A New Dawn of Farming

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's Formation & Growth

A joint publication of the Land Stewardship Project and the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

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Contents

Chapter One

The History of the SFA

Learning from SFA Chapter Development .......................................................... 3
SFA Statement of Purpose ........................................................................ 6
The SFA Handbook ...................................................................................... 7
The SFA logo ............................................................................................... 10
Some previous & current funders of SFA .................................................. 18

Chapter Two

The SFA’s continuing efforts to focus on its farmer-to-farmer roots

SFA leaders talk about the organization’s past accomplishments and its future challenges ......................................................... 12

Chapter Three

A Survey of Chapter Members

Survey shows SFA makes a difference, poses questions for future ......................................................................................... 20

Appendices

A. The structure of the Minnesota SFA .......................................................... 22
B. SFA of Minnesota Chapter Charter ............................................................ 23

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The History of the SFA

Learning From SFA
Chapter Development

Organizations evolve out of circumstances, resources and need. To track the evolution of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota and its chapters, there is an historical, political and economic context worth examining.

The 1980s were a time of tremendous change in rural America, much of it negative as far as the land and its people were concerned. Various people were responding to the economic and environmental travesty that was taking place on the land by creating grassroots organizations. The Land Stewardship Project was founded in 1982 by Ron Kroese and Victor Ray. Simultaneously, groups like Practical Farmers of Iowa and the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society were developing, fostered by Iowa State University Extension and the Center for Rural Affairs respectively.

Kroese and Ray believed that how we treat the soil is reflected in the nature of our rural communities. LSP brought Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson to speak with rural community members about that very issue.

"The soil is the great connector of our lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer, restorer and resurrector by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it, we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life."

—Wendell Berry

With books such as Meeting the Expectations of the Land, Wes Jackson's influence preceded his visits. He brought forth the idea that agriculture should not try to impose itself relentlessly on nature, but that the land itself states, if you listen carefully, what should and could be done upon it.

It became clear to LSP that it was important to organize people from all across the region. LSP wanted to honor the pioneering attitude that served as the foundation for sustainable agriculture. It also wanted to bring forth information on use of integrated farming systems, not only as a respectable thing to be doing, but also the right thing to set the course for the future.

By the mid-80s it became increasingly obvious, as the so-called “farm crisis” deepened, that factors beyond attitude were driving the way people were farming. Producers were being forced to farm in ways that they may not have necessarily agreed with due to overwhelming government policies, economic incentives and the difficulty associated with low prices and high input costs. There was need for more than talk. Demonstration and action were called for. LSP started holding winter workshops and summer field days for farmers to learn from each other. The new organization also started reaching out into the policy arena. Ron Kroese and others linked up with Marty Strange from the Center for Rural Affairs and helped form the organization that eventually became the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

As LSP began to wrestle with the policies of government programs and private corporations, the organization inevitably became controversial, making some people uneasy.

Farmer interest in networking and lack of opportunities at that time

When LSP organized the Stewardship Farming Program in the Lewiston area in 1987, it limited participation to 25 farmers. This was an effort to link farm families who had an interest in learning about and sharing sustainable farming techniques. This program focused
on researching four integrated farming practices. Farmer-members of this initiative met with researchers to develop research plans and to analyze data. They also shared what they had learned with other farmers through field days and winter workshops. This group quickly became quite well-known, and many farmers who were not part of it were envious of the fellowship these families were enjoying. It became clear there was a need for forming some sort of permanent venue that would bring people together in a farmer-to-farmer information sharing type situation.

The time was right for the development of an organization like the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. The work of LSP was still ethics, stewardship talk and policy work. But a sharing network was needed that transcended political boundaries. We needed a politically neutral place to explore improving ways of farming and profitability.

In late winter 1988, LSP hired Tammy Keith-Wellstone to set about doing the organizing for this farmer-to-farmer network. A steering committee settled on the name Sustainable Farming Association of Southeast Minnesota at its first meeting on March 23, 1988. Mike Lovlien and Bob Goss were elected co-chairmen of the committee and Sheila Nordgaard was elected secretary-treasurer.

Other steering committee members included Ralph Lentz, Robert Love, Carmene and Dale Pangrac, Gerald and Margaret Redig, Ron Keller and Jerry Wethold. There was also much support and involvement on the part of Mike and Jennifer Rupprecht and Greg Erickson. The SFA polled its 30 dues-paying members to find out which “low-input” farming practices were already being tried in the area and came up with the following ideas:

- Publish an area newsletter highlighting local sustainable farming.
- Publish a directory of southeast Minnesota farmers willing to share their experience with low-chemical weed control, manure and nitrogen management, alternative forages, pasture management, etc.
- Sponsor summer farm tours in individual counties.
- Hold an annual winter meeting and workshop.
- Organize an equipment exchange
- Discuss “sustainable” research ideas with the University of Minnesota

Interestingly, most aspects of this initial list continue to be the foundation of activities in SFA chapters 10 years later.

In October 1988, inspired by successful organizing in the southeast, LSP opened an office in western Minnesota, fueled by the creative imaginations and fundraising of Ron Kroese and Patrick Moore, and funded by the USDA’s new Low Input Sustainable Agriculture program, the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute and private foundations. Audrey Arner and Anita Zelenka were hired to hold a series of winter workshops that would serve to bring together sustainably-oriented farmers from a target area between Morris and Marshall (the resulting participants in the embryonic network represented a much broader geographic area). A steering committee first met July 24, 1989. Among the committee members were Craig Murphy, David Michaelson, Ann Fernholz, Kent Goplen, Kurt Arner, Dick Jepson and Stan Glimadal. There was also much support and involvement on the part of Gerard, Mary and Ed Radermacher. That summer two field days were held. In August, a new SFA newsletter called the Network News was published and a van-load of Minnesota farmers attended Dick and Sharon Thompson’s famous field day in Boone, Iowa. An official name was also decided upon at that time: The Sustainable Farming Association of Western Minnesota. This name was chosen to be consistent with the Southeast Chapter and to be conducive to forming additional chapters. By October there were 41 paid members.

Articles of Incorporation were submitted to the Minnesota Secretary of State in November 1989, the cost of which was split between the
Southeast and Western Chapters. The Articles allowed for chapter formation and were designed to give each chapter a significant amount of freedom to create their own identity. They were signed by Bob Goss, Carmene Pangrac and Craig Murphy. By-laws, co-developed by the two chapters, were finalized in March 1990.

