

# The Land Stewardship



LAND  
STEWARDSHIP  
PROJECT

*Keeping the Land & People Together* **Letter**

Vol. 25, No. 4

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Autumn 2007



Land Stewardship Project members came together in October to raise a barn for Farm Beginnings graduates Brad and Leslea Hodgson. For more photos of this special 25th Anniversary event, see page 12. (photo by Karen Stettler)



—*Whistleblower Testimony*—

—*A Farm Bill Report Card*—

—*25 Years of LSP in Western Minnesota*—

—*Minnesota Cooks 2007*—

—*Beginning Farmers Walk the City-Country Line*

—*Reviews: Haymakers Hits Home; Farm Aid Sings America's Song*—



The *Land Stewardship Letter* is published by the Land Stewardship Project, a private, nonprofit organization. The mission of the Land Stewardship Project is to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop sustainable communities. Members of the Land Stewardship Project receive this publication as a benefit. Annual membership dues are \$35.

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**ROLLED HAY... The Bale of the Future**

A weather-resistant rolled bale with leaves locked inside! The rolled hay... a bale that for the first time sheds rain like a shagreened roof. Once your hay is in the rolled bale, you breathe easy. It's safe from sudden showers. The bale won't rot in a week, will last, appearing to forever, can be fed whole in the feedrack without waste.

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**ALLIS-CHALMERS**  
TRAVERS WISCONSIN

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# Get involved during the next 25

By Patricia Wright

My family first became involved with the Land Stewardship Project when we began our community supported farm 16 years ago. LSP was actively involved in supporting Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmers and promoting the concept in this region. For us, that support was vital.

In the past year or two, I've become involved with LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee. I admit—I'm somewhat reluctantly involved in this arena. In many ways, I'm perfectly content to stay home, grow vegetables in the summer and read books in the winter. But it's hard to live in a small community, see what's happening to family farmers and not get involved. My neighbor, who must be in his 60s, was telling me recently that when he attended a one-room school in our community, there was just one student in the school who was not from a farm family. Today, as his grandson attends school in this same community, this young man is the only student in his class growing up on a working farm.

For many years now LSP has worked on the national level for policy reform that would reverse this trend—policies that would support an agricultural system in which family farmers, rural communities and a clean, healthy environment could thrive.

Many of you have been involved in that work.

Maybe you joined with other LSP members and were part of a national effort to end the unjust mandatory pork checkoff.

Maybe you became involved in efforts to stop a factory farm from settling in your community.

Maybe you've pushed for policy reform that would increase fairness and competition for livestock producers like fighting to ban packer ownership of livestock or passing country of origin labeling.

Maybe you were part of developing or working to pass the Conservation Security Program—a working lands program that actually rewards true

conservation results.

Or maybe you're involved with LSP now in efforts to bring about reforms in the 2007 Farm Bill (see page 16).

One of things I love about LSP is that our work is both practical and visionary. We sponsor field days on rotational grazing while working for policies that support family farmers on the land.

We publish a list of CSA farms while working for policies that support community based food systems. But our greatest strength, I believe, is in our membership and in our staff's commitment and ability

• • •

## 1982-2007 25 Years of Keeping the Land & People Together

• • •

to engage membership.

It's the norm—not the exception—for LSP staff to be out meeting with family farmers in their communities, holding meetings in both rural and urban settings, identifying issues, prioritizing and doing the work that needs to be done—work that directly affects and brings positive change to the lives of farm families. Work that is about justice and about what is right for communities and for the land.

This work of pursuing justice sometimes put us directly in conflict with those in power. Our strength as an organization—as members and staff of LSP—also lies in our willingness to confront injustice, to go forward with courage and conviction even when it's difficult.

As we move into our next 25 years I would encourage us to build on our strengths, to continue to be an organization that is both practical and visionary—an organization that provides hands-on education while working for policies that move us toward a more just and sustain-

able food and agriculture system.

We all know that in order to push our politicians toward fundamental reform, we need many, many people putting pressure on them. So I challenge us to increase our membership significantly. Let's talk to our neighbors, our church and community groups about the work of LSP. Let's reach out to new communities—my area of Wisconsin for example—and to immigrant and minority communities.

Finally, I challenge each of us to think about what you want to do next to further this vision. Consider getting involved in working on the Farm Bill, contact LSP staff to learn more about what you can do, write a letter to the editor, invite a speaker to your church, serve on a committee—*do something!* □

*Patricia Wright, a CSA farmer from Prairie Farm, Wis., serves on LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee. This commentary is excerpted from a talk she gave at the LSP Policy and Organizing Program's "Celebrate the Past-Move into the Future" 25th Anniversary event on Aug. 2.*

Opportunities

Resources



## Get connected with

LIVE  WIRE

Sign up for LIVE-WIRE for regular e-mail updates and news from the Land Stewardship Project. To subscribe, call Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or e-mail [lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org), and put in the subject line "Subscribe LIVE-WIRE." □

## LSP podcast

The Land Stewardship Project's *Ear to the Ground* audio magazine features interviews and field reports related to LSP's work. To listen in, go to [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org), and click on the **Listen to the Latest Podcast** link under **Take Action**. For a step-by-step guide on how to subscribe to the free *Ear to the Ground* service, visit [www.landstewardshipproject.org/podcast.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/podcast.html). □

## LSP blog

The Land Stewardship Project is writing a weekly food and sustainable agriculture web-based blog for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership. To read the blog, go to [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) and click on the **Read This Week's LSP Blog** link under **Take Action**. □

# Letters

## Logo not idiot-proof

I wholeheartedly agree with Jay Fier, who believes in logo stewardship (Summer 2007 *Land Stewardship Letter*, page 6). The old logo was much nicer and friendlier, and also looked better as a t-shirt graphic. The new logo seems so impersonal and gives me no sense of what the Land Stewardship Project is about. Please reconsider. All I can think of when I see the new logo, is, "What idiot forgot to shut the gate???"

— **Mindy Desens**  
**Sleeping Cat Organic Farm**  
**Litchfield, Minn.**

## Bring it back

Count me as another reader who much preferred your old logo, which was not only beautiful, but had a clear, understandable message. I wish you'd go back to it.

— **Peris Suddeth**  
**Bowie, Md.**

## Logo: I didn't do it

In response to my dear friend Jay Fier: As much as I would like to take credit for designing the original LSP logo, that honor belongs to Ardys Blake, a friend of Ron Kroese.

That being said, I like the new logo. Change is good. In the Jeffersonian spirit, I believe that every generation deserves to express itself graphically.

— **Patrick J. Moore**  
**Executive Director**  
**Clean Up the River Environment**  
**(CURE)**  
**Montevideo, Minn.**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *When asked to clear up the confusion about who designed the first Land Stewardship Project logo, the organization's co-founder, Ron Kroese, provided some background: "Ardys Blake engraved it out of a round piece of wood, then painted it, and we used it as our original office sign. Patrick Moore did a linoleum engraving version that was inspired by the original logo for our 10th Anniversary."*



The new Land Stewardship Project logo, as it appears on a "signature beam" mounted on a barn erected on the Brad and Leslea Hodgson farm Oct. 6. See page 12 for more photos from the barn-raising. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)

## Different logo, same mission

As a person who dreads change, I was not too excited about a task that the Land Stewardship Project's board and the staff took on for the 25th Anniversary year: seeing if our name, our mission, our logo, reflected the LSP of 2007 and beyond.

We have examined our mission carefully and decided to update some of the areas in which we are concentrating (new farmers, local foods, energy). The issue of the name change always carries risk, as it gets imprinted on friend and foe alike, but we all decided to keep the name and emphasize the LAND STEWARDSHIP part since that really is what all of our programs/PROJECTS are about.

That brought us to the logo. We did ask for some professional design help but the final tweak was done by staff and the board members. We all liked the animals and the land. But the original fence was closed. By adding the open gate we also add the presence of people. We welcome more people and animals to the land.

Yes, some things change, but the heart of everyone who supports LSP, all those who have attended the anniversary

events, remains with the people who are the stewards of the land and all the people who support them.

Our hearts are with those land stewards of southeast Minnesota and southwest Wisconsin who are struggling now in the wake of the flooding in August. It is a shocking way to end our 25th Anniversary year, but we all need to extend every ounce of support to those who have given us so much over the years.

— **Charlotte Brooker**  
**LSP Board Chair**  
**Maplewood & Wabasha, Minn.**

## Myth Buster valuable

I just read your *Myth Buster* on local food procurement (Summer 2007 *Land Stewardship Letter*, page 7). It is the most succinct piece on this topic that I have read and I am including it on my farm to school website at [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org).

— **Emily Jackson**  
**Appalachian Sustainable**  
**Agriculture Project**  
**Asheville, N.C.**

## What's on your mind?



Got an opinion? Comments? Criticisms? Of course you do.

We like to print letters, commentaries, essays, poems, photos and illustrations related to issues we cover. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Commentaries and letters published in the *Land Stewardship Letter* do not necessarily represent the views of the Land Stewardship Project.

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# Myth Buster Box

An ongoing series on ag myths & ways of deflating them

## → Myth:

Genetically-engineered products like Roundup Ready crops will reduce the presence of dangerous pesticides in the environment.

## → Fact:

When Monsanto first introduced crops genetically engineered to resist being killed by herbicides in the 1990s, it made the argument that products such as Roundup Ready soybeans were a boon for the environment. For one thing, Monsanto claimed, this technology would help protect the environment by reducing reliance on herbicides which are much more toxic than glyphosate, the main ingredient in Roundup. Such older style herbicides are often applied on the soil before the crop plants emerge or when they are quite young. As a result, they must have a “residual” quality about them, meaning they can stick around for weeks, killing weeds the entire time. That’s good news for weed control, but can be bad news for the environment: the longer a chemical sticks around, the more chance it has of producing ecological mischief. For example, atrazine, a highly residual herbicide, can be found in groundwater long after it’s applied. Researchers such as Tyrone Hayes have found that low levels of atrazine can cause serious health problems in amphibians (see page 14).

Indeed, glyphosate is a relatively benign herbicide and is volatile, quickly breaking up in the environment after it’s applied. When farmers plant herbicide-resistant crops, they can spray glyphosate later in the season, when the corn or beans are well established, and weeds

are thriving. Since you are applying the chemical directly to growing weeds, instead of to soil that will eventually produce weeds, in theory you can get away with using much less herbicide per acre.

But glyphosate has proven to be its own worst enemy. First soybean farmers and later corn farmers adopted the “Roundup Ready Package” whole hog, and the USDA estimates that today at least 90 percent of this country’s soybean acres are being raised using a herbicide-resistant system (around 36 percent of U.S. corn is herbicide resistant). The problem is all that glyphosate is now producing herbicide-resistant weeds, despite assurances by the pesticide industry during the early 1990s that the complex formulation of the chemical would outsmart weeds indefinitely. But the laws of natural selection could have predicted such an occurrence: the more you use of a product that kills, whether it be a herbicide, bug killer or antibiotic, the more likely a few weeds, aphids or bacterium will outsmart it and survive. And when they reproduce, there is a good chance at least a few of their offspring will have inherited that ability to fend off the killing effects of a certain chemical.

In the case of crop production, glyphosate-resistant weeds have been popping up in spots around the world, including in the Midwest. In 2007, fields were found in southern Minnesota where glyphosate wasn’t able to control giant ragweed and water hemp at four to eight times the rate recommended on the label, according to *Farm and Ranch Guide* magazine.

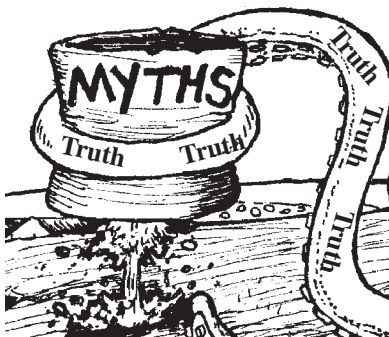
There are a couple of strategies for fighting superweeds. These days, the one that’s being promoted heavily by pesticide com-

pany experts and university extension educators involves diversifying the herbicidal arsenal and tossing a mix of chemicals at weeds. It’s a sound strategy: the less uniform the chemical use, the less likely a superweed will develop and reproduce. The problem is, what’s being recommended is a heavier reliance on pre-emergent herbicides that stick around for a long time. It would be bad enough if farmers were being told to replace glyphosate with these more toxic, residual herbicides. But the recommendation is that they use glyphosate *and* pre-emergent herbicides as a “chemical package.” So it’s no accident that at a recent field day on glyphosate-resistant weeds at the University of Minnesota’s Southern Research and Outreach Center, a “biological research and development scientist” for pesticide giant Syngenta was on hand to discuss the issue. His advice? Buy more pre-emergent herbicides from Syngenta.

Researchers are now studying the “farm-level economic impacts” of combining pre-emergent products and glyphosate. Translation? The price of chemical weed control is about to go up. That puts a damper on another argument Monsanto made for adopting Roundup Ready technology: it was supposed to save farmers money.

## → More information

• University of Illinois Extension has a summary of the herbicide resistant weed issue at [www.farmgate.uiuc.edu/archive/2007/03/are\\_you\\_booking\\_1.html](http://www.farmgate.uiuc.edu/archive/2007/03/are_you_booking_1.html).



## Myth Busters on the Internet

The *Land Stewardship Letter's* popular *Myth Buster* series is available on our website. You can download pdf versions at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/resources-myth.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/resources-myth.html). For information on obtaining paper copies, contact Brian DeVore at 612-729-6294 or [bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org). □



# What Minnesota lawmakers didn't hear in March

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In March 2007, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency hydrologist Paul Wotzka was asked to testify before a Minnesota Legislative committee on his research related to atrazine contamination in southeast Minnesota water. Wotzka was denied permission to testify, and was later fired (see page 14). On Oct. 10, he was invited back to testify before a committee chaired by Senator John Marty. On these two pages is an excerpt of Wotzka's Oct. 10 testimony.

