

The Land Stewardship



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

Keeping the Land and People Together *Letter*

Vol. 25, No. 2

www.landstewardshipproject.org

Spring 2007



See page 7 for how you can get a color copy of this special 25th Anniversary commemorative poster created by Ricardo Levins Morales of the Northland Poster Collective.

—*Wendell Berry Helps LSP Celebrate 25 Years June 29*—

—*2007-2008 Farm Beginnings Deadline*—

—*Immigrants, Migrants & Our Food System*—

—*Hospital Food That Doesn't Make Us Sick*—



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 newsletter as a benefit. Annual membership dues are \$35.

All inquiries pertaining to the content of the *Land Stewardship Letter* should be addressed to the editor, Brian DeVore, 4917 Nokomis Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417; phone/fax: 612-729-6294; e-mail: bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Charlotte Brooker,
- Dan Guenther, Bonnie Haugen,
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STAFF

Southeastern Minnesota

180 E. Main St., P.O. Box 130, Lewiston, MN 55952; phone: 507-523-3366; fax: 2729; e-mail: lspse@landstewardshipproject.org
Karen Benson, Karen Stettler, Caroline van Schaik

Twin Cities Area

2200 4th St., White Bear Lake, MN 55110; phone: 651-653-0618; fax: 0589; e-mail: lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org
Louise Arbuckle, George Boody, Brian DeVore, Cathy Eberhart, Lori Golightly, Dana Jackson, Ron Rengel,

Western Minnesota

301 State Rd., Montevideo, MN 56265; phone: 320-269-2105; fax: 2190; e-mail: lspwest@landstewardshipproject.org
Amy Bacigalupo, Michele Skogrand, Terry VanDerPol

Policy Program

2919 42nd St. E., Minneapolis, MN 55406; phone: 612-722-6377; fax: 6474; e-mail: marks@landstewardshipproject.org
Bobby King, Rachel Long, Mike McMahon, Mark Schultz, Paul Sobocinski, Adam Warthesen

The Land Stewardship Letter's Editorial Advisory Team:
Jason Abraham, Patrick Deninger & Susan Maas

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Contents

Membership Update...3

- LSP's new logo
- Make your donation go further
- In memory of Ludoph Torstenson

Commentary...4

- Land ethics in action
- Letters: Grain subsidies & livestock

Myth Buster...6

- Conservation tillage & global warming

LSP News...7

- LSP turns 25
- Minar, Palmer join board
- Murphy serves internship
- Walk for Justice Sept. 16
- *Planting in the Dust* 2007
- Farm Beginnings deadline Aug. 30
- Community Food & Farm Fest
- LSPers meet with U.S. Rep. Walz
- Serfling Scholarship
- Kickapoo Country Fair
- Members honored
- Organic record keeping workshop

Western Minn. Update...19

- Homegrown Economy conference

A Contentious Link in the Food Chain...20

- Centro Campesino's stand for justice
- LSP & Centro Campesino join forces

Food & Farm Connection...24

- Food Alliance Midwest's annual meeting
- Healthy food & health care
- How to get good food to those in need
- *Buy Fresh Buy Local* in the St. Croix River Valley

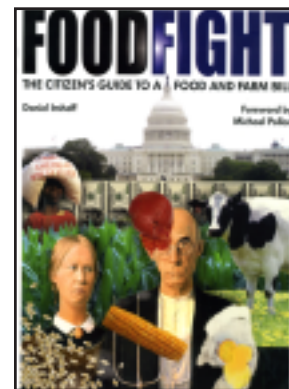


Fresh Faces-Fresh Farming...12

- Justin Leonhardt & Gayle Hanson

Policy Update...13

- Beginning farmer bill introduced
- LSPers in the nation's capitol
- The latest on CSP
- Capitol Family Farm Breakfast



Reviews...30

- *Food Fight*
- *Dirt*
- *From the Farm to the Table*

Opportunities/Resources...31

Stewardship Calendar...32



Membership Update

A new era—a new logo

With this edition of the *Land Stewardship Letter*, we are unveiling a new logo for the Land Stewardship Project. Our old one, which had been designed by long-time Land Stewardship Project organizer Patrick Moore, has served us well for 25 years.



1982

A chance to double your LSP donation

During our 25th anniversary year, you have a great opportunity to have your Land Stewardship Project donation go further than ever. A long-time LSP member has generously provided a matching fund for major donations.

Through this fund, all \$500 donations from people who have never given \$500 before, and all \$2,500 donations from people who have never given \$2,500 before, will be matched on a dollar-to-dollar basis. If you give a major donation of \$250 or more, and it is the largest one-time gift you have provided LSP, the amount of that contribution above your previous largest gift will also be matched by the donor. Up to \$50,000 is available to be matched through this generous offer.

In addition, the McKnight Foundation has made available an additional \$5,000 to match dollar-to-dollar all gifts of \$500 or more from donors who give at that level for the first time.

We are very grateful for these amazing contributions. If you can, please consider helping LSP begin laying the foundation for our next quarter-century of work with a financial contribution that qualifies for a match in 2007.

But it was time to update our look.

The new logo features a fence and a gate, and that's no accident. The presence or absence of a fence can tell a lot about a farm. When fencing is being torn out, it's a sign that the farm is probably being switched over to monocropping, or

livestock is being separated from the land. When fences are being built on a farm, it usually means diversity is returning to that operation. It's worth noting that when Farm Beginnings® graduates get started on an operation, often one of the first things they do is erect new fencing.