By the late 1980s, the outlook for yet another chapter, the South Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association, was bright. The idea for this chapter grew out of the fact that members of the Southeast Chapter found they were driving long distances to attend field days and meetings. They needed a more localized group to organize around. With the help of Tammy Keith-Wellstone, in only one year’s time farmers in south-central Minnesota held several house meetings, set up a steering committee and organized a June field day. By the time of this new chapter’s December annual meeting, membership had grown to 60. Their reach extended roughly from Waseca to the north, Blue Earth to the west, the Iowa border to the south and Austin to the east. The steering committee was comprised of Dwight and Becky Ault, Keith and Barb Bakken, Terry Cunningham, Lafe Ieoger, Owen and Virginia Lorenz, Brian and Carol Schultz, Rich and Deb Thorson, and George and Leona Yokiel. Barb Bakken went on to serve as chapter coordinator with W.K Kellogg Foundation financial support in winter 1994.

On December 3, 1990 the first meeting of a steering committee to form the “Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota” was held with Ray Eiswald, Bob Miner (co-chairs), Jim Pratt (treasurer), Wilbert Koopman, Glen Borgerding, Bob Miner, Beth Corymb Everett, Audrey Arner and Jim Schmidt. A chapter charter was immediately submitted. The geographic focus would be Stearns, Morrison, Todd, Douglas, Pope and eastern Ottertail counties. Start-up organizing assistance was provided by the Rural Life Program of the Diocese of St. Cloud and LSP in Montevideo.

The first issue of the Central Minnesota Chapter newsletter, Searching and Working toward a Sustainable Society, was published in January 1991, with this statement:

“The state association and its affiliated chapters are an outgrowth of the work of the Land Stewardship Project. LSP’s objectives in organizing these chapters are:

1. To provide an all-important social support mechanism for Minnesota farmers seeking to make the transition to more sustainable farming practices;

2. To promote the exchange of information between farmers in a given geographic region about what kinds of low-input/sustainable farming practices are working on neighboring farms;

3. To engage family farmers in participatory on-farm research and demonstrations of integrated farming systems that will lead to more environmentally sound and economically viable farming operations; and

4. To develop ongoing farmer-to-researcher relationships that enhance the credibility of participatory on-farm research, assist University of Minnesota and Extension researchers in determining research priorities, and help transfer findings from their sustainable agriculture research to family farms.”

“It takes more than a board — it takes an activated membership. It’s best when members take initiative on activities.”

—DeEtta Bilek, 4/6/98

The Central Minnesota Chapter's first workshop was held March 9, 1991, featuring Larry Olson from the Western Chapter and a local farmer panel. By April there were 45 paid members. In August the association’s first farm field tours were held at the Eiswald Farm and Campbell Village.

After a year and a half of very low activity, LSP used W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding to
offer direct organizing assistance to the Central Chapter in late 1993. After relocating to central Minnesota from the southeast part of the state, LSP staff member Tammy Keith-Wellstone served as coordinator for the Central Chapter until 1995, and coordinator of the state board until late spring, 1994.

"SFA really needed that jump-start that LSP provided. As SFA got further along, then it was possible for chapters to get started on their own easier."
—Glen Borgerding, 3/98

The Cornerpost, the newsletter of the Southeast Chapter, was by 1991 functioning as a communication tool for inter-chapter dialogue and providing a format to exchange stories from on-farm research experiences around the state. Editing, printing and distribution happened out of LSP's Lewiston office.

In attempts to clarify the relationship between the organizing rooted in the work of LSP with the formation of SFA chapters, beginning in the early 1990s contracts were developed between LSP and chapters that were directly served by LSP staff. It was understood that LSP and the SFA had a mutual interest in seeing that the SFA achieve financial and organizational independence. The provisions of the contracts were intended to help reach that goal and formalize the relationship between the two organizations. LSP staffed some of the chapter boards, undertook grant writing and grant administration responsibilities, fostered the planning process, developed promotional materials, and generally made sure the details were attended to for chapter events. LSP also provided use of office space and equipment.

As LSP-related chapters sought gradual fiscal independence, some challenges resulted, primarily related to trust and communication issues.

"LSP started SFA down here and to get us started it was fine. But we felt we had to fulfill grants that we were not involved in writing. If individual SFA members want to do grants with LSP, that's fine. The Southeast Minnesota Chapter had to have a teenage rebellion against LSP in order to survive, and in the end it was good. We are glad that LSP founded us, and we look forward to working with them in the future, but we had to go through that teenage rebellion."
—Carol Michaelis, 3/98

With support from The Nature Conservancy, LSP opened a fourth office in Faribault in 1991. The Cannon River Area SFA, after meeting a year as an advisory group, signed a chapter charter in February 1992. Ron Keller chaired the new board which also included Mary Doerr, Muriel and Dan French, Mary Hanks, Dave Langsdorf, Ralph Lentz, Florence and Dave Minar, Mike Noble, Loren Snesrud, Merton Taylor and Gary Vosejpka. They started out hosting the popular Ag Professionals Luncheon and held summer field days. LSP staff who worked with various stages of chapter development were Kirby Zicafoose, Todd Lein and June Redig.

"Kirby Zicafoose had the foresight to get over what I see as some prejudice in working with government people and invited me in to that first meeting in the Cannon River Chapter. A lot of what I know about sustainable agriculture and my philosophy about it I learned at those meetings."
—Mary Hanks, Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture, Energy & Sustainable Ag Program, 12/97
In the early 1990s the East Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association started in the Princeton and Cambridge area with the initiative of Doug Gunnink and Jeff Coult. Alton Hanson served as a primary contact.