By Paul Wotzka

Atrazine is a widely used herbicide primarily applied on corn. Between 1.5 million and 3 million pounds are applied annually in Minnesota, according to the USDA's Agricultural Statistics Service. It is by far the most commonly detected pesticide in our state's waters. In statewide sampling of rivers that I conducted during the summers of 1991, 1992 and 1993, atrazine and alachlor were the most frequently detected pesticides. During the period 1991 to 1996, in cooperation with researchers from the University of Minnesota, we performed studies to look at pesticides in rainfall. Atrazine was consistently detected in the vast majority of samples at stations across the state.

Between 1992 and 1995, we detected atrazine in Twin Cities runoff going into Lake Harriet even though the herbicide is not used in that watershed. In that study, we confirmed that the source of atrazine was rainfall, and that the herbicide was applied on cornfields many miles away. Finally, at surface water stations in southern Minnesota between 1991 and 1999 where the most in-depth sampling took place, atrazine was detected throughout the year with the highest concentrations occurring shortly after it was applied in late spring or early summer.

This early work gave policy makers at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and study cooperators insight into how atrazine gets into the water resources of the state, how frequently it occurs and in what magnitudes.

Beginning in 2000, I began to see an increasing trend in the concentrations of atrazine in storm runoff at a number of sites. In the fall of 2002, after seeing this trend continue, I sent a memo to MDA policy makers detailing my concerns and requesting that action be taken. I did not

receive a response nor was I apprised of any action the MDA would take. The trend of increasing concentrations continued through 2004.

To summarize atrazine's behavior: atrazine is in our rain; it is in our trout streams and urban runoff from our largest metropolitan area. It is in cold, clear springs and our largest muddy rivers. It is in our aquifers used for drinking water and in lakes used for recreation. It is detected in streams in the dead-of-winter many months after it was applied. Atrazine's highest concentrations occur in late spring and early summer in storm water runoff. It is and has been omnipresent in our state's waters for many years.

With respect to the endocrine disruption threshold of 0.1 parts per billion in Tyrone Hayes' presentation (see page 14), based on the work that I described to you, nearly every stream in southern Minnesota would have concentrations above this level during a number months of a given year.

For example, in the middle branch of the Whitewater River, a well-known trout stream, average annual base flow levels of atrazine are three to four times higher than this threshold. Accordingly, I believe there would be far reaching implications for improving the aquatic health of our water resources if a bill that requires the Minnesota Department of Health to do health assessments would be passed. But because of the persistent nature of atrazine and how long it has been used to kill weeds, changes in concentration would come slowly and may take years to disappear completely.

## Results of regulatory actions for atrazine & acetochlor

The following quote is from a report prepared for the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources by the departments of Health and Agriculture in 1988:

"The karst region is located in

southeastern Minnesota and is characterized by disappearing streams, springs, sinkholes and fractured limestone bedrock. Karst aquifers feature cracks and crevices in the bedrock that allow rapid water movement. Variable depths of loess-derived, silt-textured soils overlie fracture bedrock. These conditions can result in rapid transport of surface water containing dissolved or soil bound pesticides into the groundwater."

The paragraph describes the close, intimate connection between ground and surface water in southeastern Minnesota and the direct connection between land use and management and the quality of our water resources. The land, hydrology and water quality of this region needs to be looked at as one connected system.

Since 1992, the MDA has been promoting voluntary best management practices (BMPs) and label changes for atrazine to protect groundwater and surface water in southeast Minnesota. But is this effort working? Objective criteria for evaluating this effort would be: 1) is the amount of atrazine being applied decreasing and 2) is there less atrazine in the water?

Based on the MDA's atrazine use data (including a report done in 2006 that has yet to be released by the MDA detailing higher atrazine use in the Whitewater watershed), a greater amount of atrazine is being used in southeastern Minnesota than anywhere else in the state and a greater percentage of corn acres—90 percent to 95 percent—in southeastern Minnesota receive atrazine at higher rates than anywhere else in the state. Second, based on water quality data from streams in southeast Minnesota, there has been a significant increase in the amount of atrazine in these streams. The highest concentrations of pesticides seen in streams in Minnesota occurred in 2004.

So the question I pose is: "After 15 years of the MDA promoting these BMPs and label changes, how do we have the highest amount of atrazine being used resulting in the highest concentrations in streams in the part of the state that is the most vulnerable to pollution from using this herbicide?" I would suggest that these efforts to reduce and carefully use

*Testimony, see page 7...*

atrazine are in fact not being promoted or followed and that mandatory label requirements are not being enforced. The MDA is required to promote these BMPs and to track their adoption rates and enforce label requirements.

There are a number of mandatory setback requirements for atrazine, including a 50-foot setback from sinkholes as well as a 66-foot setback from perennial streams. Does anyone know if these setback requirements are followed? For example, how many of the estimated 15,000 sinkholes in southeast Minnesota have atrazine applied within the 50-foot setback requirement? In addition, the Minnesota Legislative Auditor in his 2006 report on pesticide regulation stated in his list of recommendations to the MDA that the effectiveness of these BMPs are not known and need to be immediately verified—especially those applicable to this very vulnerable part of the state.

Acetochlor regulation is the second example I would give to demonstrate that the MDA is not doing its job to protect the waters of the State from pesticide contamination.

Acetochlor was first registered for use in the U.S. and in Minnesota in 1994, and it is commonly used as a corn herbicide. Since 1995, 3 million to 4 million pounds of acetochlor have been applied annually to Minnesota's corn crop. The MDA started monitoring for it in the waters of the state in 1995.

Once applied, acetochlor moves to rivers and streams through tile lines, overland flow and in rainfall. In 1995 it was detected in urban stormwater running into Lake Harriet at 0.82 parts per billion, higher than the water quality criterion of 0.79 parts per billion. In 1999 it was measured in two separate tile lines flowing into a designated trout stream at 30-40 times the water quality criterion.

In 2007 the MPCA finally promulgated a water quality standard for acetochlor. This is only the first step to cleaning up our waters that have been polluted from acetochlor. This occurred 14 years after acetochlor was first registered for use in Minnesota and after over a decade of documenting that it moves from fields where it is applied to rivers and stream at high concentrations. The divided responsibilities between the various state agencies allow for this delay. One state agency escapes its responsibility while another state agency performs its part of the task. Why does it

take 14 years to develop a water quality standard to begin to protect every lake, stream, and river in Minnesota from pesticide contamination? What do we do know is that during that 14 years, over 40 million pounds of acetochlor were sold and applied to Minnesota's cropland. Minnesotans deserve more timely response to new sources of pollution to their water resources.

Individuals that are familiar with the pesticide and water quality regulatory processes in this state know it is confusing and tedious. Earlier this year a report was written by the MDA to address the need for an Environmental Worksheet for the registration of atrazine. In the report the MDA states "detections of atrazine are common at the MDA monitoring sites but have not violated the water quality standards." This statement directly contradicts the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 2006 assessment documentation, which showed that there was a violation of the human health standard, and there was a violation of the aquatic toxicity standard. Again you have to ask who is the MDA protecting by refusing to acknowledge the problems with atrazine?

For a regulatory process that works we need go no further than Wisconsin, which prohibits atrazine application on 1.2 million acres. It uses private drinking water wells to evaluate concentrations of atrazine plus its three metabolites. In Minnesota, we know very little about what pesticides owners of private wells are drinking. The reason is very simple: nobody tests!

In my 16 years working in southern Minnesota collecting pesticide samples, I only sampled a dozen private drinking water wells. Common questions that would come up during public meetings on water quality in southeast Minnesota are: "What pesticides are in our drinking water?" and "How can I get my well tested for pesticides?" We need to know what pesticides are in drinking water from private wells. We also need an easy procedure for private wells owners to get their wells tested. This is an especially important gap in our knowledge of human health in southeast Minnesota because again that area is particularly sensitive to water pollution. Most of our corn acres receive atrazine and nitrogen fertilizer. We know that nitrate and bacteria contamination of wells frequently occurs, yet we know little about pesticides because no one tests for them.

Wisconsin's program works because it is simple enough for the public to partici-

pate in and understand. There are seven steps and I would encourage interested Legislators to go to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website for details.

In closing I want to emphasize what I have talked about extensively in southeast Minnesota to farmers, fishermen, elected officials and the public. The common goal for all water quality and good land management is to keep pesticides, nutrients and soil in place on our farm fields growing crops.

As an owner of a well in southeast Minnesota, I want to personally tell you that I have significant concerns about the water that is pumped into my kitchen every day. My neighbors and friends who also have their own wells want to believe that the water we are giving to our children and grandchildren is not going to make them sick today or harm their health in the future. In the interest of our health and the sake of the health of our posterity, the Minnesota Legislature must continue to act to protect our water resources. □

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- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection atrazine prohibition areas web page: [www.datcp.state.wi.us/arm/agriculture/pest-fert/pesticides/atrazine/index.jsp](http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/arm/agriculture/pest-fert/pesticides/atrazine/index.jsp).
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture Common Detection Advisory Committee Report on the status of pesticides in Minnesota's water resources. 1996.
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture Common Detection Advisory Committee Report on the status of pesticides in Minnesota's water resources. 1998.

## Give it a listen

Check out the *Ear to the Ground* podcast (episode 43) featuring Paul Wotzka at [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) (click on the **Podcast** link under **Take Action**).



LAND  
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# LSP News

## Farm Beginnings wraps up 2007 field day season



**Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin (left) gave a tour of his black bean operation.** (photo by Karen Stettler)



**Chris Blanchard described the equipment Rock Spring Farm uses to produce organic vegetables.** (photo by Karen Stettler)

A key component of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings® program is a series of on-farm education events where participants in the course can get a hands-on look at various production methods and management systems. The 2007 Farm Beginnings field day season featured a variety of operations.

For example, this summer Reginaldo and Amy Haslett-Marroquin hosted a bilingual Farm Beginnings tour in Northfield, Minn. The evening tour focused on community-building and black bean production. Reginaldo has also been working with interested Latino farmers who are experimenting with growing and selling onions to the Northfield food cooperative. A grant from the USDA's Risk Management Agency funded the Northfield tour, as well as other work focusing on issues related to accessible education and gaining farm experience.

During another Farm Beginnings event, Kim and Chris Blanchard of Rock Spring Farm hosted a field day on operating a Community Supported Agriculture produce operation. The Blanchards are regular presenters at Farm Beginnings classes. Rock Spring is located on the Iowa-Minnesota border and is known for its innovative marketing and business planning system.

For more on Farm Beginnings, see page 24.



## 'Farming into the Next Generation' Feb. 8-9 & March 14-15

The Land Stewardship Project will be putting on a "Farming into the Next Generation" workshop Feb. 8-9 and March 14-15, in Lewiston, Minn. This workshop is for beginning and established farmers thinking about or currently entering into an inter-generational farm

business. Through this seminar, participants will discover how to address major issues that can lead to failure in an intergenerational farm business and will find out whether an existing operation has the capacity to support an additional partner. They will also learn about estate

planning tools and alternatives for transfer of farm assets. For more information, e-mail LSP's Karen Stettler at [stettler@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:stettler@landstewardshipproject.org), or call her at 507-523-3366. ☐





**LEFT PHOTO:** Land Stewardship Project intern Andrew Slocum discusses LSP’s work with a young participant in the “Move Your World” event at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis on Oct. 6. The event included a presentation by LSP and other groups at a special Solutions Twin Cities ([www.solutionstwincities.org](http://www.solutionstwincities.org)) forum. During the event, LSP member Uli Koester, who is the Executive Director of Midwest Food Connection ([www.midwestfoodconnection.org](http://www.midwestfoodconnection.org)), gave a presentation on how to help the environment through support of local, sustainable farmers. (LSP photo)



**Members of the Land Stewardship Project’s “Walk for Justice and Stewardship” team gathered for a photo on Sept. 16 in Minneapolis.** LSP was one of 130 community organizations that participated in the Headwaters Foundation for Justice’s ([www.headwatersfoundation.org](http://www.headwatersfoundation.org)) annual walk. The LSP team raised over \$5,000, \$1,000 of which went to the Minnesota Environmental Fund. (photo by Cathy Eberhart)



**Western Minnesota farmer and LSP member Audrey Arner traveled to Washington, D.C., in October with LSP Policy Program Director Mark Schultz (left) and LSP Policy organizer Adam Warthesen to promote key reforms in the 2007 Farm Bill.** See page 16 for LSP’s “report card” on the Farm Bill thus far. (LSP photo)



**Chef Lucia Watson of Lucia’s Restaurant in Minneapolis talked about her work with young gardeners at the Blue Heron Coffeehouse in Winona Sept. 23 during the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Winona Farmers’ Market.** The all-local “Harvest Feast” honored market farmers in the audience, including 20-year veterans Anne and Wendell Klein, as well as the 30-plus others who bring fresh food to Winona twice a week for six months each year.

Watson, who is a member of Land Stewardship Project, has been at the forefront of a chef community that supports area farmers with direct purchases of product that, in the words of Winona Farmers’ Market outreach coordinator and vendor Jennifer Rupprecht, “is 1,500 miles fresher.”

The dinner was organized by the Local Food subcommittee of the Winona County Economic Development Authority, which includes the University of Minnesota and LSP. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)



LAND  
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# LSP News

## Liesch joins LSP as Membership Assist.

**Abigail Liesch** recently joined the Land Stewardship Project as its Membership Assistant. Liesch has worked as a soil conservation technician for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, a website assistant for University of Minnesota Extension and a field crew member of the Minnesota Conservation Corps. Liesch has also volunteered for LSP's Policy and Organizing Program. She has bachelor's degree in English literature and writing from Bethel University in Saint, Paul, Minn.

As LSP's Membership Assistant, Liesch is maintaining the database and helping with Policy Program organizing. She is based out of the organization's White Bear Lake office. □



**Abigail Liesch**

## Doug Nopar returns to LSP

**Doug Nopar** has joined the Land Stewardship Project's staff in its southeast Minnesota office in Lewiston.

This is a return to the organization for Nopar. From 1984 to 1998, he served as the southeast Minnesota office director for LSP. He was instrumental in developing and building LSP's Stewardship Farming Program in the 1980s and 1990s, and also coordinated LSP members' local efforts to challenge industrial-sized livestock operations. In recent years, Nopar has done organizing and communications work for various organizations, including the migrant farm worker group Centro Campesino, and MOSES (Midwest Organic Sustainable Education Service).

