control work at Hormel. He even spent a few
months working there as a production worker. Jim is
currently retired from research. He has an interest in
writing and has written articles about some of the Seed
Saver’s Exchange’s most active members. He also spends
time gardening and is trying to raise more and more of
the food for his family’s consumption.

Jim is married and has two daughters and two
grandchildren. His wife is the supervisor of children’s
mental health services in Freeborn County. His older
daughter is a civil engineer and his younger daughter is
an art student at the Chicago Institute of Art.

He has also been a volunteer for international
agricultural work participating in three projects, 2-
3 weeks in length. The projects were done in three
countries - Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and Bolivia. According
to Jim, “I enjoyed this work, which involved some direct
contact with farmers and people who work with farmers
in these countries through projects set up by ACDI/
VOCA, a non-profit group that recruits volunteers and
receive money from the US government to organize these
projects and pay the volunteer’s travel expenses.”
Dan Moe continued from page 31
7 acres of woods and 18 acres of filter strips. To cover land taxes most of our tillable land is currently rented to a cousin who farm it conventionally. In 2010, we will be operating and transitioning 9 to 10 acres of vegetables and berries. Strawberries are our signature crop. Soon 60 to 80 percent of the farm will be in perennial berries and stone fruit trees. The remaining 20 to 40 percent will be vegetables. We are transitioning the farm into organic production to be better able to identify with my need to grow high value nutritious food. I am also joining many farmers who are interested in year around production by investigating high tunnel production.

The seed to become a farmer was planted years ago. Now that seed has sprouted and I am farming and learning alone side the many farmers in our area. On Saturday, July 10 SFA is having a statewide farm tour event. Our farm will be one of the farms available to come and see. If you are in the Hutchinson area that day I would be honored to have you stop in and say “Hi”. My contact information is on our web site www.thefarmofmn.com. Please do contact me if you have a question, I can always talk about farming. Feeding people healthy nutritious food is what I get up each morning thinking about. Many people do see farming as a great life and I will have to agree. My belief, as an adult, is that we can choose our quality of life. I need to have nutritious food available for people to be able to live the life they want.

Mary Jo Forbord, former SFA of MN Executive Director, Starbuck, MN, was also honored with a SFA Distinguished Service Award. Read more about Mary Jo in the Summer Edition of the CornerPost. (L-R) Mary Jo, Luverne Forbord (Mary Jo’s husband), and Mary Hanks, SFA State Board Secretary.

Carl Ziebarth, Faribault, MN, was honored with the Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award. This award is given to a Farmer or Farm Family, currently farming or retired, that has dedicated many years of their life to the advancement of sustainable farming in Minnesota. Read more about Carl in the Summer Edition of the CornerPost. Carl is pictured with his wife, Betty Ziebarth.
Meet Dan Moe

I first became aware of SFA at the Minnesota Organic Conference in January 2009 where I met Jerry Ford at the SFA booth. Jerry had a display of garlic there, which is what started the conversation. I was having trouble growing garlic and Jerry talked about his farm a little, but he talked more of the like minded people in SFA, who share information back and forth about farming. Being surrounded by families of conventional farmers who keep telling me that the only correct farming was the industrial conventional monoculture that they did; it was refreshing to talk, visit, and share ideas with someone who thought like I did about farming. Jerry discovered where my farm is and invited me to join the Crow River chapter. Just this January I was elected to the board of the Crow River chapter.

I am blessed and honored to be on the farm that my grandfather purchased back in the 1940’s. My mother grew up on this farm and the land has always been in the family. When I was seven I got the opportunity to spend the summer here with my grandfather. I was able to see farming through his eyes. That was when I fell in love with farming. A few years later, my folks decided to move to California and we lived around the big city of Los Angles. However, by my mid-high school my family purchased land between L.A. and Santa Barbra, in Camarillo. I meet my wife Donna there, we are high school sweethearts, and started an avocado ranch. Orchard work can be a part time venture after you get all the systems in place, so I also started working construction to earn extra money. 2009 was the first year that I farmed full time and could proudly call myself a farmer. Farming is now my full-time profession.

Donna and I moved back to my family’s Minnesota farm in 2000. Our farm, The Farm of Minnesota, is located between Hutchinson and Dassel on Hwy 15. In the summer of 2001, we planted a small garden to see what we can do with the farm. In 2003, I planted my first strawberries. Year after year I have experimented with different methods of crop management to help discover what to grow and the best way to grow it. In 2008 friends suggested that I run my farm as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. At the time I had no idea what a CSA was, but started learning. In 2009 we had 19 customers and we are on our way to exceeding 60 in 2010. We are also working on expanding our market share into some restaurants and food co-ops.

Our farm is 160 acres and that includes two lakes,
mission: we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.