In the spring of 1991, LSP staff who were working with SFA development began strategizing the movement toward a statewide organization. This included part of the following people's time and roles:

- Audrey Arner: convener, organizer, fundraising, administration
- Anita Zelenka: on-farm research and demonstration coordinator (Western SFA)
- Debbie Rislow: administration, mailing list maintenance and mail services
- Kirby Zicarelli: organizer, facilitator (Cannon River)
- Patrick Moore: fundraising, advisory
- Todd Lein, organizer
- Mary Schulte, organizer
- Tammy Keith-Wellstone: organizer, fundraising, lists/mail, SFA/LSP accounting

“Farmers wanted to get chapters started on their own, but they didn’t know quite what to do. That’s why we put together a chapter handbook to cover the basics.”
—Carol Thornton, 3/98

A chapter handbook was developed that included sample documents, structure ideas, helpful hints on fundraising, how to hold house meetings, organizing field days and workshops, working with the media, etc. LSP began organizing intermittent training opportunities held at a central location (Mankato) and over the next few years held training sessions on community organizing, grassroots fundraising, grant writing, strategic planning and media outreach.

Additionally, chapter coordinators began to intentionally meet on a quarterly basis to exchange organizing ideas and to avoid the re-invention of every chapter wheel.

“Staff convened a teleconference on August 29, 1991, the first time that representatives of the Southeast, Western, Central, Cannon River, South Central, and East Central Chapters spoke with one another in a formal setting.”

“A state organization is being developed to make it easier for new local groups to develop without having to duplicate efforts of the Southeast and Western Chapters when incorporating and applying for tax exempt status. The state board is envisioned as a group to

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Sustainable Farming Association Handbook

With the help of Land Stewardship Project organizers, SFA leaders developed an extensive handbook and list of resources to serve as a guide for anyone interested in developing their own chapters. This handbook consists of the following sections:

- Ten Steps in Establishing a Successful SFA Chapter:
  - Step One: Initial Organizing Meeting
  - Step Two: Follow-up Meeting
  - Step Three: Mailing & Membership List Development & Accounting

- Other Organizations in the Upper Midwest

- Other SFA Chapters

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“Step Four: Public Education Events
- Step Five: Newsletter & Directories
- Step Six: Annual Meetings
- Step Seven: Planning for Chapter Self-sufficiency
- Step Eight: Representation & Communication with other SFA Chapters & the State Board
- Step Nine: Research & Demonstration Projects
- Step Ten: Getting People Involved & Publicity

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“A state organization is being developed to make it easier for new local groups to develop without having to duplicate efforts of the Southeast and Western Chapters when incorporating and applying for tax exempt status. The state board is envisioned as a group to
whom local chapters will be accountable, especially when they use the tax exempt status for funding."
—Bob Goss, 8/29/91

March 2, 1992:
First Annual Meeting of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

More than 100 people attended the first annual meeting, representing seven existing and potential chapters. An official state SFA board was formed, with members appointed from each existing chapter. It was decided to include two members from each chapter on the board, thus giving each chapter equal representation. The first state board was comprised of Ralph Lentz (chair), Carol Ekarius (co-chair), Stephen Hege, John Sluss, Jeff Coult, Duane Hager, June Redig, Dwight Ault, Brian Schultz, and Glen Borgerding.

“Lentz believes there is a strong grassroots sustainable agriculture movement in the state and it’s unlikely it will be stopped.”
—Agri News 3/19/92

The Sustainable Farming Association of Northeast Minnesota held its first farm tour August 9, 1992, with over 60 people attending. The chapter hoped to promote more sustainable methods of crop production while producing a healthier choice of fruits and vegetables for the consumer. Its first annual meeting — the theme was “What is Sustainable Farming” — was held January 22, 1993.

Instrumental in the chapter’s development was Ken Peterson, who at that time worked for University of Minnesota Extension. The chapter still uses the Extension office for meetings and as a mailing address even though Ken has retired.

“We’ve had a good relationship with the Extension office all along. Using the extension office connection

for the Northeast SFA Chapter gave us some credibility.”
—Ken Peterson, 3/98

By August 1992 various local editions of the Cornerpost were being published by chapters, and momentum developed to converge into one newsletter. On October 21, 1992, the first statewide Cornerpost was sent out. Newsletter chapter liaisons began to be identified to facilitate information flow to the Cornerpost. It was edited by June Redig, first as a volunteer and later as LSP staff and Cannon River Chapter Coordinator until her untimely death in October 1994.

“I like the idea of a state newsletter a lot. I would like to hear more from what is happening in other chapters. It also lends credibility to the organization. But we would like to keep an inset for the local chapter.”
—Duane Hager, 8/91

In March 1993 state board members from six chapters and coordinator Tammy Keith-Wellstone pulled together the Second Annual Meeting in St. Cloud; 130 attended. LSP staff facilitated the workshop “Building an Effective SFA Chapter.” Patrick Moore focused the training on “planning, funding and effective management to realize your vision.” At about this time, the State Board started holding two-day summer retreats to think collectively in a relaxed setting, build community and sing together. These retreats are still held.

In 1993, Cannon River Chapter member Mike Noble wrote the original draft of a mission statement on waste paper he had scrounged up while milking in his parlor and brought it to a chapter board meeting, where it was adopted. The state SFA board adopted it later that year at their summer meeting. It reads:

“The Sustainable Farming Association recognizes the wisdom within ourselves and our communities to find ways of farming that are economically viable and ecologically sound. In the spirit of cooperation we offer
The state board responsibilities were clearly identified in winter 1994:

- To develop statewide organizational policy.
- To provide information sharing between chapters.
- To publish the Cornerpost and distribute it to chapter members.
- To coordinate SFA finances and keep up the necessary audit and legal paperwork required to maintain the SFA's nonprofit status.
- To coordinate funding activities of the chapters and make sure they are accountable to their grant requirements.
- To provide the chapters with chapter development resources.
- To organize the State Annual Meeting to bring members from other chapters together, celebrate our community, and to promote and create greater recognition of the SFA and sustainable agriculture throughout Minnesota.
- To represent the SFA statewide and nationwide. This will not be in advocacy of specific policy or political activities unless voted so by the membership.

King's position was made possible by a Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources chapter development grant crafted by Ralph Lentz and Carol Thornton, as well as supplemental funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Tim also assumed writing and editorial responsibilities for the Cornerpost, greatly increasing its readability and substance.

By 1994, various chapter members had attended LSP's training sessions in management intensive grazing and Holistic Management.

In January 1995, the Hiawatha Valley Chapter of the SFA was formed with 41 members, crediting the Cannon River and Southeast chapters for giving them the experience they needed to run their own board.

A continuing item on a variety of meeting agendas was the nature of the LSP-SFA relationship.