In his new position, Nopar will focus



**Doug Nopar**

on involving LSP's membership in local, state and federal agricultural policy issues, and will help connect the organization with immigrant communities and communities of color in the region. He and his family live in rural Winona.

Nopar can be contacted at 507-523-3366 or [dnopar@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:dnopar@landstewardshipproject.org). □

## Rhys Williams joins LSP Board

**Rhys Williams** has joined the Land Stewardship Project's Board of Directors.

Williams served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya and a community organizer in Chicago. He also managed orchards in New York, Canada and Washington. Most recently, he was a partner in Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables, an organic produce farm in southeast Minnesota. In recent years, Williams has served on the steering committee for LSP's

Farm Beginnings program in Lewiston, Minn.

Currently, he is a buyer for the Co-op Partners Warehouse, the first certified organic warehouse in Minnesota. Co-op Partners is an initiative of the Wedge Community Co-op in Minneapolis. Williams lives with his family in the Twin Cities area. □



**Rhys Williams**

## Warren, Yokom, Claassen serve LSP internships

**Cael Warren** served an internship with the Land Stewardship Project's Community Based Food Systems and Economic Development Program this fall. Warren is majoring in environmental studies and economics at Macalester College in Saint

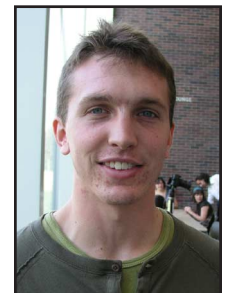


**Cael Warren**

Paul, Minn. Warren has worked as a research assistant, food co-op staffer and animal caregiver. During the internship, Warren worked with the St. Croix River Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign (see page 22).

**Andrew Yokom** served an internship with LSP's White Bear Lake office this fall. Yokom is studying environmental studies and biology at Macalester. He has worked as an

assistant caretaker at the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area, an intern at Eureka Recycling, a soccer instructor and a lifeguard. Through his LSP internship, Yokom worked on sustainable biofuels issues.



**Andrew Yokom**

**Sarah Claassen** served an internship with LSP's Policy and Organizing program this fall. Claassen is pursuing a

bachelor's degree in environmental studies at Macalester College. She has worked as a research assistant at the Land Institute in Kansas, as a freelance gardener and as a co-organizer of a community

garden. While interning with LSP's Policy Program, Claassen worked on federal policy issues. □



**Sarah Claassen**

# LSP celebrates 25th Anniversary in western Minn.



A farmers' market was featured at the Land Stewardship Project's 25th Anniversary celebration in Granite Falls, Minn., Aug. 19. The celebration, which was held at Memorial Park on the banks of the Minnesota River, also featured a Farm Beginnings® presentation, storytelling, music and a silent auction. LSP member Carol Ford performed an excerpt of the updated *Planting in the Dust* play. (LSP photo)



A Farm Beginnings candle lighting ceremony featured several past participants—students as well as mentors—in the program. (LSP photo)



Local music was featured at the event. (LSP photo)



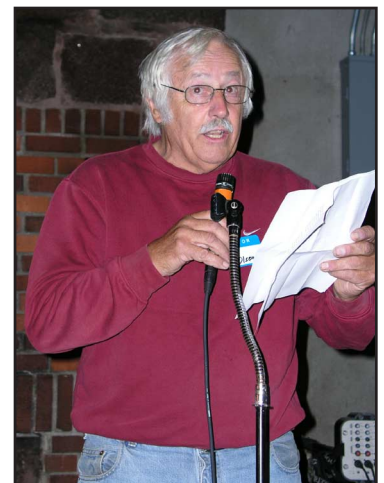
Locally produced food was featured at the potluck/hog roast. (LSP photo)



Farm Beginnings graduates LaVonne and Daniel Murphy talked about their experience with the course. (LSP photo)



Patrick Moore, who is now Executive Director of Clean Up the River Environment (CURE), helped launch LSP's western Minnesota office in 1986. LSP spun off CURE as a separate organization in 2000. (LSP photo)

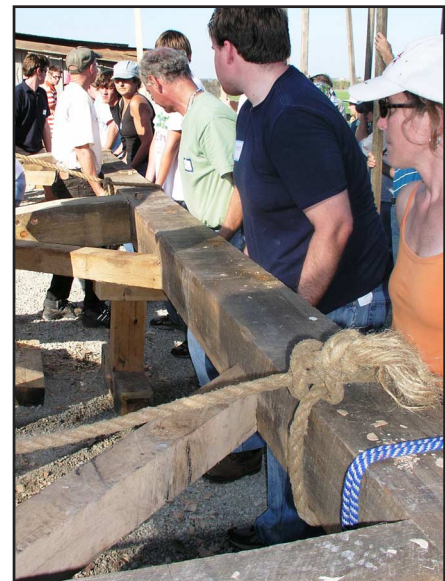


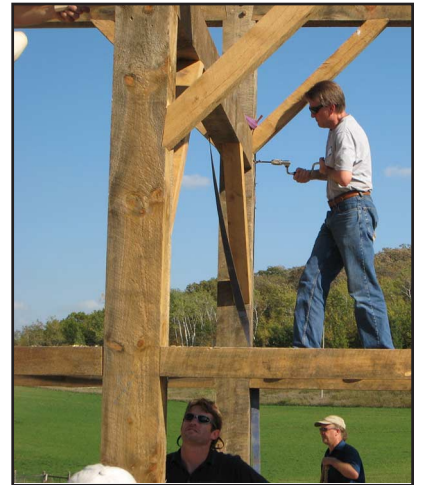
Larry Olson, a southwest Minnesota farmer and pastor who served as president of LSP's board in its early years, read a poem he wrote for the 25th Anniversary event. (LSP photo)

# Barn-raising celebrates LSP's 25th Anniversary & a decade of launching the next generation



Brad and Leslea Hodgson (left photo) hosted a special Land Stewardship Project event on their southeast Minnesota farm Oct. 6. LSP members came together on a warm Saturday to raise a barn in honor of the organization's 25th Anniversary, as well as its Farm Beginnings® program. The Hodgsons, who raise beef on grass near the Root River, are graduates of Farm Beginnings. Todd Juzwiak of DreamAcres Organic Farm and Tillers International led the barn-raising, which included a special training session the day before. These two pages include photos from the event taken by LSP's George Boody, Karen Stettler and Caroline van Schaik.





# Public science, public speech

*A whistleblower finally gets heard at the Legislature.*

On a chilly morning in early October, Paul Wotzka sat down before a Minnesota Senate committee and prepared to testify about a controversial and troubling subject: pesticide contamination in the state's waters. Before he began his formal remarks, Wotzka made a simple statement that, considering the circumstances, may have seemed out of place: "I am happy to be here."

Wotzka was pleased to present his research to Legislators because it was overdue by more than six months.

For 16 years, Wotzka (see Autumn 2007 *Land Stewardship Letter*, page 28) was a highly-respected hydrologist working for the state, doing cutting-edge research on pesticides in surface water.

He worked for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for 15 years, and in the fall of 2006 took a position with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). In March 2007, Wotzka's research caught the attention of Ken Tschumper, a southeast Minnesota dairy farmer and freshman member of the Minnesota House of Representatives. During the 2007 session, Tschumper and Sen. John Marty, with the support of the Land Stewardship Project, spearheaded a group of bills that would tighten regulation on pesticides such as atrazine. Tschumper contacted Wotzka and asked that he testify before the Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division committee on March 23.

A regional MPCA supervisor turned down Wotzka's request to testify at the March 23 hearing, arguing that the research Wotzka was to present to the committee was done while he was an MDA employee.

Wotzka feels that the real reason is his testimony would have run counter to what the MDA's line is on atrazine contamination—although MDA officials concede atrazine is a common pollutant, they maintain that it does not threaten the environment or public health, and that voluntary best management practices are adequate for dealing with the problem.

A week after the hearing, Wotzka was placed on "investigatory leave." On May 8, he was fired.

In the spring of 2007, Wotzka filed a federal whistleblower lawsuit, claiming

that his First Amendment right to free speech had been violated. In October, Wotzka temporarily dropped his whistleblower lawsuit, but plans on resurrecting it in the near future. Both sides in the lawsuit asked that the case be dismissed "without prejudice," which means Wotzka can re-file the lawsuit at any time.

The hydrologist says he took this step for several reasons. For example, it allows him to deal with the State of Minnesota's claim that it was the Department of Employee Relations that fired him, and not the MPCA. Before re-filing, Wotzka and his attorneys want to investigate the respective roles the various government agencies played in the decision to fire him.



**Paul Wotzka makes a point during a forum on atrazine held Oct. 10 at the Ritz Theater in Northeast Minneapolis. Also shown are (right to left) scientist Tyrone Hayes, Sen. John Marty, farmer and LSP organizer Paul Sobocinski and Rep. Ken Tschumper. (LSP photo)**

In addition, the government has invoked a legal technicality which would require Wotzka to file his lawsuit in state court instead of federal court.

"Before we re-file, we want to make sure we are in the right court with the right defendant," says Wotzka. "I definitely plan on pursuing this."

Meanwhile, Marty and Tschumper have continued to work with LSP and other groups on legislation pertaining to herbicides. One bill authored by Tschumper and Marty became law during the 2007 legislative session. Among other things, it lowers the standard for atrazine in private drinking water supplies from 20 parts per billion to three parts per billion, bringing it in line with the EPA's limits, which were already in place for

Minnesota's public water supplies. And in March, the Minnesota Department of Health has to start examining the possibility of establishing new health limits for 11 of the most common contaminants, including atrazine, found in the state's water. The last time such an assessment was done was the early 1990s. The passage of that legislation provides a good basis for other pesticide rules becoming law, says Tschumper.

For example, he and Marty plan on reintroducing a proposal during the 2008 session that would authorize the Department of Health to review registrations and assess the public health risks of certain pesticides, such as atrazine, which have been shown to pose a hazard to human health and the environment. Currently, the MDA regulates pesticides, but does not conduct health assessments when considering whether to re-register them. "It wouldn't change what the

Department of Agriculture does as far as pesticide regulation," says Marty. "It would just make sure we are doing some long-overdue risk assessment."

To highlight the need for this assessment, in October Marty worked with LSP and other groups to invite Wotzka back to the Legislature to testify about his research before the Senate's Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

Also on hand to testify Oct. 10 was Tyrone Hayes, a University of California-Berkeley scientist whose widely respected research has shown links between severe health problems in amphibians and exposure to low levels of atrazine. In

*Atrazine, see page 15...*

# A big day for atrazine

Paul Wotzka's testimony at the Minnesota Legislature Oct. 10 was part of a day-long series of events the Land Stewardship Project and others organized that helped highlight the atrazine issue and the importance of making sure publicly-funded science is not controlled by special interests.

That morning, scientist Tyrone Hayes was interviewed on Minnesota Public Radio's Midmorning program. At noon, a Capitol press conference was held featuring Hayes, Wotzka, LSP organizer Paul Sobocinski, Sen. John Marty and Rep. Ken Tschumper.

After the afternoon hearing, a forum was held at the Ritz Theater in Northeast Minneapolis. The forum, which was co-hosted by LSP and the Eastside Food Co-op, featured presentations by Wotzka and Hayes, among others, and served as a fundraiser for Wotzka's legal fund. Ad-

ditional sponsors of this event included Brenda Langton of Café Brenda and Spoonriver, Gardens of Eagan, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), Mississippi Market Co-op, Organic Consumers Association, Riverbend Farm, Valley Natural Foods Co-op and the Wedge Co-op.

Sobocinski, a southwest Minnesota crop and livestock farmer, said during the forum that he used atrazine on his fields until the spring 2007 planting season.

"I didn't use it after hearing Tyrone Hayes testify in committee" at the Minnesota Legislature, said Sobocinski.

Sobocinski said he and other farmers are concerned about the safety of pesticides because they and their families are on the front lines. That's why LSP and other groups would like to see better health assessments of these chemicals. It is also why it was so key that increased funding for researching

and supporting sustainable alternatives to pesticides was obtained by LSP and others during the 2007 session of the Minnesota Legislature, said Sobocinski.

Pushing through legislation in 2008 and beyond that's good for family farmers and the environment will require more people to have the kind of courage Paul Wotzka has shown, Sobocinski said. "I think the challenge to us is how are we going to move this? How are we going to stand up and speak out? That's why it's so important to join groups like LSP so you can stand up together," Sobocinski told the crowd. "What's important is that we stand together to make changes to protect our water, protect our land and protect our communities."

*The events on Oct. 10 received extensive media coverage. Check it out at the **LSP in the News** page at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/news-itn.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/news-itn.html).*

## ...Atrazine, from page 14

2004, Hayes was dis-invited from giving a keynote at an MPCA conference after concerns were raised his presentation on atrazine would offend MDA officials.

At a pre-hearing press conference, Marty and Tschumper talked about the importance of allowing state employees to testify before legislators, even when the information they are presenting goes counter to the interests of powerful political and business players. "I know a lot of state employees who are not allowed to talk to legislators," said Marty. "They're not allowed to talk to media...and I'm just saying that it's really troubling that state employees are discouraged from testifying here, even on their own time."

Indeed, Senator Betsy Wergin attempted to keep Wotzka from testifying during the committee hearing that very afternoon when she argued that because of the pending lawsuit, it wasn't proper to have a litigant speak to a legislative committee. "I am going to ask that you not have [Wotzka] testify, because I think it's wrong," Wergin said to Marty as Wotzka took his seat at the hearing.

But Marty maintained that it was appropriate for Wotzka to speak, given that the circumstances of the lawsuit were not going to be part of his testimony. After a 30-minute delay, when Wotzka finally was allowed to testify (an

excerpt of his testimony is on page 6), the hydrologist spoke about water sampling research he conducted from 1990 to 2006 as an MDA hydrologist.

## Hayes' testimony

Hayes, who testified after Wotzka, gave a presentation showing how exposing frogs to as little as 0.1 parts per billion of atrazine causes severe health problems.

Hayes said when his laboratory work showed atrazine caused health problems in amphibians, he followed up with field work where frogs exposed to the herbicide in the wild were sampled. One of the more troubling studies involved tadpoles exposed to levels of atrazine that would be found in a typical Nebraska cornfield. The research showed that when mixed with other herbicides—as it often is—atrazine's ability to cause harm was increased.

Hayes also outlined research done by other scientists showing links between atrazine exposure, low fertility, breast cancer and prostate cancer in humans.

"I think the farmers are probably the biggest victims in all of this," said Hayes. "If anything the farmers should be up in arms and demand better monitoring."

Since atrazine has become so ubiquitous in the environment—it's been found in urban rainwater for example—everyone should be concerned about how much of it is used, said the scientist.

Hayes told the committee that Syngenta, the world's largest manufacturer of atrazine, has been working with the EPA to dismiss research he and other

scientists have done on the pesticide. As a result, he has become a strident critic of close ties between pesticide manufacturers and government regulators. Hayes acknowledged that his criticism has earned him an "activist" label, something he wasn't fond of at first. But today the scientist realizes he needs to speak out if action on this issue is to take place.

"I'm not Mister Anti-pesticide. But the risks of atrazine outweigh the benefits," Hayes told the committee. "I don't want to put my daughter and granddaughter at risk, and my ethics don't allow me to want something for my children that I wouldn't want for all children." □

## Pesticide legislation & podcasts

→ During the 2008 session of the Minnesota Legislature, the Land Stewardship Project is working with Sen. John Marty and Rep. Ken Tschumper on legislation related to pesticide use. For more information, contact LSP's Bobby King at 612-722-6377 or [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org).

→ To listen to *Ear to the Ground* audio podcasts featuring presentations by Paul Wotzka and Tyrone Hayes (episodes 42 and 43), go to [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org), and click on the **Podcast** link under **Take Action**.

## Grading the 2007 Farm Bill (so far)

As this issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter* went to press, the 2007 Farm Bill was stalled in the Senate over procedural rules. After passing the Senate, a House-Senate conference committee was scheduled to hammer out a final law that would be sent on to President Bush for his consideration. Indications were at this writing that a new Farm Bill would not be completed until later in 2008. Below, the Land Stewardship Project's Policy Program has provided a "report card" on the bill as it stands. A complete report on the final Farm Bill will be in a future issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter*. Stay tuned...

Land Stewardship Project priorities in the 2007 Farm Bill	House Farm Bill as passed in July 2007	Senate Farm Bill as of December 2007
<b>Expand the Conservation Security Program (CSP) by providing more funding, and including an annual sign-up with a national scope, while maintaining conservation integrity.</b>	<b>F</b> Cut \$4.8 billion or 44 percent over next 10 years. No sign-up until 2012.	<b>B</b> Increased by \$2 billion to a total of \$4.8 billion over the next five years. Nationwide enrollment; available to all farmers with a goal of enrolling 13.3 million acres per year.
<b>Pass and fund a strong beginning farmer and rancher policy.</b>	<b>A-</b> Passed and funded the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) at \$15 million per year in mandatory funding. Also included other lending and conservation provisions for beginning farmers.	<b>D</b> Zeroed out BFRDP program funding, but included some beginning farmer conservation and lending provisions.
<b>Policies to support the development of local and regional food systems.</b>	<b>B</b> Dedicated \$30 million in mandatory funding per year to the Value Added Producer Grants Program with value chain language; did not fund Community Food Projects but did provide mandatory funding for the Farmers' Market Promotion Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.	<b>C+</b> Zeroed out the Value Added Producer Grants; provided mandatory funding for Community Food Projects, Farmers' Market Promotion Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
<b>Reform Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with stronger payment limits per operator.</b>	<b>D</b> Placed slightly stronger payment caps on contract holders, yet at the same time increased EQIP funding overall at the expense of other conservation programs.	<b>D</b> Continued excessive \$450,000 per operator limit.
<b>Livestock Competition Title/ban on packer ownership of livestock.</b>	<b>D-</b> Good language on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), but no action on other pressing concerns related to corporate control in food and agriculture.	<b>B</b> Senate bill includes a ban on corporate meatpackers owning livestock, prohibition of mandatory arbitration clauses in livestock contracts; same language as House on COOL; some improvements to Packers and Stockyards Act enforcement.
<b>Fundamental reforms to the commodity programs.</b>	<b>F</b> Some very minor payment reform.	<b>F</b> Some very minor payment reform.



# Report: Performance-based policy will produce real benefits

**R**eforming conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill so they reward farmers based on measurable environmental results would provide increased benefits at a lower cost, concludes a new white paper. Such a “performance-based” system would be in contrast to current working lands agricultural conservation policy, which pays farmers for practices they establish, even when the actual environmental results of such practices are not known, according to the paper, which was produced by the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Initiative.

“The success of federal and state agricultural conservation programs is measured by how many acres are enrolled in practices like no-till farming, or how much of a watershed is covered in structures like terraces,” says George Boody, a co-author of the paper and Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project. “Although this practice-based system has produced benefits such as decreased soil erosion, environmental problems such as lower water quality and diminishing wildlife habitat are increasing in severity. We need to base conservation programs on actual performance.”

Boody and co-author Frank Casey, Director of the Conservation Economics Program at Defenders of Wildlife, analyzed farm conservation programs and how farmers are paid for putting in place specific practices. The problem with current agricultural conservation programs, say the authors, is that they pay for practices based on the assumption they will produce benefits without actually measuring the outcomes.

Natural resource professionals, farmers and taxpayers in general are increasingly demanding to know what benefits—cleaner water, more wildlife habitat, etc.—are actually being produced by farm conservation programs, which cost billions of dollars annually.

Performance-based systems will likely have several potential benefits, including improved environmental outcomes from conservation efforts at the farm and watershed level, increased cost effectiveness at the farm level and more accountability in the use of public funds, say the paper’s authors. Performance-based systems could provide the data and foundation for innovative policies such as non-point source pollution trading programs and markets for ecosystem services that result in environmental benefits.

“Performance-based systems tend to reduce costs and lead to the adoption of conservation practices by farmers because producers have more flexibility for innovation and can find least-cost ways of achieving a defined environmental outcome,” says Casey.

From a taxpayer and public investment perspective, it is better policy to pay on the basis of goals achieved rather than just funding specific practices, Casey adds.

“But transitioning into paying for environmental performance will take experimentation and research,” he says. “If public or private markets are going to pay landowners based upon environmental outcomes, there must be indicators for measuring the level of environmental performance attained. Currently, too little effort is focused on such indicators.”

The 2007 Farm Bill holds great potential for beginning the process of creating performance-based conservation policy, say Boody and Casey. For example, the Conservation Security Program (CSP) is the first USDA initiative to provide increased payments for higher levels of resource protection

and could be developed as a more performance-based model. CSP includes performance-based components such as minimum conservation standards required to be eligible for program participation, an increased payment level based on the number of “resources of concern” that are addressed, and the availability of enhancement payments that go beyond minimum conservation standards.

“Farmers participate in CSP after they have made significant environmental improvements, thereby reducing costs to taxpayers and protecting water and wildlife habitat when those environmental outcomes continue,” says Casey. “Even better, farmers tend to make continuous improvements beyond the minimum levels covered by the installation of one new practice.”

“But CSP will have little impact unless it is fully funded and reserves its highest payment rates for resource-conserving crop rotations, sustainable grazing systems and other conservation systems with high multiple environmental benefits,” says Boody. “Congress needs to take the first step toward performance-based conservation by fully supporting CSP.” □

## LSP helps launch Farm Bill ads

In October, the Land Stewardship Project joined a diverse group of taxpayer watchdog groups, environmental and social justice organizations and faith groups to launch a major advertising campaign calling on Congress to stop directing the bulk of subsidies to multi-million dollar firms.

The television and newspaper ads, which appeared in Minnesota, among other states, encourage citizens to contact Congress and tell them that, “Unfair subsidies hurt family farmers and cheat taxpayers.” Besides LSP, supporting the ad campaign were Oxfam America, Church World Service, Citizens Against Government Waste, Environmental Working Group, Progressive National Baptist Convention, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, NETWORK, Sojourners/Call to Renewal and Taxpayers for Common Sense.

To view the television version of the advertisement, see [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org). For more on the Farm Bill, see page 16.

*A copy of “An Assessment of Performance-Based Indicators for Resource Conservation on Agricultural Lands” is available at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/mba/performance\\_based\\_indicators.pdf](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/mba/performance_based_indicators.pdf) or [www.defenders.org/publications/pbi\\_aglands](http://www.defenders.org/publications/pbi_aglands).*

*The Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Initiative ([www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs\\_mba.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_mba.html)) studies how diverse cropping, perennial plants and grazing systems affect communities on a watershed level.*

## Give it a listen

Tune in to the Land Stewardship Project’s *Ear to the Ground* podcast to hear George Boody and others talk about how sustainable farming can produce multiple benefits for the environment and our communities.

Go to [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) and click on the **Listen to the Latest Podcast** link under **Take Action**. Episodes 9, 10, 11 and 34 cover multi-functional agriculture.

# A factory farm sneaks into town

*A land deal between a feedlot officer and one of the largest swine producers in the country raises questions on the state and local level.*

When, during the fall of 2006, word went around that a swine operation was being proposed in Lyle Township, a community in southern Minnesota's Mower County on the Iowa border, it was not a big surprise. That part of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa is home to many hog operations. What was different about this one is that the proposer was the county feedlot officer, Lowell Franzen. Franzen informed neighbors that it was a hog finishing operation, that the purpose was to help his son get started in farming and that eventually his son would run the operation. With those assurances, neighbors decided to keep quiet.

But once the facility went into operation in the fall of 2007, there were a few unpleasant surprises for people in the community as far as size and make-up were concerned. And perhaps the most unpleasant surprise is that the project is now owned not by Franzen but by Holden Farms, one of the largest hog firms in the nation.

Gene Slowinski, who lives across the Cedar River from the facilities, says that before sows moved into the facility this fall, Holden officials met with local residents and confirmed that as early as July 2006 Holden was planning on raising sows in the area.

"Why at the time didn't Holden go and buy the property and get all the permits?" Slowinski asks. "I think I know."

Neighbors to the new facility are now facing the reality that a factory farm was literally snuck in under their noses, that they were misled by a public official, and that county officials and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are doing their best to avoid responsibility.

## A 'family farm' start-up?

It all started in September 2006, when Tim Carroll and other neighbors received a notice that Franzen was proposing a 1,996 animal-unit hog confinement operation to be located on around 14 acres of land he owned in the township. Carroll runs a horse logging and wood working business and lives within 5,000 feet of the operation. The notice said that

if neighbors had concerns about the proposal, they could contact the county feedlot officer, which is Franzen.

In retrospect, says Carroll, the fact that the feedlot officer was applying for a feedlot permit should have raised red flags in the neighborhood. But since it was understood that Franzen would be operating it himself and eventually turning it over to his son, neighbors decided they could live with it.

"I wasn't crazy about it, but if his son

clear also that this was not going to be a finishing operation, but that it was a sow facility. That's important: a sow with a litter of pigs produces on average four gallons of liquid manure a day, according to Midwest Plan Service. A finishing pig produces more like one to one and a half gallons of manure daily. In total, the facility will have the capacity to store 7.2 million gallons of liquid manure. Carroll and other neighbors are concerned about odor from that much manure, as well as runoff from manure applications to adjacent fields. The facility is within a mile and a half of the Cedar River.

What troubled Carroll even more was a rumor going around during the summer that Franzen didn't even own the facility anymore. That is when Carroll approached the Land Stewardship Project asking for help. LSP organizer Bobby King explained to Carroll that the documents related to this facility were public and helped Carroll figure out a plan to get them. Although the county was resistant, Carroll persisted and got copies of the permit and the deeds. These documents told the story in black and white:

In the spring of 2007, two weeks after receiving a feedlot permit from the MPCA, Franzen sold the undeveloped farmland to the Santos Group, LLC, for \$292,000; that price is approximately \$243,000 above market value. Five days after the sale, he transferred the feedlot permit to the Santos Group.

The officers of the Santos Group are Nick, Nate and Tyler Holden, brothers associated with Holden Farms, LLC. Holden is a Northfield, Minn., based company and the 19th largest hog producer in the country, according to *Successful Farming* magazine. He also learned that expansion of Holden operations in the Northfield area as well as other Minnesota communities, including Winona County, have been controversial with rural residents concerned about environmental and health issues.

It seemed to Carroll and other residents in the area that Franzen, who is the first and only feedlot officer the county has ever had, abused his position and betrayed the public trust while making a significant profit in the process. (Franzen and Holden Farms officials have declined

**CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP FORM**  
for animal feedlots and manure storage areas

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Animal Feedlot Rules chapter 7020

Part 1. Purpose and Scope (when must this form be completed and submitted)  
Minn. R. 7020.0405, subpart 4, requires the new owner of an animal feedlot or manure storage area to complete and submit a change of ownership form to the MPCA or delegated county feedlot/pollution control officer. This form must be completed and submitted prior to a change in ownership or control of an animal feedlot or manure storage area issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) State Disposal System (SDS) permit, this form shall serve as a request by the new owner to modify the permit required by Minn. R. 7001.0190. Note: Changes at the animal feedlot or manure storage facility other than a change in ownership or control of the facility may require completion and submission of a permit application.

Part 2. Facility Information  
Registration number: 089-11010  
Permit number: MNB 440941  
Location of facility: Mower County

Part 3. Owner Information Prior to Change (please print and attach additional sheets as necessary)  
Legal name of facility prior to change: Lyle Township  
Name of owner(s) prior to change: Lowell Franzen  
Mailing address: Lyle, MN 56057 (507) 663-0003

Part 4. New Owner Information (please print and attach additional sheets as necessary)  
New legal name of facility: The Santos Group, LLC  
Mailing address: 12346 Hall Ave, Northfield, MN 56057 (507) 663-0003

**A "change of ownership form" filed with government officials was one of the documents showing Lowell Franzen's feedlot proposal was not as it had originally been presented to neighbors.**

was going to be involved in it as a start-up, I was okay with it," recalls Carroll.