In 1994, 130 people traveled to Mankato to attend the third annual meeting, themed “Farmers Are Heroes.” It was organized by Ralph Lentz, Carol Ekarius, Ken Peterson, Glen Borgerding and Linda Noble, with coordinating help from Tammy Keith-Wellstone.

The state board took several months to determine the changing coordination needs of the state organization. Tim King was hired as the program manager by the state board in July 1995. This represented the first time the SFA had a paid staff member working for the organization on a statewide basis. This provided critical support as the chapters expanded.

“What is the relationship between SFA and LSP? We find ourselves asking this question over and over again. One answer that seemed to put it in a nutshell is that LSP is like the parents, and SFA is like the adolescent, who is eager for independence, but not completely on his or her own yet.

In our chapter, finding an answer to this question has ramifications that affect several areas of our operation. The most obvious is finance. LSP has been assisting us...
financially, though we’re on the verge of independence.

Does LSP speak for SFA? I know of no instance when it has. The difficulty comes when people outside of SFA and LSP get the two confused.

SFA has far more definitely steered clear of taking a political position. What we are about is sharing of information, ideas and methods. We feel that taking a definite stand on political questions could interfere with our ability to attract a wide spectrum of farmers. My understanding is that LSP, having launched us like a good parent, has worked itself out of a job, as far as SFA is concerned.

Is there a clear, simple response SFA members can give to people who do confuse the two organizations? Perhaps the best answer is to explain that yes, we’re related, but that SFA is a separate organization with different methods and a different agenda. It’s not safe to assume that the child will be a copy of the parent.”

—Mary Ellen Frame, Cannon River Chapter, writing in the Cornerpost, Spring 1995

Evaluator Jerry DeWitt conducted a “listening session” with 12 State SFA Board members in mid-July 1995 to ascertain feelings concerning, among other things, “decision making.” The Board members generally acknowledged that shared decision-making was practiced between SFA and LSP during the initial development and rapid growth of SFA chapters between 1991 and 1995. But the process was not fully understood. The distinct roles and responsibilities of LSP staff and SFA representatives were not only unclear, but not fully communicated. As one Board member indicated, “What were the rules?” Because of these perceptions, “expectations were not met.”

However, through this period it was acknowledged that SFA had been effective, growth was present and the partnership “did work.” It appears that communication, as opposed necessarily to the process or outcomes of decision-making, may have been the “flash point” in the decision-making process in the first few years, according to DeWitt’s analysis.

The Fourth Annual meeting was held in Hutchinson in 1995. Randy Meyer, a dairy grazing pioneer from Lake City, was elected chair of the state board at the Hutchinson meeting. He replaced Lake City beef producer Ralph Lentz, who had served as the board’s first chair. The board elected to make Lentz an official “SFA Ambassador” in recognition of his service. A specific intention was identified to increasingly collaborate with the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA).

In the Western Chapter, readiness for changes in coordination included board members taking on more responsibilities. The LSP office in Montevideo was still contracted after this time for data base maintenance and direct mailing assistance.

The Crow River Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association held its first annual meeting in January 1995 with the help of LSP’s Mary Schulte and Doug Gunnink, a farmer and at the time a Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff member. It followed up with two workshops that winter and several summer field days. Leadership emerged from Al Sterner, Laura Bihl, Sue Cristan, Tom Wegner, Greg Reynolds and Larry Michaeletz.
The **Lake Agassiz Chapter** of the Sustainable Farming Association signed its charter in July 1995 with eight founding members. They received some preliminary technical assistance from LSP and went on to work with Tim King in developing the chapter. Jamie DeRosier and Joe Schafer spearheaded the effort.

Also in 1995, a group of southwestern Minnesota farmers who had met at a Holistic Management training went on to form the **Coteau Ridge Chapter** of the Sustainable Farming Association. Among its leadership were Roger and Sherry Wisniewski, Joe Rolling, Kent Goplen and Dennis Schentzel. Then-state SFA coordinator Tim King and other SFA state leaders assisted in the formation of this chapter.

An SFA member since 1991, DeEtta Bilek became the **Central Chapter** coordinator in April 1995. In 1996 the **Central Chapter** emerged as a significant organizational chapter leader. As a result of Carol Ekarius's grant writing expertise, significant funding was provided to all chapters through USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. One important component of this grant was travel funding for farmers.

DeEtta went on to serve as program manager for the State Board in September 1997. In the last part of the 1990s, Bilek worked closely with Bev Sandlin, who served as temporary *Cornerpost* editor, as well as secretary of the state board and **Southeast Minnesota Chapter** coordinator.

The **Princeton Chapter** arose out of a group of organic farmers that had been banded informally together for about 15 years. This group had worked to start a farmers' market in Princeton and Cambridge and was associated with an annual "Homesteading Workshop Day" that attracted participants from across Minnesota as well as the Midwest. In 1995, these farmers started talking to Tammy Keith-Wellstone and Tim King about becoming a part of SFA. They became an official chapter soon after.

"Our group was hesitant to get involved in a bureaucracy, because we were all so busy. But we liked the idea of networking with other farmers and that it was grassroots and from the bottom up. And we liked Tim King because he was so laid back. It seemed to be our kind of organization."

—Frank Folz, 3/98

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**Farmers observing open pollinated organically grown corn at the Ed Rademacher farm in western Minnesota.**

*Photo by Anita Zelenka*
CHAPTER 2:
The SFA’s Continuing Efforts
to Focus on its Farmer-
to-Farmer Roots

_SFA leaders talk about the organization’s past accomplishments & its future challenges_

Since the founding of its first chapter in 1988, the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s core mission has remained clear: It is a farmer-to-farmer networking system, a way for sustainable agriculture practitioners to share techniques and expertise in the field and across their kitchen tables. That sharing of local experiences has proven key to the success of certain sustainable farming techniques, which don’t lend themselves easily to cookie-cutter methods than can be utilized over a broad geographical area.

Rollingstone dairy farmer Carol Michaelis recalled that when she and her husband began investigating management intensive grazing some 10 years ago, they were able to find magazine articles on grass-based dairying practices that were taking place in other parts of the country. But they needed information based on their local conditions.

“Written documentation is great, but there’s nothing like word of mouth. The weather and other conditions vary a lot even between here and Iowa,” said Michaelis, who is a member of the Southeast Minnesota Sustainable Farming Association Chapter. “That local farmer-to-farmer education can’t be beat.”

Over the years, that farmer-to-farmer education foundation has made the SFA an important forum for the exchange of technical information. And interviews with a dozen SFA members in early 1998 showed that this organization is also a key source of moral and social support as farmers face new challenges in adopting sustainable production techniques and dealing with the stresses of rural living. These chapters are also doing more outreach into their local communities while networking with other organizations on a statewide and even national basis.

Moral Support

Like many farmers, LeeAnn and Jim Van Der Pol faced some tough decisions in the 1980s. The cropping system on their western Minnesota farm was not paying off financially. Then the drought of 1988 came, and they watched as their soil blew away, raising serious questions in the couple’s minds about the environmental sustainability of their operation as well.

“We were very frustrated with our farm,” recalled LeeAnn. “Many times we talked about whether we should quit.”

When they joined the Western Minnesota SFA, the Van Der Pols found a positive support network that helped them through a tough time on their operation.

“Just the fact that you have other people as a support system is key,” she said. “You go to other kinds of farm meetings and everybody is down. Whenever we come away from any SFA activities, workshops or field days, we feel refreshed.”

SFA members from across the state reiterated the importance of the moral support their local chapters provide them. In fact, many said that it’s the “support group type atmosphere” that binds chapters together, rather than the actual sustainable farming techniques.

“From what I sense in the group, what’s held it together is the support,” said Frank Folz, an organic nursery stock producer who helped start the Princeton Chapter. “People need that sense of community. That’s number one with us. Learning the sustainable techniques is second in line, I’d say.”

Part of this fellowship comes from a sense that the farmers are not competing with each other, and thus feel comfortable sharing information, said Glen Borgaarding, a Freeport soil consultant who helped found the Central Minnesota SFA Chapter and in 1997 was elected chair of the state board.
Lake City Farmer Ralph Lentz digs up a soil sample during a presentation on forage and pasture production. On-farm research is a key component of many SFA chapters.

Photo by Brian DeVore

“In sustainable agriculture we emphasize making more with less,” he said. “The attitude with us is that we have such a big job to do and such a good opportunity to do it that we need to just go out and grab that opportunity together.”

Reinforcing the support network

Many chapters have taken steps in recent years to reinforce that support network. Carol Thornton — she has organized her share of field days and meetings, first as a member of the Southeast Chapter and later with the Hiawatha Chapter — said she learned early the importance of free time at any SFA gathering.

“In some early field days we didn’t leave time for informal discussion and some people felt left out,” she said. “Some people don’t feel comfortable asking questions in front of a big group. They always want time to stand around and talk informally. I always stress making time for that.”

Carol Michaels said the Southeast Minnesota Chapter is trying to instill more fellowship time into even the formal board meetings. Board members were starting to get burned out as monthly meetings lasted late into the night. Now the board meets less frequently (delegating more work to committees) and it intentionally concludes the business end of things early in the evening to leave room for socializing, said Michaels.

In the late 1990s, the Crow River Chapter began a series of potluck dinners at members’ homes. At these events, a University of Minnesota expert or farmer is invited to come and talk about a particular farming technique. But, said chapter board chair Greg Reynolds, the meetings are really more about fellowship than formal discussion.

“Intentionally it was left a little bit loose so people would have time to talk informally,” he said.

The Western Minnesota Chapter undertook a similar potluck meal-meeting system, starting in 1996. Members take turns hosting the meals and a theme or topic is featured as a kick-off to the conversation. Chapter member Craig Murphy, who is a certified organic crop producer, said eight to 10 people generally show up at these suppers. Non-SFA members are also invited. A banker showed up to one meeting, a local soil and water conservation district official to another. Murphy said bringing in non-farmers helps build the sense that the SFA is more than just about reducing chemical usage and lowering input costs.

“We want to not just be about producers,” he said. “We want to be about community.”

Going beyond the farm

Indeed, individual SFA chapters as well as the state organization as a whole have become increasingly involved with other groups and the community at large over the years. That community includes faculty from the University of Minnesota. In 1997, five members of the South Central Chapter met with a University of Minnesota scientist from the Waseca Experiment Station to discuss what kinds of alternative weed control research they would like to see take place.

“This scientist would like feedback on research directions and these SFA members can
provide feedback hand over fist,” said Jim Tjepkema, past chair of the South Central Chapter. “The scientist is hoping it can become a regular thing.”

Joe Rolling, a livestock producer from Arco who chairs the Coteau Ridge Chapter board, said that in addition to individual research/grant projects carried on between farmers and ag scientists, the chapter has worked with a forage specialist on a pasture-improvement workshop.

In fact, said state board chair Glen Borgerding, the SFA’s growing positive relationship with University researchers has been one of the group’s biggest accomplishments in recent years. That’s a big step considering that the University of Minnesota as an institution has not always been supportive of sustainable agriculture. A survey of SFA membership conducted by Iowa State University’s Jerry DeWitt (see next chapter) showed that one of the main reasons people joined the organization was because they felt they were not getting help from Extension. But, ironically, one of the perks of being an SFA member a few years down the road was the relationship the organization helped develop between sustainable farmers and Extension/University personnel, the survey found. Not only does this relationship provide farmers with access to expertise on production techniques, but it reflects more positively on the movement as a whole.

“It gives us credibility,” said Borgerding.

This relationship has been cultivated over the years. For example, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) is a partnership between the University of Minnesota’s College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences and the Sustainers’ Coalition, a group to which the SFA now belongs. MISA has proven to be a valuable link into the land grant research and education system for farmers seeking out sustainable options. MISA’s influence and effectiveness continue to grow, in part, because of the demand on the part of SFA members for such an institution. Its relationship with SFA members has given it the credibility that comes with being in touch with farmers.

“[The scientist] would like feedback on research directions and these SFA members can provide feedback hand over fist.”

—Jim Tjepkema

“[The University is not a homogeneous mass, there’s individual people with interests in sustainable agriculture],” said Greg Reynolds, who has invited Extension personnel to the Crow River potluck gatherings and is working with a University of Minnesota entomologist on encouraging beneficial insect species on his farm. “It helps if you approach them as a group, and not just individuals wanting attention.”