But Carroll's view of the operation changed quickly in June 2007 when construction started. For one thing, the building was much larger than expected. "This looks like Noah's Ark," Carroll recalls thinking to himself. It became

**Factory Farm, see page 19...**

to comment publicly on the controversy.) This appears to be breaking new ground in the real estate world as well: a reporter for Minnesota Public Radio was unable to find other examples of a property that had been issued a feedlot permit being sold for a high price with the permit attached. An MPCA official has said this is the first feedlot permit he's seen issued to a feedlot officer.

Neighbors began meeting at Carroll's farm weekly to start discussing how they could respond to the situation and King helped them craft a plan. Within weeks the group submitted letters signed by 40 neighbors to the MPCA Commissioner, the Minnesota Attorney General and the Mower County Attorney calling for them to address the situation. In August, neighbors followed up by meeting with Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson. One detail in the case was clearly a violation of state law: Franzen issued himself county permits before the state-mandated environmental review of the operation was completed. State law requires that no permits be issued until after environmental review is completed. However, it is the job of the county attorney to enforce state laws at the county level and the state attorney general has little authority in the case.

"The county clearly violated state law. As the feedlot officer, Franzen should have known the permits could not be issued until after the environmental review was done and his supervisors should have been looking at this closely," says Slowinski. "The county seems more interested in covering up its mistake and looking out for Holden Farms then standing up for the citizens of Mower County."

When Mower County and the MPCA refused to act, 18 neighbors took the county to court requesting that the court invalidate the county permits. They hired attorney Jim Peters, a veteran on these issues who has represented citizens from around the state in cases related to state inaction on factory farms. Since the barns were under construction at the time, citizens requested a temporary injunction halting construction until the judge could rule. However, in October a Mower County District Court Judge turned down the request for an injunction. Citizens are still pursuing the case.

In September 2007, Minnesota Attorney General Swanson sent the Mower County Attorney a letter stating

that the permits appear to have been issued in violation of state law. Swanson wrote: "You may wish to review whether the county wishes to declare the Mower County Feedlot Authorization and zoning permit null and void as a matter of law...." Despite that, the county still took no action.

LSP approached Mike Hatch, the former Minnesota Attorney General, and he agreed to help by conducting depositions of the Holdens and Franzen. On Nov. 7, Hatch deposed four members of the Holden family. As a plaintiff, Carroll sat in on the depositions. At the deposition, the Holdens admitted to having a pre-purchase agreement with Franzen months before any permits were applied for. Holden family members also revealed that they paid for some, and possibly all, of the costs associated with getting the permits: blue prints, engineering, etc.

"The Holdens clarified that they understood agricultural land in this area went for around \$4,000 per acre and they purchased 14 acres for \$292,000, or more than \$20,000 per acre," Carroll told the *Austin Daily Herald*. "They also discussed the costs involved in the process of getting the feedlot permitted and the costs of the different procedures that had to be done. They said those costs were under \$50,000, so the question is: 'What about the additional \$178,000 Santos paid for Mr. Franzen's 14 acres of undeveloped farm land? What was that used for?'"

"With all the information we have now, we're at a point where the Mower County Attorney or the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency should be stepping in. Something should be happening here," says Carroll.

Franzen has been placed on a paid leave of absence, and Mower County and the MPCA have launched internal investigations. It's not known when the county or MPCA will complete their investigations of Franzen and the circumstances surrounding his feedlot permits. Residents in the area are working with LSP to pressure state and local authorities into recognizing and dealing with the seriousness of the situation. This is an issue larger than one feedlot officer, says King.

"If a feedlot officer can illegally issue himself county permits, mislead the public in the process and profit handsomely with the MPCA taking no meaningful action, then it shows the state's feedlot program is fundamentally broken," says King. "There is no oversight and when neighbors discover clear

abuses there is no meaningful action on the part of the agency."

Meanwhile, the sows have moved into one barn even as the nursery is still being completed, helping push Holden Farms even further up *Successful Farming's* "Pork Powerhouse" list. Slowinski says that when Holden officials met with residents in the fall to talk about their "good neighbor policy," they said they would alert neighbors when emptying manure pits. They also recommended planting trees to screen odors.

"We can't wait 30 years for the trees to grow," says Slowinski.

Neighbors continue to meet and organize and the number of county residents calling for the county and MPCA to take action is growing. LSP mailed a letter from concerned neighbors to every rural resident in the county giving the details of the situation and asking people to call the MPCA and county officials. The group held a public informational meeting on Oct. 2 attended by over 100 people.

"I know we are going to get the MPCA and county to take some action," says Slowinski. "The concern is growing, not going away. The MPCA and county can not ignore this." □

*Key documents related to this issue, including a timeline and permits, are at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/newsr\\_070818.htm](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/newsr_070818.htm). The attorney general's letter to Mower County is at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/pdf/attorney\\_general\\_letter.pdf](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/pdf/attorney_general_letter.pdf).*

## Township manual

An updated edition of a popular guide for Minnesota township supervisors and residents interested in understanding their township zoning powers is now available. First published by the Land Stewardship Project in 1997, *When a Factory Farm Comes to Town: Protecting Your Township From Unwanted Development*, is designed to help townships begin the process of creating zoning ordinances that reflect their local values and land use needs.

*When a Factory Farm Comes to Town* is available at no charge at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/PDF/township\\_manual06.pdf](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/PDF/township_manual06.pdf). Paper copies can be purchased for \$8 (that price includes the 6.5 percent Minnesota state sales tax) by calling LSP's Minneapolis office at 612-722-6377.

## Minnesota Cooks 2007

By Jill McLaughlin

Minnesota Farmers Union, Food Alliance Midwest, and Renewing the Countryside are proud to report that the fifth annual Minnesota Cooks event was a grand success. Taking place Aug. 28 at the Minnesota State Fair's Carousel Park, Minnesota Cooks brought together local chefs, Minnesota farmers and celebrity tasters for an educational and inspirational day of cooking demonstrations using local ingredients. This served as a forum for conversations about the importance of supporting our Minnesota farmers and growers who are committed to sustainable agricultural practices.

Each of the seven hour-long programs featured two talented Minnesota chefs teamed up with a taster panel of celebrities and Food Alliance certified farmers.

This year featured three emcees: Brenda Langton, chef and owner of Café Brenda and Spoonriver and one of the founders of the Mill City

Farmers' Market; Scott Pampuch, chef and owner of Corner Table; and Andrew Zimmern, food writer and host of the "Andrew Zimmern Show" and the Travel Channel's "Bizarre Food."

Minnesota Cooks works hard to feature a diversity of presentations from year-to-year, both from the standpoint of



During the past five years, the annual Minnesota Cooks event at the Minnesota State Fair has become a popular venue for showcasing local food, farmers and chefs. (photo by Jill McLaughlin)

cooking style and restaurant location. Some of the newcomers for 2007 included chef Lucia Watson of Lucia's Restaurant and Wine Bar in Minneapolis, chef Scott Graden of New Scenic Café in Duluth, chef Matt Annand of Prairie Bay in Baxter, and chef Stephen Smith of Ristorante Luci in Saint Paul. Several Minnesota Cooks veterans took the stage, including chef JD Fratzke of Muffuletta in the Park in Saint Paul, chef Matt Schoeller of Signatures in Winona, and chef Mike Phillips of The Craftsman in Minneapolis, to name a few.

Participating Food Alliance Midwest certified farmer/growers spoke enthusiastically and fervently about their sustainable and humane growing practices and how we all benefit. Minnesota growers included but were not limited to Brian and Leslie Axdahl of Axdahl's Farm in Stillwater, Paul Otten of Natura Farms in Marine on St. Croix, Dave and Florence Minar of Cedar Summit Farm in New Prague, and Jim and LeeAnn VanDerPol of Pastures A' Plenty in Kerkhoven.

"The importance of using Minnesota-grown and local foods was highlighted by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* editorial noting the importance of these foods and also noting the significance of these organizations in their efforts to promote new trends and directions in Minnesota agriculture," says Doug Peterson, Minnesota Farmers Union President. "This is something that we can do more of and the time has come." (See page 21 for an excerpt of the *Star Tribune* editorial.)

Fairgoers were attracted to not only the cooking demonstrations and discussions, but also the large tent featuring some of the 2007 Minnesota Cooks sponsors and the Minnesota Cooks calendar. Because buying Minnesota-grown foods is important all year long, Minnesota Cooks once again produced the beautiful 16-month calendar that showcases the participating chefs and farmers. (See page 21 for information on ordering a calendar.)

This year the Minnesota Cooks team partnered with the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) to support its efforts in reaching out to students aspiring to become chefs. Through AURI's support, Minnesota Cooks worked with Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall to provide opportunities for students in SMSU's School of Culinology in assisting some of

Food Alliance, see page 21...

the state's top chefs during the seven shows.

The Minnesota Cooks presenters are also proud of the revamped Minnesota Cooks website, where you can find out about previously-participating chefs and farmers, discover additional recipes, and stay up-to-date on other Minnesota Cooks events. Updates to the site in the near future will include our new blog and

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*"It's a one-day event. But with five successful years to its credit, the collaboration among the Minnesota Farmers Union, Food Alliance Midwest and Renewing the Countryside ought to be only the beginning. In promoting the purchase and consumption of Minnesota-grown foodstuffs by Minnesota eaters and eateries, they have a winner."*

— from an Aug. 31, 2007, *Star Tribune* editorial on the State Fair Minnesota Cooks event ([www.startribune.com/561/story/1393092.html](http://www.startribune.com/561/story/1393092.html))

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video clips. You can find the website at: [www.minnesotacooks.org](http://www.minnesotacooks.org). □

*Jill McLaughlin is the Assistant Program Director for Food Alliance Midwest. She can be reached at [jill@foodalliance.org](mailto:jill@foodalliance.org) or 651-265-3684.*



**Minnesota State Fairgoers of all ages get exposed to local foods through the Minnesota Cooks event.** (photo by Jill McLaughlin)

## Minnesota Cooks calendars available

Each month the Minnesota Cooks calendar weaves a meaningful story about Minnesota Cooks chefs and their devoted relationships with Minnesota farmers. The calendar is full of great photography and enticing, easy-to-prepare recipes.

Calendars are \$5 plus postage. To order a Minnesota Cooks calendar, e-mail [info@minnesotacooks.org](mailto:info@minnesotacooks.org). □

## Minnesota Cooks at 'Food & Wine'

Food Alliance Midwest certified farmers will team up with local chefs at the 14th Annual Twin Cities Food and Wine Experience Feb. 23 and 24 in Minneapolis. This special winter version of the Minnesota Cooks experience will feature farmers and chefs on the Grand Cooks Stage preparing and talking about local food. For details, contact Jill McLaughlin at 651-265-3684 or [jill@foodalliance.org](mailto:jill@foodalliance.org). □

## Farmer-chef workshops in January

Land Stewardship Project members will have registration fees waived for a series of workshops that will bring Minnesota farmers and chefs/buyers together in January. These workshops will feature information sessions, followed by a networking opportunity.

The sessions will be: Jan. 7 in the Twin Cities, Jan. 14 in Winona and Jan. 28 in Little Falls.

For more information and to register, call 612-871-1541, or visit [www.eventbrite.com/org/44076390?s=881386](http://www.eventbrite.com/org/44076390?s=881386). □

## Midtown Market needs vendors

The Midtown Farmers' Market (Saturdays and Tuesdays at Lake Street and 22nd Ave. S. in Minneapolis, Minn.) is looking for organic/natural vendors for the 2008 season. In particular, the market is looking for farmers who have produce, meat, cheese, eggs, dairy products and specialty items.

For more information, see [www.midtownfarmersmarket.org](http://www.midtownfarmersmarket.org), or call Dayna at 612-724-7457. □

## What is Food Alliance Midwest?

The Food Alliance seal certifies that a farm is producing food using environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices. Food Alliance certification is available for all crop and livestock products, including fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products and meat products.

Food Alliance Midwest, based in Saint Paul, Minn., was established in 2000 by the Land Stewardship Project and Cooperative Development Services. It is the Midwestern affiliate of the Food Alli-

ance, which is based in Oregon.

Food Alliance certified products are available for sale throughout the United States and Canada in natural food co-ops and grocery stores, as well as select restaurants and food service dining halls.

For details on Food Alliance Midwest, including a list of stores that carry its products, visit [www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs/mwfa.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs/mwfa.html), or call 651-265-3682.

## Food Alliance is looking for farmers

Food Alliance Midwest is looking for farmers in the Upper Midwest who produce fruit, vegetables and livestock using sustainable methods and are interested in getting those methods certified. Details on what it takes to get certified by Food Alliance are at [www.foodalliance.org/certification/index.html](http://www.foodalliance.org/certification/index.html). More information is also available by calling 651-265-3682.

## Food Labeling:

# Pasture farmers applaud new USDA grass-fed label standards; 'natural' label proposal lacks critical elements

Farmer-members of the Land Stewardship Project gave the USDA's new labeling standards for grass-fed meat an enthusiastic thumbs up, calling them a vast improvement over original proposals. The final rules, which were released Oct. 15 by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), call for a "grass-fed" meat product to come from a ruminant animal that has been fed only grass and forage during its lifetime.

"If a standard like this is going to have any real meaning it has to be strong, and this one is," says Don Struxness, an LSP member who raises grass-fed beef in western Minnesota.

Under the standard, animals considered "grass-fed" cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. The grass-fed labeling standard does allow milk to be consumed before weaning. Under the voluntary standard, livestock producers are eligible to request that a grass-fed claim be verified by the USDA through an auditing

process.

Terry VanDerPol, Director of LSP's Community Based Food Systems Program and a grass-fed beef producer in western Minnesota, co-chaired the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's Marketing and Rural Development Committee, which advised USDA on the grass-fed standard.

During the past few years, LSP members joined over 19,000 farmers and consumers from across the country in providing comments on what the final grass-fed standards should look like. VanDerPol says the vast majority of the comments called for tighter restrictions on what can be labeled "grass-fed." The public's involvement in the rulemaking process paid off, she says.

"In 2002, the proposed rule was for 80 percent of the energy to be derived from grasses and forage, a standard nearly any feedlot animal could meet. The 2006 revision was better, but left the door open for too many questionable practices," says VanDerPol. "The final standard is an excellent example of the public's input

being taken seriously by USDA. Farmers and others are to be commended for their perseverance, and AMS is to be commended for its willingness to pull a bad rule and re-negotiate a good one."

To view the final grass-fed label standard, see the Oct. 16, 2007, edition of the *Federal Register* at [www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html).

## Comment on 'natural' label proposal by Jan. 28

Farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates have a decidedly different take on the USDA's proposal for label claims related to "naturally raised" livestock and meat. The proposed standards were released in late November and the public has until Jan. 28 to comment on them.

"Amazingly, these proposed standards mention nothing about access to pasture, or animal housing issues such as use of cages and crates," says VanDerPol. "These issues are critical to farmers and consumers and need to be addressed in the final standards."

On the bright side, experience with the grass-fed standard shows that public input can have a positive impact on the final product, she says.

The proposed standard can be viewed at [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org). For information on how to provide comments to the USDA by Jan. 28, contact VanDerPol at [tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org), or 320-269-2105. □

## Rapid market assessment of slow food

By Cael Warren

'Hi, would you like to help us gather information about the market?'

Dana Jackson, the St. Croix River Valley's *Buy Fresh Buy Local*® coordinator—along with me and Ruth Hilfiker, a University of Wisconsin Extension horticulturist on the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* steering committee—posed this question to over 250 shopping groups at the Stillwater Farmers' Market one Saturday morning in mid-September. The question prompted market customers to participate in a Rapid Market Assessment, organized by Jackson to help the vendors at the Stillwater Farmers' Market learn how they might improve or expand their market.

The Rapid Market Assessment

(RMA), developed by Oregon State University professor Larry Lev\*, is an innovative technique used to gather information about farmers' market customers in a cost-effective and efficient manner, while also reaping an extraordi-

nary customer participation rate relative to other information-gathering techniques. The RMA aims to increase farmers' market success by providing farmers and market managers with information about their customers, their product preferences, spending habits and more.

To collect this information, Jackson and her small team approached each shopping group that came through the market that Saturday, inviting them to participate in the study. When shoppers agreed (as nearly all of them did), they were provided with a set of four sticky dots and directed to four flip charts, each chart displaying a question and four to five potential responses to that question. Debbie Roth, manager of the Stillwater Farmers' Market, had chosen the four questions out of a long list of questions used in other market assessments.



St. Croix, see page 23...

Shoppers were asked to place one sticky dot on each chart, indicating their responses to the questions shown. By noon when the market ended, there were some 250 dots on each flip chart, and all that was left to do was count the dots in each response column, crunch the numbers and share the results with the vendors.

For regular shoppers who are fans of this market, the RMA provided an opportunity to do their part to help the market and have a little fun in the process. While these devoted shoppers were enthusiastic about the goals of the exercise, most were also delighted to have a chance to play with sticky dots and flip charts. The simple task of placing sticky dots on a chart, as opposed to circling responses on a written survey, is what makes the RMA so successful in generating high response rates.

The cost of this assessment was a few hours time, four flip charts and some sticky dots, while the benefits can be huge. The RMA can be used to collect information about what customers like and dislike, what would bring them to the market more, where they come from, how they found out about the market, how much money they spend, whether their trips to the market boost sales at other local shops, and more. Vendors can use information about customers' likes and dislikes to improve their product selection, while market managers can devise

strategies to bring in more customers or gain local support for the market.

The team also estimated the total number of market shoppers, tallying entering customers for 20 minutes of every hour and multiplying the result by three to approximate the total number of people entering within the hour.

The results of the Stillwater Farmers' Market RMA revealed that most of the estimated 540 market shoppers that day were regular customers who lived very near (within three miles) the market and heard about it through word-of-mouth, although 20 percent were there for the first time. One very popular suggestion for market improvement was to bring in a cheese vendor. While the study revealed that most customers felt a strong sense of community at their successful little market, the collected information may help the farmers pull in a larger customer base and extend the benefits of local foods to more people.

"The results of this survey are really interesting," says Roth. "It gives us



**Most customers surveyed at the Stillwater Farmers' Market said they felt a strong sense of community at the market.** (photo courtesy of Stillwater Farmers' Market)

something to think about for next year."

Jackson intends to conduct the RMA in the Stillwater Farmers' Market again next summer, but earlier in the season and perhaps with different questions. She also invites other farmers' markets in the St. Croix River Valley to work with *Buy Fresh Buy Local* to conduct surveys on their sites in 2008. Using Lev's simple but effective technique, Jackson hopes to provide farmers and market managers with sufficient information to attract larger numbers of shoppers to the St. Croix Valley markets and increase the consumption of local food, a major goal of the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign.

For more information on *Buy Fresh Buy Local*, visit [www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org) and [www.landstewardshipproject.org/foodfarm-main.html#stcroix](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/foodfarm-main.html#stcroix). □

*Cael Warren was recently an LSP intern in Community Based Food Systems and is a student at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minn.*

\*Larry Lev is currently a Senior Fellow in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota, as a part of the School of Agriculture Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems program. On August 13-14, Lev conducted a workshop in Minneapolis and trained Minnesota market managers to conduct Rapid Market Assessments. His paper, "Tools for Rapid Market Assessments," provides a detailed explanation of the Rapid Market Assessment procedure, and can be found on the web at <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/publications/techreports/TechReport6.pdf>.

## Want to be a *Buy Fresh Buy Local* Partner?

A local partner of the St. Croix River Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local*® chapter is a farm, a small-scale processor utilizing local farm products, a farm stand, farmers' market, or a retail food business, such as a restaurant, food cooperative or locally-owned retail grocery store selling local products. Partners can also be organizations, government agencies, chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus and individuals who endorse the chapter goals and participate in chapter activities.

Partner benefits include use of the market-tested label that conveys a message of "fresh and delicious" to consumers, access to a tool kit of designs for promotional materials, opportunities to help plan and participate in special *Buy Fresh*



*Buy Local* (BFBL) events, opportunities to develop marketing collaborations through connections with other partners in the St. Croix River Valley, and identification with a popular, progressive movement to increase consumption of healthful foods, keep family farms financially viable and improve local economies.

Local partners pay an annual fee and sign a participation agreement. Contact Dana Jackson at [danaj@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:danaj@landstewardshipproject.org) or 651-653-0618 for specific information about becoming a local partner.

The St. Croix River Valley BFBL chapter is one of 50 chapters connected to the national Food Routes Network.

# Farm Beginnings

Joe & Michelle Gransee-Bowman

## Devine intervention

In 2003, Roger Devine died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 72. Eleven months later, a stroke took his wife Marilyn, who was 71. These sudden deaths not only saddened their two adult daughters, Kim and Tammy, but left them wondering about the future of their family's 240-acre farm, which their grandfather moved to in 1905. Besides producing crops and livestock over the years, the farm is also a natural gem, home to one of only two remnant prairies in the area. Oak savannah habitat dots the farm and a creek snakes through a surprisingly dramatic valley on its way to the Minnesota River a mile away. But it also lies on the edge of Belle Plaine, a fast growing community just south of the Twin Cities. Belle Plaine is the kind of town that still has a Cenex Farm Co-op to serve area crop and livestock farmers, as well as a cute "farm store" for newer residents looking for horse and pet supplies.

Development was encroaching, and encroaching fast. So even prior to their parents' death, the daughters had been working towards developing a retreat center. Yet, Kim says, there were always so many fires to put out. In fact, within a few days of Roger's death, the family received an ominous telephone message: a major connecting road was being proposed that would cut through their pasture.

The family always felt the land should still be a working farm, but also knew that the traditional model of producing crops and livestock probably wouldn't

work. They needed to make the land a valuable part of the neighborhood—too valuable to be paved over and subdivided.

Today, two graduates of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings® program are helping the sisters put that strategy in place. Joe and Michelle Gransee-Bowman are caretakers of the Devine Farm, but they are doing more than mowing the weeds and doing farmstead maintenance. They are combining sustainable planning, environmental education and community outreach to show that a working farm



*Fresh Faces-Fresh Farming*

belongs on the edge of a fast-growing community. At the same time, they're learning the basics of producing food.

Michelle, 34, has a master's degree in natural resources education, with an emphasis in environmental education. Joe, also 34, will complete his master's degree in sustainable design in architecture this winter. He has an undergraduate degree in public and environmental affairs, with a political science minor.

Joe and Michelle have always worked in careers where they could work to improve the environment. Michelle is a Belle Plaine native, and both of her parents grew up on farms.

"I actually had that real common view of agriculture and the environment being separate," she says. "When we started talking about going into agriculture, Joe was much more in favor of it than I was."

During the 2004-2005 class session of Farm Beginnings, they learned that not only can farming be environmentally sound, but also can be done in a way that's profitable and retains a good quality of life. Farm Beginnings, which begins its second decade in 2008, is a

program where established farmers and other ag professionals provide insights into low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. The course provides workshops on goal-setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative production techniques. In addition, class participants have an opportunity to network with established farmers and utilize them as mentors.

"I think Farm Beginnings is critically placed, because there is a deep understanding of farming and working with the land that's within individuals that are either retiring or dying out," says Michelle. "This is a critical knowledge base that our society needs to have."

Farm Beginnings presenters include Dave and Florence Minar, who produce milk on Cedar Summit Farm just down the road from Belle Plaine. The Minars have become a model of environmentally sustainable farming in the midst of sprawling development. They are now helping mentor the Gransee-Bowmans on pasture-based livestock production systems and business management techniques as part of Farm Beginnings' interest-free Livestock Loan Program.

The Gransee-Bowmans learned through Farm Beginnings how to develop a business and marketing plan. The business plan was particularly important for the couple—they had studied the pasture-based livestock production methods of Joel Salatin, and knew "just enough to be dangerous." Soon after moving into the Devine farmstead—a neat brick house built circa 1860—they began raising chickens on grass. It didn't take them long to learn what they didn't know.

"The first two summers were simply about learning how to raise poultry," recalls Joe. "Farm Beginnings took it a step further and taught us how to treat the farm as a business."

Recently Joe and Michelle have been using the networking skills they learned in Farm Beginnings to improve their marketing and production skills. For example, they are selling eggs and chickens direct to consumers through local outreach efforts, as well as through Cedar Summit's on-farm retail store. They have also begun marketing to restaurants.

And the Gransee-Bowmans have teamed up with a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation being hosted on the Devine Farm. The CSA farm, Gullywash Gardens, is operated by

### Farm Beginnings profiles on the Web

To read other profiles of graduates of the Farm Beginnings® program, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/fb/graduates.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/fb/graduates.html).

To listen to an audio podcast featuring Joe and Michelle Gransee-Bowman, see *Ear to the Ground* episode 41 at [www.stewardshipproject.org](http://www.stewardshipproject.org) (click on the **Podcast** link under **Take Action**).

**Fresh Faces**, see page 25...



Barbara and Roy Pumper, who live across the Minnesota River. They are renting two acres of land from the Devines and in 2007 launched a 12-member CSA on the farm. Under the CSA model, consumers sign up for a weekly delivery of organic vegetables during the growing season. In this case, the members come to the Devine Farm once a week to pick up their share. This gives people from the community a chance to feel connected to the farm. The Pumpers took the Farm Beginnings class with the Gransee-Bowmans and have raised vegetables using organic methods for several years.

Through the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, the Gransee-Bowmans were able to make contact with

The Gransee-Bowmans are also transitioning 40 acres of cropland into a pasture using the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which provided 50 percent matching funds for seeding, fencing, watering and implementation of a rotational grazing plan.

And they are working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) to restore a prairie on the farm.

Both Kim Devine-Johnson and Tammy Devine have careers in health and wellness, and they see food—what's raised and how it's raised—fitting into their long-term goals for the farm. "We really looked at the global issue of the world today, and where our food comes from is a big part of it," says Devine-Johnson.

## Farm Beginnings at Common Roots this winter

On the first Thursday of each month from now through March, Common Roots Cafe (2558 Lyndale Ave. S. Minneapolis) will host a "Local Foods/Farm Beginnings" guest speaker. There will be sessions on Jan. 3, Feb. 7 and March 6. For details, call 612-871-2360, or visit the Common Roots Cafe website at [www.commonrootscafe.com](http://www.commonrootscafe.com).

away. We hope to send people away with something they can use in their own community."

Devine-Johnson concedes it is easy to get sidetracked because of the distractions of approaching development. The road that was to cut through the pasture has been put aside for now, but the family had to sell 40 of the 240 acres to pay for estate taxes.

On an overcast day in early fall, Joe and Michelle gave a tour of the CSA operation, prairie restoration, pasture renovation, chicken production area and cattle grazing area. As they stand on a high point overlooking the creek, a pair of wild turkey scurry away—the whining sound of Minnesota Highway 169's traffic is in the distance. They walk up to the farmstead's front yard where there's another reminder that this farm is not far from the city: a mere 100 yards away homes are under construction. A new school is also being built less than half-a-mile away.

The Gransee-Bowmans and Devines are embracing the reality of farming on the town's edge. Joe is on the Belle Plaine planning and zoning commission, and is chair of the commercial design committee. Michelle is on the park board and is the president of the local parent-teachers organization. They often go to the local primary school to talk about farming, and host classes on the farm. The young couple knows how to make the farm family friendly—they have four children of their own, ages 3 to 10.

"This town I grew up in has doubled [to 6,000 people] since I left and is projected to quadruple in the next 15 years," says Michelle. "That kind of development is often detrimental to farms and the families they support. Yet, the excitement of being a farmer in an area like this is not just about developing a farm, but also developing a community asset that produces not just food but clean water, a natural environment, a sense of community and a strong economy." □



Joe and Michelle Gransee-Bowman (LSP photo)

Greg Harris of Harris Herefords, a local cattle producer who was looking for grazing land last summer. As a result, during the 2007 growing season the Devine Farm was home to a herd of 13 Hereford brood cows with calves.

Kim Devine-Johnson says cattle and conservation were always important elements on the farm. That's why she's thrilled Joe and Michelle were able to continue to support cattle on the farm where they are being raised using managed rotational grazing, an environmentally sound method.