In the same light, the SFA has enjoyed a positive relationship with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program (MDA-ESAP). Initiated in 1987, MDA-ESAP has set up an extensive on-farm research program that provides grants to farmers who want to explore everything from alternative livestock production methods to cover crop management. Since 1991, MDA-ESAP has had close ties with the SFA. For example, the two co-sponsor dozens of field days each year and have jointly designed whole farm planning workshops. The majority of farmers featured in the Greenbook—an annual published summary of the research projects MDA-ESAP funds—are SFA members.

The local community

But various SFA chapters are also emphasizing outreach to the local, often non-farm, community. In 1994 the Northeast Minnesota Chapter started a one-day event called the Harvest Festival. Duluth-area churches were interested in helping develop such an event out of concerns over social justice and hunger. The event, which features a farmers’ market, crafts and other activities, draws about 5,000 people annually, said Ken Peterson, who helped found the Northeast Chapter while an employee of the local Extension office. Local media have recognized the community value of this event. The daily newspaper has provided two free quarter-page advertisements and a radio station broadcast live from the festival for two years.

Peterson said the event not only provides a forum for at least two dozen SFA members to show off their produce and cultivate customers,
but it also educates the community as to the benefits of having sustainable farmers in the area. Chapter members and local church members who are not farmers volunteer at the festival, adding to the feeling that this is not just another “farm group.” Area businesses have pitched in at other times of the year to show their support of sustainable food production. For example, the chapter sponsors other farmers’ markets in the area and banks and other businesses have volunteered the use of their parking lots to help out.

In fact, Peterson said the Northeast SFA is particularly interested in community outreach because of its focus on direct marketing. Besides the farmers’ markets, the chapter is also working to promote direct to consumer selling of meat. In 1994 the chapter got an MDA-ESAP grant to develop a mobile poultry slaughtering facility. Using an old bus and used processing equipment, the facility has greatly enhanced the ability of farmers to provide fresh poultry to local consumers. About 15 to 20 farmers use the facility in a year’s time.

In addition, the Northeast Chapter is researching the viability of building a USDA-approved meat processing facility to help beef, pork and other livestock farmers provide local consumers with sustainably produced meat.

“We really emphasize direct marketing and that means interacting with the public a lot,” said Peterson.

Showing the public that the SFA is a positive force that offers something to the community can take on many forms — even entertainment. Members of a local “story-tellers” club are also involved with the South Central Minnesota Chapter. Beginning in 1994, the chapter has sponsored an annual story-tellers night as a fund-raiser at a theater owned by the city of Wells.

“It’s a way of making that cross-over between story-telling and sustainable agriculture. Some of these people are professional story-tellers just honing their craft,” said Jim Tjepkema. “Frankly, it doesn’t really raise a lot of funds, but it’s a community building activity.”

To further build community, as well as raise funds, the South-Central Chapter has also sponsored a cooperative machinery auction. One of the member-families allowed other members to gather extra equipment on their farm for the auction and a local auctioneer donated his fee to the chapter. As an added bonus, several local beginning farmers involved with the chapter were able to get machinery at low cost.

As another example of community outreach, consider what the Princeton Chapter has done. Chapter board chair Fank Folz has hosted a “homesteading workshop” event at his farm for the past eight years. It features 16 different classes as well as activities for children and has attracted participants from various states. In 1997 the Princeton SFA helped put on the event in a large barn. It drew more than 300 people and helped solidify the new chapter’s position in the community, said Folz.
In addition, the Cannon River Chapter sponsors a barn dance each fall on a member’s farm. It is a way for the chapter members to get together socially, but the event is also open to the public.

Including the conventional ag community

But perhaps the toughest community for some SFA chapters to reach out to are their fellow farmers, especially those who consider themselves “conventional” producers of crops and livestock. A typical chapter can range in membership from the certified organic farmer to one that is experimenting with ridge tillage to one that is simply interested in trimming some input costs on his or her operation. SFA members interviewed said this mix is good, not only because it serves as a new source of membership, but because it provides the chapters with fresh insights and credibility in the general agricultural community. In fact, many SFA members say the key to the future survival and growth of the organization is the ability to tap into the conventional agriculture community.

“When we first got started there were people who absolutely did not want anyone in SFA who was not organic. One guy did not want anyone in the organization who used a plow,” recalled Ralph Lentz, a Lake City beef producer and founding member of the SFA. “But I was a person that felt SFA should include a diverse cross-section. We had to meet three or four times a year to iron that out, but we finally settled on including everyone, even though it is still quite a challenge to balance all the different ranges of what people consider sustainable farming.”

The Cannon River Chapter has made serious efforts to reach out to the conventional ag community. Kenyon crop and livestock farmer Mike Noble said many of their new membership sign-ups have come via field days where they team up with mainstream farm groups in the area. For example, half the participants in one field day on alternative cropping and silage covers at the Noble farm were members of a local forage improvement organization. Whenever the chapter holds a field day, it makes sure the event gets on the local Extension office’s calendar of events, which is in turn sent out to local farmers. In addition, when a “conventional farm event” is held in the area, the chapter attempts to get on the agenda as the “sustainable” component. One summer alone, the Cannon River Chapter was involved with six field days: two were their own, two were conventional events the chapter tagged onto and two were joint efforts with conventional commodity groups.

Mike Noble said they have consistently signed up the most new members during field days and other events that were held in conjunction with conventional groups.

“I think there’s a lot of farmers out there who are questioning where they are at all the time and we need to keep in touch with them,” said Noble.

In addition, the Cannon River Chapter made a name for itself early on within the agribusiness community by hosting an annual Ag Professionals Luncheon. True to its name, this event involved inviting local agricultural professionals for a meal and a presentation on sustainable agriculture.

Craig Murphy said although he is a certified organic crop producer, the Western Minnesota Chapter still offers a lot to all levels of sustainable farmers.

“We try to emphasize practices at field days that are practical, doable things,” he said. “We have mostly a character but we still get the quote, unquote, conventional producers at meetings who just want to be there in case there’s something they can use. It’s good to see that awareness that one can get by trying something different, no matter how elemental, like banding herbicide instead of broadcasting it.”
Linda and Mike Noble (standing) discuss their farming techniques during a Cannon River chapter SFA field day. SFA field days often involve conventional commodity organizations.