"It does my heart good to pull up there and see the cattle grazing," she says.

With the Gransee-Bowman's on the farm, the sisters now feel they can move ahead with their three-part goal: make the farm into a model for sustainable food production as well as a place of education, leadership and renewal.

Over the past 10 years, the Devines have created a nonprofit board of directors and an old granary has been renovated into a retreat center (it's located at a scenic spot overlooking the creek).

"Our plan is to be a model, living in a way locally that has a positive impact globally," says Devine-Johnson. "We don't want people to just come and go



## The Haymakers A Chronicle of Five Farm Families

By Steven Hoffbeck  
2000; 223 pages  
Minnesota Historical Society Press  
www.mnhs.org

By Laura Jackson

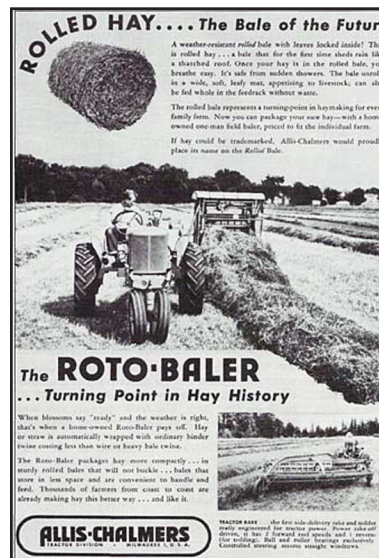
Back in the year 2000 (doesn't that sound weird?), no one was talking much about using the growth of perennial grasses as a feedstock for electricity or liquid fuels. The corn ethanol boom had not yet taken form, energy prices hadn't risen dramatically, and the truth about global warming was still being hidden from us by Exxon Mobil and the witless, gutless mass media. Today, "biomass fuels" are being eyed as a major source of renewable energy, and something that the Midwest could produce in abundance.

In 2000, that most high-tech and modern-sounding of years, the Minnesota Historical Society published a book on the no-so-modern topic of... hay. *The Haymakers: A Chronicle of Five Farm Families*, by Steven Hoffbeck, was not on the minds and lips of my relatives and friends in 2000, so I didn't read it then. Too bad. Winner of the Minnesota Book Award, it is everything that could be desired in a history: lively narrative, emotional suspense, riveting detail, and careful but accessible scholarship.

The history of haymaking is told through the lives of five farm families in five Minnesota counties—Carver, Ottertail, Stearns, Polk and Redwood—from the 1860s to the 1980s. It is partly a technological history: from marsh hay, scythe, pitchfork and oxen; through horses, timothy and clover, sickle mower, dump rake, hay loader, and haysling; alfalfa, balers and hay-bale conveyors; to forage choppers, haylage blowers, and blue silos. Descriptions are accompanied by very instructive photos and line drawings. If you ever wondered what that hook and pulley was for at the top of the barn roof, this book will explain it.

It is also the story of particular families and their communities in Minnesota, derived from their diaries, historical documents and author inter-

views. The endless work, economic pressures and distinct dangers of farm work are palpable on every page. One of those stories is Hoffbeck's own. The prelude describes his boyhood and his father's death in a tragic farm accident when he was 15. Interludes between chapters fill out the history of his extended family on the farm, and the poignant final chapter describes his brother's journey, from 1968 to 1984. At age 18, he took over the farm after his father's death. Over the years, the farm transitioned into an entity of greater mechanization, inhuman workload and uncontrollable debt. Eventually, Hoffbeck's brother was crushed while



fixing a self-propelled swather, 16 years later and within 100 yards of his father's accident. While the bookend accidents forge a somber tone, they do not overwhelm. There are also hopeful, lyrical descriptions of the nature to be found in hayfields, and humorous accounts of the characters that populate these family stories.

There are many reasons to read this book, not the least of which is writing strong enough to evoke visceral memory, if you possess it. Writes Hoffbeck: "If this book succeeds, you will be able to feel the burning July sun and the noon-time heat that made haying one of the hardest tasks of agriculture. You will find red clover plants in cut hay in a nearby meadow, take in the aroma, and remember Shakespeare's line from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'good hay, sweet hay'... the stifling heat in a hayloft and the cooling effects of an August breeze on the sweat-streaked brow. Fill your lungs with the fragrance of hay. ...Any-

one who has ever lain down on his back on piled hay has kept traces of the feel of hay, of its aroma, its essence of work, its usefulness, of its very nature and quiet force." For me, this book succeeded admirably.

Even if you haven't personally been yelled at for failing to get the bales tied in just right on the hay wagon, or experienced the high drama of an approaching thunderstorm during haying, there are good reasons to read this book. For almost 100 years, a combination of native prairie hay and tame hay covered much of the Cornbelt landscape. Then, beginning in the 1950s, cattle disappeared on many farms, and soybeans replaced oats, hay and pasture.

This sweeping change eliminated the prairie analogue and with it native plants that could survive under grazing and haying regimes. Hay was a compromise between wildness and production, a way of living off the land that continued to rely on nature's ecosystem services, and retained many of the ecological features as the prairie itself—diversity, year-round vegetative cover, deep root structure, biological nitrogen fixation. Hayfields supported grassland nesting bird populations, now in decline, especially when haying was done once in July, rather than three or four times throughout the summer.

Aldo Leopold, in "Marshland Elegy," describes the era of harvesting wild hay on the crane marshes of Wisconsin as a kind of Arcadian era of humans and nature in harmony. This book explains hay and haymaking for those who missed it altogether, and it is a good antidote and reality check to resist romanticizing hay, to honor the incredible effort and struggle, and the very real dangers, required to employ this crop in a farming system.

### No free lunch

More to the present discussion of biomass fuels, a thoughtful reading of *The Haymakers* will stimulate some thinking. For those who dream of replacing a significant portion of our current demand for coal and gasoline with biomass-fueled electricity and cellulosic ethanol, *The Haymakers* helps those long removed from the land and farming to get a feel for the limits of biomass fuels. The ability of an ecosystem to convert solar energy to plant biomass is what ecologists call "net

**Haymakers**, see page 27...

primary productivity,” but Hoffbeck’s characters might just call it hay yield. Sunshine, soil, moisture and plant species interact to determine net primary productivity. As every haymaker or grass-based farmer knows, a piece of land can only grow so much hay and support a certain number of cows. Do we have enough bales in the loft to feed all our cows this winter? Will their milk yield decline? So too, with biomass energy. In southern Iowa, it would take about a million acres of fertilized switchgrass to fuel the equivalent of a 750 megawatt coal-fired power plant—that’s a square area of land almost 40 miles on a side. Let’s say, optimistically, that we can triple that net primary productivity with different plants or management techniques. Is it feasible yet?

The second insight that *The Haymakers* brings to the biomass fuels question is that we have long cultural and technological experience to draw from. Cutting, compacting, moving and storing the stuff is energy-intensive work, and it has always involved a coordinated suite

of technologies that fit together hand-in-glove, with different implications for human labor and fossil fuel dependency. Small-scale farms and dairy herds in the 1860s used wild meadow grasses, scythes, pitchforks, oxen and abundant, inexpensive human muscle power, fueled by even more labor-intensive, home-cooked meals. Horses were faster and more trainable, but needed timothy and clover, as well as oats; they could help people harvest larger fields and feed larger dairy herds. As scale increased and horses were retired, the small square bale and hay conveyor replaced the pitchfork and loose hay. A generation of bale-pitching kids left the farm, and the high-labor requirements of square bales had to be replaced again, with haylage blowers and blue silos, or larger round or square bales and forklifts.

All of this is in obedience to the second law of thermodynamics: a broken plate won’t mend itself; the coffee in my cup won’t get any warmer, and hay doesn’t cut, rake, bale, haul itself and jump into the barn. It takes energy, whether muscle-powered or fossil, to move energy from an area of low concentration or disorder (the field) to

high concentration or high order (the hayloft, the ethanol plant). The laws of thermodynamics and ecosystem productivity have been obscured by 100 years of intensive fossil fuel development, but in no way has “high” technology repealed them. The society that tries to fuel itself with current solar energy will, by necessity, drastically scale back energy demands to match local net primary productivity. They will, I predict, deliberately and critically reanalyze the advantages of different combinations of human and draft animal labor compared to fossil fuel-powered machines. They will also re-think the question of scale and energy quality: one 750-megawatt electric plant vs. many, widely-dispersed biomass burners. All options will be on the table, even the scythe, pitchfork, haystack, oxen and farm kitchen; even the wild grass meadow. □

*Laura Jackson is a professor of biology at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. She co-edited with Dana Jackson The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems (Island Press, 2002).*

## Farm Aid

### A Song for America

Edited by Holly George-Warren  
Music essays by Dave Hoekstra  
Introduction by Eric Schlosser  
2005; 236 pages  
Rodale Press  
www.FarmAid.org

*Reviewed by Dale H. Hadler*

**F**arm Aid: A Song for America is not only a review of the music that has made this concert series so popular, but a comprehensive collection of articles addressing the issues confronting modern agriculture. Yes, there are articles by country music legend and Texas farm boy Willie Nelson, as well as Canadian born sixties music icon and social activist Neil Young. They, along with long-time family farm rock star and Indiana native John Mellencamp, explain their commitment to Farm Aid and family farming. However, this book also contains a collection of articles addressing the history, problems and possible solutions facing American agriculture.

These articles include Howard Zinn’s

“The American Farmer’s Experience. A Brief History;” Wendell Berry’s “The Pleasures of Eating”—a response to the urban question “what can city people do?” to which Berry responds “eat responsibly.” Also included are Barbara Kingsolver’s article “Lilly’s Chickens,” an endearing tale of her 5-year-old daughter’s love affair with her pet chickens; environmental attorney Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.’s article “Factory Farm’s

in current United States farm policy.

In addition to addressing the challenges facing modern agriculture, this book also discusses some of the current innovations in modern agriculture, including organic farming, efforts to connect urban and rural communities, community-based sustainable agriculture and urban agriculture programs like the ones existing in Chicago neighborhoods.

*Farm Aid: A Song for America* is almost a one-volume encyclopedia of American agriculture. It’s an enjoyable, easy-to-read work full of articles addressing the challenges and innovations in modern agriculture, the legendary music of this concert series and the many programs supported by Farm Aid. This book is a must-read for anyone concerned about family farming, whether they are farmers, land owners, farm advocates, rural pastors, interested consumers or public officials. □

*Land Stewardship Project member Dale H. Hadler is a frequent volunteer for LSP’s Policy and Organizing Program. He has a master’s degree in theology from United Theological Seminary, where he focused on the theological implications of the land and food, as well as agricultural and environmental policies.*



Pollute our Water,” a vivid account of the damage done by large factory farms; and former Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Hightower’s article “Keeping the Farm Movement Moving.”

This book also contains material addressing soil erosion, the depletion of the Ogallala aquifer and needed changes



## Get your *Buy Fresh Buy Local* bags & aprons

You can show off your support for fresh, local food with a new *Buy Fresh Buy Local*® cloth shopping bag or apron. Shopping bags (15 x 16) with the colorful St. Croix River Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local* label, or the Pride of the Prairie *Buy Fresh Buy Local* label, are available for \$15. The full-length apron, which features the St. Croix River Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local* label, is also available for \$15.

For information on buying these items, contact the Land Stewardship Project's Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or [lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org).



## Land Stewardship Project t-shirt features new logo

In these photos, Land Stewardship Project member Lois Nash proudly displays her stewardship ethic with LSP's new short-sleeved t-shirt. The organic, cream-colored, union-made in the U.S. shirt features our new green and black logo on the front and "Keeping the Land & People Together" on the back. These fashionable items are available in men's and women's sizes, and can be obtained from each of our offices. You can also have them mailed to you by calling our White Bear Lake office at 651-653-0618. Prices are \$13.50 for members, and \$15 for nonmembers. If you are ordering by mail, call 651-653-0618 for information on shipping costs. □



# LSP cap looks good in the field or in town

The Land Stewardship Project's new baseball-style cap is union-made in the U.S. of high quality 100-percent cotton. They come in black with LSP's green and white embroidered logo featured on the front. A fabric strap and brass clasp on the back make this a one-size-fits-all cap.

Caps can be obtained from each of our offices: Lewiston, 507-523-3366; Montevideo, 320-269-2105; Minneapolis, 612-722-6377; White Bear Lake, 651-653-0618.

You can also have them mailed to you by calling our White Bear Lake office. Prices are \$15 for members and \$17 for nonmembers. If you are ordering by mail, call 651-653-0618 for information on shipping costs. □



## Own a piece of Land Stewardship Project history

LSP's special 25th Anniversary commemorative poster is now available for the bargain basement price of \$5 if you buy one at an event or at one of our offices (\$5.33 with Minnesota sales tax). If you order one through the mail, the price is \$8 (\$8.33 with tax). To order by mail, contact Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or [lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org). Posters can also be purchased from our offices in the Minnesota communities of Lewiston (507-523-3366), Montevideo (320-269-2105) and South Minneapolis (612-722-6377).

This poster is by artist Ricardo Levins Morales of the Northland Poster Collective. For almost three decades, the Northland Poster Collective ([www.northlandposter.com](http://www.northlandposter.com)) has featured the art of social justice, the tools of grassroots organizing and activism, and the craft of union workers.

For LSP, the Collective has created a piece entitled, "Keeping the Land and People Together." The 17 x 22 high-quality, laminated artwork is suitable for framing and portrays a food and farming system that benefits the land, its people and our communities.

### Notecards

LSP is offering a set of blank notecards that feature our commemorative poster. The 4 x 5 cards come in packages of eight, and cost \$11 for members and \$12.50 for nonmembers. To order the cards, contact Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or [lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org).



### 25th Anniversary booklets

*25 Years of Keeping the Land & People Together* is a special commemorative booklet celebrating LSP's Anniversary and presenting our vision for the future. A 25-year timeline is also included. Copies of the 20-page color publication are \$5 each. For ordering information, contact Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or [lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org).



## SE Minn. poultry processor for sale

Burt's Hilltop Poultry in southeast Minnesota's Winona County is for sale.