Photo by June Redig

Inviting all stripes of farmers (and non-farmers) can raise some interesting challenges in maintaining a tight organization. After all, even among “sustainable” farmers there is plenty of room for diversity. Because of the diverse nature of some of the chapters, it’s difficult to plan field days and other events that appeal to all of the members. Some, such as the Central Chapter, have partially solved this by helping spin off niche groups such as a buckwheat organization and a cooperative that direct markets a variety of food products, including meat. The Crow River Chapter — one of the more diverse SFA chapters — has taken another innovative approach. In 1997 the chapter created three special interest areas: vegetable production, grazing and grain production. Three board members are leading these specialty areas (one of the board members is a livestock producer, one a grain producer and one a vegetable farmer) to help members focus on their particular areas of interest. However, these specialty areas are still operated under the general umbrella of the Crow River Sustainable Farming Association.

“As a vegetable grower I can’t always know what’s of interest to grain and livestock farmers,” said chapter chair Greg Reynolds. “But we didn’t want to splinter off into separate organizations because we felt we needed a critical mass of members to be effective as a chapter. This is an experiment, but it may be a way of accommodating different interests within one chapter.”

Independence is key

State SFA chair Glen Borgerding said the organization’s ability to make inroads into university, government and local communities during the past decade is a significant achievement. And it’s been done through an organizational structure that allows individual chapters to remain as independent as possible from the statewide umbrella. That structure is no accident, said Ralph Lentz. In fact, the state board recently rewrote its articles of incorporation to reinforce the independence of each chapter.

“We really emphasized at this year’s board meeting that each chapter should be autonomous,” Lentz said in 1998. “But we also recognize that for the good of the whole you need a structure to develop new chapters. We want the state board to be as weak as possible and still keep the structure as a whole.”

Lentz and Borgerding concede that such a structure can be a challenge to maintain. Even individual chapter leaders said in interviews that being autonomous can lead to burnout among key farmer-members who find themselves keeping track of grants, organizing meetings and field days, and in general taking on the brunt of
Some previous and current funders of the SFA

Besides membership dues, many foundations and government bodies have provided funding for SFA development and SFA operations. Several provided funding to LSP in the early years for SFA organizing, field days and on-farm research and organizational development. Several provided funds directly to the SFA for new chapter development, field days, research, marketing and processing, and various other activities.

Here is a partial list of funders:

- Agricultural Utilization and Research Institute (The predecessor to this group was The Greater Minnesota Corporation.)
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Bush Foundation
- Central Minnesota Initiative Fund
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Great Lakes Protection Fund through the Minnesota Project
- Greater Minnesota Corporation
- Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program
- Agriculture Program, Minnesota Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources
- Nathan Cummings Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Public Welfare Foundation
- Southeast Minnesota Initiative Fund
- USDA SARE—North Central Region
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- Wallace Genetic Foundation
- Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation

Beginning in 1992, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation provided multi-year funding to help expand the SFA into a statewide federation of chapters and further collaborative relationships with scientists from the University of Minnesota and government agency staff. Besides the SFA, the main recipients of this funding were the Land Stewardship Project and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture.

keeping the chapter active.

"It seems when you go off the board you quit coming to events altogether, because you're burned out," said Carol Michaelis.

Michaelis' Southeast Minnesota Chapter — it's the chapter that got the SFA ball rolling in 1988 — is attempting to deal with this by reducing the number of board meetings from almost a dozen per year to four. And as was mentioned earlier, the chapter is pruning meeting agendas to leave more time for socializing and to reduce late-night adjournments. The chapter is also experimenting with more hands-on "barn raising" type chapter development events such as a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ground burning followed by a picnic.

Finally, to reduce membership drop-offs, the Southeast Chapter is now offering a discounted, three-year membership fee (one year is $25, three years $50.) All of this is starting to pay off.

"I'm very positive about what's happened here in the last year and a half," said Michaelis. "The people that are coming are the ones that want to come. At the last board meeting we even had someone volunteer to be co-chair instead of [having to drag] them through the coals."

Frank Folz of the Princeton Chapter said he got burned out after getting the chapter off the ground. He stepped out of an active role in the group and other members took his place. After a year he returned to being an active leader of the chapter again.

Other chapters have tried various other strategies to alleviate burnout, including hiring part-time coordinators (usually farmer-members) to deal with grant work, membership renewals and event planning. Glen Borgerding said burnout can be an especially difficult problem for chapters that are quite active in seeking and executing grants. Collaborative fundraising in particular can be challenging with staff turnover and different people filling the roles of grant writer, implementer and reporter. Ideally, the grant writer should do the report, say SFA leaders.
“When applying for grants getting the money is the fun part, spending it is where the real work begins,” said Borgerding.

Borgerding said while he was chair of the Central Chapter, they discussed the tell-tale signs of burnout and tried to spread the grant management duties around so that just a few members were not so burdened with it. Ultimately, he said, hiring a part-time coordinator to deal with such chores seems to be the best solution. Several chapters have done that, although funding such a position even for just a few hours a month can be difficult.

Such problems are the signs of the growing pains that come with an organization steeped in the grassroots and so reliant on the creative energy that comes with chapter self-reliance. Members interviewed said they wouldn’t want it any other way. Central Chapter member DeEtta Bilek said the fast growth of the SFA over the years has made it clear there was a pent-up demand for such a farmer-to-farmer organization in all parts of Minnesota. Individual chapters were able to react relatively quickly to this demand by forming on a local basis. Such a fast response is sometimes difficult for a more centralized organization.

Carol Thornton of the Hiawatha Chapter said that autonomous chapters also help farmers feel they have more control over their futures, something that has been cast in doubt by an over reliance on outside “experts” over the years.

“You can’t believe how much that improves self-esteem,” she said. “It’s amazing to see people when they first start up a chapter realize they can empower themselves. It turns them into real positive people and that’s why SFA is so positive in general.”
A Survey of Chapter Members

Survey shows SFA makes a difference, poses questions for future

In 1995, Jerry DeWitt, an Iowa State University Extension Educator, surveyed members from the then-existing nine chapters about their experience with the SFA. One hundred sixty-nine people responded, representing 20 percent of the total membership at the time.

Who is the SFA?

- 41 percent of respondents had been members for less than two years.
- People had been farming from one to 51 years, with an average farming time of 11 to 20 years.
- Farmed acreage amounts ranged from less than 20 to more than 1,000. The mode was between 161 and 320 acres, with 22 percent farming 300 to more than 1,000 acres. In part, the acreage amounts depended on what part of the state the farmer was from.

Why do people want to join the SFA?

- Respondents from eight of nine chapters said they joined to learn from one another.
- However, local board members suggest that farmers join initially for information about production and improved profitability, but begin to recognize more social needs as time goes by.

Are needs being met?

- About 85 percent of the respondents said most of their social/non-technical needs were met but that some remain.
- Local board members surveyed identified the need for “farmers feeling better about agriculture” as a major change in need expressed by farmer-members after they had been with an SFA chapter. Other changes in needs included improving quality of life, learning from other farmers, developing moral support, learning about farming systems, optimizing available on-farm assets, obtaining information about alternative farming practices, protecting soil resources and increasing profit.

Does the SFA lead to changes in practices?

- Fifty-five percent of respondents had tried or adopted a new practice as a result of membership. Seventy-three percent of those in the six oldest chapters have adopted a new sustainable practice. Barriers to adopting a new practice were identified as either cost or time by 60 percent of respondents.
- Of those who were practicing management intensive grazing (MIG) at the time of the survey, 55 percent said they started as a result of SFA or LSP educational programs. Of those who were already practicing MIG, 86 percent said the SFA or LSP educational programs helped improve their skills.

Does the SFA help stimulate on-farm research?

- One in three respondents had participated in on-farm research.
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents noted an increase in on-farm research in their area after the SFA chapter started.

Does the SFA help increase profitability?

- Twenty-nine percent said they were more profitable since joining SFA. Given that one-fifth of the respondents were members for less than a year and 40 percent for less than two years, that figure is encouraging.
Did SFA improve quality of life?

- Forty-one percent of respondents said joining the SFA helped them improve their quality of life and 36 percent did not know.

The SFA Board Analysis

DeWitt also analyzed the SFA State Board of Directors in his study. The Board was observed and surveyed over a two-year period via a written survey and through interaction at two Board meetings. Twelve respondents completed the eight-page survey.

State Board members identified a variety of perceived needs when organizing a local SFA chapter. The need for leadership skills was most frequently identified (8) by Board members. Financial assistance was indicated by almost half of the respondents as a key need. General organizational and recruitment skills were also identified by one-third of the Board members as key requirements when organizing a chapter.

Board members also identified additional individuals or groups with which increased communication has taken place after the creation of a SFA chapter:

- Pastors
- County boards of commissioners
- University of Minnesota research farms
- Legislators
- Experiment stations
- Commercial vendors

And here is what board members felt it would take for a statewide SFA network to continue:

- Crisis moment (i.e., low prices)
- Minimal State Board responsibilities
- Formal relationship with University of Minnesota
- Maintain or increase funding
- Results
- Other agency support/commitment (Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Minnesota Department of Agriculture)

- Better State Board with full-time staff
- State office support
- More chapter involvement
- Communication input on needs
- Commitment to work for it
- Self-supporting ability
- Greater farmer interest
- No increased bureaucracy
- Creative leadership
- Practical application of felt/real needs
- Paid staff (state or area)

Key Components of the SFA Approach to Organizing Farmers

An open-ended question in the survey elicited key components of the SFA approach to organizing farmers into local SFA chapters. Board members consistently indicated that a grassroots approach involving farmers with face-to-face on-farm education as a key component to their success. Other components identified, such as newsletters, local news media, alternative local opportunities and a local network, supported the concept of a local, farmer-driven approach as a key component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% responding</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grassroots/farmer-to-farmer education</td>
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<td>Tangible benefits</td>
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<td>3-part goals (of sustainable agriculture)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings &amp; field days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local news media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local network</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State network</td>
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APPENDIX A

The Structure of the SFA

- **State Board of Directors**
  - Sets organizational policy
  - Approves fundraising efforts & contracts
  - Plans and conducts the state annual meeting
  - Receives & approves financial reports
  - Provides input on development materials
  - Helps develop new chapters
  - Publishes newsletter for SFA as a whole

- **Chapter Board**
  - Selects representatives to the state board
  - Oversees budget & prioritizes activities
  - Plans & conducts annual statewide meeting
  - Selects workshop presenters & field day locations
  - Determines approach to on-farm demonstration proposals
  - Determines newsletter content, tone & frequency of publication
  - Selects training activities

- **Membership**
  - Elects chapter boards
  - Determines topics of workshops
  - Determines the approach to on-farm demonstration or research projects
  - Approves changes in dues structure and membership benefits

- **Staff**
  - Provides assistance in coordination of above
  - Provides input on the above
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Chapter Charter

This agreement, dated this _______ day of __________, 19____ between the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (hereinafter referred to as the Association), and the __________ chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association, (hereinafter referred to as Chapter).

The chapter that signs the charter agrees to the following:

1) **AUTHORITY.** The local chapter must follow the Articles of Incorporation of the Association.

2) **DUES.** Dues of three dollars per local chapter member per year shall be paid to the Association or subject to the Board of Directors discretion with Chapter Approval.

3) **MEETINGS.** A minimum of one local chapter meeting must be held each year.

4) **MINUTES.** A record of all issues discussed and decided upon at local chapter meetings must be kept and made available upon request.

5) **AUTHORITY TO BIND ASSOCIATION.** The chapter shall not enter into any agreement or incur any obligations on the Corporation’s behalf, or commit the Corporation in any manner without the Association’s prior written consent.

6) **TERMINATION.** Either party may terminate this Agreement at any time with or without cause. Termination of this Agreement shall not relieve the Chapter of its obligation to pay to the Corporation any membership fees collected, due or owing at the time of termination. Funds thereafter remaining shall be distributed in accordance with the guidelines as established from time to time by the Association’s Board of Directors or Chapter’s Board of Directors.

7) Chapters must select from its Board of Directors from one to three REPRESENTATIVES to serve on the State Board of Directors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have signed this Agreement on the date first above written.

THE SUSTAINABLE FARMING ASSOCIATION OF MN

BY:__________________________

ITS:__________________________

CHAPTER OF SFA

BY:__________________________

ITS:__________________________