The 10-year-old USDA certified on-farm processing plant is the only one of its kind in southeast Minnesota or western Wisconsin. Over the years, it has served numerous farmers, including several Land Stewardship Project members, who are selling their poultry directly to customers and in stores. The organically-certified plant butchers more than 100,000 chickens and 15,000 turkeys annually. Included in the package is a farmhouse and 35 acres, with mixed woodland and cropland—all located near the town of Utica. The Burt family will help train and coach the new owners.

For more information, contact the Burt family at one of the following numbers: 507-932-3431, 507-202-2830 or 507-696-2332. □

## Midwest Food Connection

The Midwest Food Connection is a Minneapolis-based nonprofit that specializes in teaching children about natural foods, healthful eating and sustainable agriculture. By sending licensed educators into the elementary classroom, this organization teaches over 7,000 children at 60 schools annually. The Midwest Food Connection's website describes its curriculum offering in detail and allows you to request lessons for your school.

For more information, see [www.midwestfoodconnection.org](http://www.midwestfoodconnection.org), or call 651-373-9878.

To listen to a recent *Ear to the Ground* podcast (episode 44) on the Midwest Food Connection, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) and click on the **Podcast** link under **Take Action**. □

## Healthy pigs guide

*Managing for Herd Health in Alternative Swine Systems* is a free guidebook available from Practical Farmers of Iowa.

The 50-page guide is available from [www.pfi.iastate.edu/pigs.htm](http://www.pfi.iastate.edu/pigs.htm). Paper copies can be gotten by contacting Rick Exner at 515-294-5486. □

## Organic farm business report

*The Organic Farm Business Management 2006 Annual Report* contains data provided by 71 fully or partially organic farms enrolled in farm business management courses offered throughout Minnesota. The report contains 24 tables that cover financial statements, a farm income statement, a crop production and marketing summary, and crop and dairy enterprise analyses. The Minnesota Organic Farm Business Management Project reimburses organic producers for a portion of farm business management tuition.

Free copies of the report are available at [www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm), or by calling 651-201-6012. Detailed farm financial data summaries from other types of enterprises are available at [www.finbin.umn.edu](http://www.finbin.umn.edu). □

## Farm market rules

*Understanding Farmers' Market Rules* features legal information for farmers who sell their vegetables, meats, fruits, flowers and other products at farmers' markets. Developed by Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG), the booklet is intended to help farmers understand their responsibilities and rights as farmers' market vendors.

A free copy is available by calling 651-223-5400 (toll free 877-860-4349 in Minnesota). The booklet can also be downloaded from [www.flaginc.org](http://www.flaginc.org). □

## Julefest video

*Preparing a Traditional Julefest* is a DVD in which pigs dance, the younger generation learns to make lefse, the fearsome lutefisk is expertly handled and much more. This video features Land Stewardship Project members Dennis and Carole Johnson preparing a seven-course dinner consisting of some of the foods beloved to Scandinavian immigrants. The film is available from Tokheim Stoneware in Dawson, Minn., for \$12 (add \$3 for tax and shipping).

For more information, see [www.tokheim-stoneware.com](http://www.tokheim-stoneware.com), or call 320-769-2142. To download some of the recipes featured in the DVD, see [www.tokheim-stoneware.com/files/julefest\\_recipes.pdf](http://www.tokheim-stoneware.com/files/julefest_recipes.pdf). □

## Greenbook 2007

The 2007 edition of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) *Greenbook* is now available. Published for 18 years, the *Greenbook* highlights the results of innovative demonstration projects that test new approaches to marketing and raising crops and livestock.

For a free copy, call 651-201-6012, or visit [www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/sustainable/greenbook.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/sustainable/greenbook.htm). □

## Sustainable ag grants

Proposals for the latest round of Minnesota Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grants are due Jan. 18. These grants are designed to help farmers, researchers and educators implement new sustainable farming systems. Grants are available for three-year projects that benefit the environment, increase farm net profits through cost reductions or enhanced marketing, and improve farm family quality of life.

The application is available online at [www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.htm). For more information or to receive an application in the mail, contact Jeanne Ciborowski at 651-201-6217 or [Jeanne.ciborowski@state.mn.us](mailto:Jeanne.ciborowski@state.mn.us). □

## Farm Law Project

The Minnesota Family Farm Law Project has launched a new website at [www.mnfamilyfarmlawproject.org](http://www.mnfamilyfarmlawproject.org). The Law Project specializes in helping farmers prevent or address farm financial problems. It can represent farmers in farmer-lender mediation, USDA program appeals, land foreclosure, repossession of livestock and equipment, and Chapter 12 bankruptcy, as well as advise farmers on beginning farmer issues, natural disaster assistance, conservation and environmental protection programs, government loan restructuring, livestock contracts, and many other issues. For more information, call toll-free:

- **Farmers' Legal Action Group** (Saint Paul), 877-860-4349.
- **Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services** (Mankato), 800-247-2299.
- **Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services** (Rochester), 866-292-0080.
- **Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance** (St. Cloud), 888-360-2889.
- **Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota** (Alexandria), 800-450-2552.
- **Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota** (Bemidji), 800-450-9201.
- **Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota** (Moorhead), 800-450-8585. □



LAND  
STEWARDSHIP  
PROJECT

## Membership Update

# A membership pledge for 2008

By Mike McMahon

**T**hink for a moment about how you spend \$10, \$15 or \$20 in a month. Do you take in a movie, have a meal out, or maybe buy a new book? What if you rented a video instead of going to the theater, made an extra trip to the library, or ate leftovers one more night? Would your life be much different? Probably not.

But if you took the same amount of money and pledged it on a monthly basis to support the Land Stewardship Project, it would make a big difference to advancing our work for stewardship and justice.

If you've made it to the back page of the newsletter you've probably already read some of the exciting things LSP members are doing every day to build a sustainable food and farming system: helping new farmers get started, fighting factory farms, conducting innovative on-farm research, and shaping our state and federal policies for the betterment of family farms, rural communities and the environment. Your donations are a big part of making that work go forward.

As we look forward to 2008, we want to increase the number of LSP members who make a pledge on a monthly or quarterly basis. Pledging is simple—it saves time, money and paper, and is the best way to maximize your LSP donation.

Every newsletter has an envelope you can use to make a pledge (or join for the first time and renew your dues). You can fill out the form printed on the envelope and enclose a voided check and your pledge will kick in on the date of your choice. I hope you will consider pledging to LSP as you make your giving decisions for the coming year.

Also, I'd like to let you know about some recent changes to the membership program. After nine years as Membership Coordinator, Cathy Eberhart is moving to a part-time Membership Associate position with LSP. I moved into the Membership Coordinator position in July after almost nine years as an organizer with the Policy Program. Abby Liesch joined the membership team as the Membership Assistant in September.

I'd like to thank Cathy for her work as

Membership Coordinator and for her help during this time of transition. She has been extremely helpful, providing staff training and filling in wherever needed to keep the program running smoothly as people take on their new roles. □

*Mike McMahon can be reached at 612-722-6377, or [mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org).*

## Thank you

The Land Stewardship Project is grateful to have received a number of gifts made in the name of loved ones over the past few months:

### In honor of the Mike Rollins & Laura Flynn marriage

- Kimberly J. Wicklund
- Donald H. Libbey & Sara L. Flynn
- Jennifer Flynn
- Janel Anderson

### In honor of the Stephanie Owens & Jay Lyons marriage

- Emily Greene & Jim Manolis
- John Dixon

### In honor of the Molly McGovern & Aaron Wills marriage

(designated to the Dave Serfling Scholarship Fund)

- Alex Weck
- Susan Dahl
- Nicole Wallin
- Kay Krebsbach

### In memory of Phyllis Pladsen

- Karen Bartig

### In memory of Eunice Jean Kroese

- Virginia Clarke-Laskin
- Shelley J. Anderl

For details on honoring a loved one with an LSP donation, contact Mike McMahon at 612-722-6377, or [mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org). □

## 'Cooperate for Community' donation

Land Stewardship Project member Jillian Jacquinet of Small Family CSA ([www.smallfamilycsa.com](http://www.smallfamilycsa.com)) recently won second place in the "Cooperate for Community" awards competition, which granted her \$250 to donate to the nonprofit of her choice. "It didn't take long for me to choose the Land Stewardship Project," she wrote in a note. "I believe in you. Keep on rockin'." Thanks Jillian. □

## Support LSP in your workplace

The Land Stewardship Project is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which is a coalition of 20 environmental organizations in Minnesota that offer work-place giving as an option in making our communities better places to live. Together member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Fund work to:

- promote the sustainability of our rural communities and family farms;
- protect Minnesotans from health hazards;
- educate citizens and our youth on conservation efforts;
- preserve wilderness areas, parks, wetlands and wildlife habitat.



You can support LSP in your workplace by giving through the Minnesota Environmental Fund. Options include giving a designated amount through payroll deduction, or a single gift. You may also choose to give to the entire coalition or specify the organization of your choice within the coalition, such as the Land Stewardship Project. If your employer does not provide this opportunity, ask the person in charge of workplace giving to include it.

For more information, contact LSP's Mike McMahon at 612-722-6377 or [mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org).

## STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ **DEC. 21-FEB. 3—Traveling Smithsonian Museum exhibit, “Key Ingredients: America by Food,”** Winona (Minn.) County Historical Society Museum; Contact: 507-454-2723; [www.winonahistory.org](http://www.winonahistory.org)

→ **JAN. 3—Common Roots Cafe Local Foods/Farm Beginnings discussion,** Minneapolis, Minn. (see page 25)

→ **JAN. 7—Farmer-chef workshop,** Twin Cities (see page 21)

→ **JAN. 13—Workshop on “Improving Your Soil & Your Profits,”** Roseville (Minn.) County Library; Contact: Minnesota Food Association, 651-433-3676

→ **JAN. 14—Farmer-chef workshop,** Winona, Minn. (see page 21)

→ **JAN. 18-19—2008 Minnesota Organic Conference,** St. Cloud, Minn.; Contact: Meg Moynihan, MDA, [Meg.Moynihan@state.mn.us](mailto:Meg.Moynihan@state.mn.us); 651-201-6616

→ **JAN. 19—Winter Greenhouse Workshop,** 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Stone Soup Foods Center, Milan, Minn.; Contact: Garden Goddess Produce, [newworld@fedteldirect.net](mailto:newworld@fedteldirect.net); 320-734-4669

→ **JAN. 20—Workshop on “Preparing Your Schedule F,”** Roseville (Minn.) County Library; Contact: Minnesota Food Association, 651-433-3676

→ **JAN. 24-25—2008 Midwest Value Added Conference & Wisconsin Local Food Summit, featuring economist & author John Ikerd,** Eau Claire, Wis.; Contact: [www.rivercountryrcd.org](http://www.rivercountryrcd.org); 715-834-9672 or 800-226-9672

→ **JAN. 25—Economist & author John Ikerd will speak & sign books,** 7 p.m., River Room of the Phipps Theater,

Hudson, Wis.; Contact: Dana Jackson, LSP, 651-653-0618; [danaj@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:danaj@landstewardshipproject.org)

→ **JAN. 28—Farmer-chef workshop,** Little Falls, Minn. (see page 21)

→ **JAN. 28—Deadline to comment on USDA’s proposed standards for “naturally-raised” livestock** (see page 22)

→ **FEB. 1—Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Youth Day,** Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.; Contact: [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org); 866-760-8732

→ **FEB. 2—Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota 2008 Conference,** Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.; Contact: [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org); 866-760-8732

→ **FEB. 2—Making the Smithsonian exhibit, “Key Ingredients: America by Food,” local;** Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; [caroline@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:caroline@landstewardshipproject.org)

→ **FEB. 7—Common Roots Cafe Local Foods/Farm Beginnings discussion,** Minneapolis, Minn. (see page 25)

→ **FEB. 8-9 —“Farming into the Next Generation” workshop for people working together to pass on the farm business,** Lewiston, Minn. (see page 8)

→ **FEB. 8-9—Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society Winter Conference, featuring Fred Kirschenmann & John Doran,** Mandan, N. Dak.; Contact: [www.npsas.org](http://www.npsas.org); 701-883-4304

→ **FEB. 12—2008 Minn. Legislature convenes;** Contact LSP at 612-722-6377 or [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org) for details on how to advance legislation that supports family farmers & the environment

→ **FEB. 12-13—Upper Midwest Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show,** St. Cloud (Minn.) Civic Center; Contact: 763-434-0400; [www.mfvga.org](http://www.mfvga.org)

→ **FEB. 13—2008 Minnesota Environmental Partnership Legislative Forum,** Science Museum of Minnesota, Saint Paul; Contact: Bobby King, LSP, 612-722-6377; [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org)

→ **FEB. 21—MOSES Organic University,** La Crosse, Wis.; Contact: 715-772-3153; [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)

→ **FEB. 21-23—19th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference,** La Crosse, Wis.; Contact: MOSES, [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org); 715-772-3153

→ **FEB. 23-24—Minnesota Cooks at Twin Cities Food & Wine Experience,** Minneapolis, Minn. (see page 21)

→ **LATE FEB.-EARLY MARCH—3rd Annual LSP Family Farm Breakfast at the Capitol,** Saint Paul, Minn.; Contact: Bobby King, LSP, 507-523-3366; [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org)

→ **MARCH 6—Common Roots Cafe Local Foods/Farm Beginnings discussion,** Minneapolis, Minn. (see page 25)

→ **MARCH 14-15—“Farming into the Next Generation” workshop for people working together to pass on the farm business,** Lewiston, Minn. (see page 8)

→ **MARCH 25-27—SARE 20th Anniversary Conference,** Kansas City, Mo.; Contact: [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org); 614-306-6422

→ **MARCH 28—2nd Annual Home Grown Economy Conference, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson,** University of Minnesota-Crookston; Contact: Terry VanDerPol, LSP, 320-269-2105; [tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org)

→ **AUG. 4-8—21st North American Prairie Conference: The Prairie Meets the Prairie,** Winona (Minn.) State University; Contact: Bruno Borsari, 507-457-2822; <http://bio.winona.edu/NAPC>

Check [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) for the latest on upcoming events.



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