And an open gate sends an important message about what kind of organization LSP is. We like to think we are opening up a new world of farming—a world that keeps the land and people together.

— *George Boody*
Executive Director
Land Stewardship Project



2007

For more information, contact LSP Associate Director Mark Schultz at 612-722-6377 or marks@landstewardshipproject.org. □

Becoming a member or renewing is easy

Whether you are renewing your Land Stewardship Project membership or joining for the first time, there are several easy options:

- **Land Stewardship Letter.** Included in the middle of this newsletter is an envelope you can mail to us with your membership dues or an extra donation.
- **Online.** At www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-joinus.html you can use our secure online system to renew or join using a credit card.
- **Give us a call.** You can call our offices in Lewiston (507-523-3366), Montevideo (320-269-2105), White Bear Lake (651-653-0618) or Minneapolis (612-722-6377) to join over the telephone.

If you have any questions about membership, contact Cathy Eberhart, LSP's Membership Coordinator, at cathy@landstewardshipproject.org or 651-653-0618. □

Torstenson memorial

Lyndon Torstenson recently provided a donation to the Land Stewardship Project in memory of his father.

He wrote: "This contribution is in memory of my father, Ludoph Torstenson, who grew up on a farm along the Lac Qui Parle River in rural Dawson, Minn. Dad often played at the river as a boy and recalled seeing the sandy bottom of the nearby swimming hole—six feet or seven feet down! He was happy to see the Land Stewardship Project office in Montevideo. He passed away in February at age 95."

If you would like to give a memorial gift to LSP, contact Cathy Eberhart at 651-653-0618 or cathy@landstewardshipproject.org.

The work of this ‘project’ isn’t finished

“No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections and convictions.”

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

By Ron Kroese

Over the years, there has been talk, now and then, about changing Land Stewardship Project’s name. Twenty-five years ago when Victor Ray and I started LSP, neither of us had any idea that our “project” would continue well into the future and grow into the strong, multifaceted organization it is today. Victor, as vice-president for Field Services at National Farmers Union, had been my boss when I was director of the American Farm Project, an education program he started. This initiative was aimed at exposing young farm couples around the country to the “culture of agriculture.” The program centered on the discussion of books and readings that presented the history of agriculture in the United States and explored the richness of America’s agrarian past, including the Jeffersonian notion that a sound democracy depends on an agricultural system composed of many farmers working the land they own.

In his wisdom, Victor included a then-recently published volume by Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. With clarity that only a writer of Berry’s artistry can produce, this book exposes the flaws of industrial agriculture, warns of the danger that the loss of the family farm portends, and offers an alternative vision for agriculture based on the values of stewardship and community. For many of us, this book set the course of our lives.

The American Farm Project, which had been funded by a special program within the National Endowment for the Humanities, ended in 1981 when the federal government shut down the program. Around that time, a national study had revealed that America’s farmlands were in trouble. As a result of 1970s “get-big-or-get-out” policies that brought millions of fragile acres into row crops, erosion had reached near Dust Bowl levels. The study

noted that 22 pounds of soil were lost for every pound of food produced in the U.S.; in Iowa two bushels of soil were washed or blown away for every bushel of corn grown. At about the same time, two of the largest religious denominations in the Upper Midwest, the Roman Catholic and American Lutheran, released well-publicized statements that proclaimed care for creation as fundamental to Christian faith.

Victor and I decided that in the spirit of the American Farm Project we would try to start a new nonprofit effort — a land stewardship project that, building on recent headlines about the soil loss and the churches’ renewed commitment to care for the earth, would elevate the concepts of agricultural stewardship. The word “project” seemed most fitting for this effort because it conveyed a sense of action toward a clear mission.

Unfortunately, the word “project” also conveys the sense of an effort being time-limited. In retrospect, it may not have been the best word to choose, given that the day when the values of stewardship prevail on America’s agricultural landscape has yet to arrive. The phrase that has never come into question, however, is “land stewardship.” Despite the expansion of LSP programs and growth of its membership and influence, the values inherent in those two words continue to inspire and inform its vision for an agriculture built on sustainable and humane farming methods, strong rural communities, and social and economic justice for those working the land.

Embedded in the phrase “land stewardship” is the notion that the first calling of the farmer is to care for the land, and from that care will emerge the blessing of the harvest. That lofty ideal manifests in practical day-to-day behaviors that put the land ethic into action. A summary of those stewardship-based behaviors, and how they contrast with the values implicit in industrial farming, was included in one of LSP’s first publications in the mid-1980s, a self-published booklet titled *Excellence in Agriculture* that featured interviews with 10 farm families.

All 10 expressed a commitment to leaving their land in better condition than when they began farming it. They viewed soil not merely as a physical medium, but as a living biotic system that must be

carefully maintained. They valued diversity and rotated their crops, with most of them integrating livestock into their operations. They considered animal manure an essential resource rather than waste, and preferred animal and green manures over purchased inputs as sources of soil fertility. They were distrustful of synthetic pesticides and used them sparingly, if at all. They talked about their love of the wildlife on their farms and relied on their gardens and livestock for much of their families’ food. They acknowledged limits on the amount of land they could sustainably manage and were humble about their role in relation to the natural systems with which they worked on their farms.

Several also expressed concerns about the difficulty they had making economic ends meet and the decline of their rural communities, as more and more of their neighboring farms went out of business and the land was rented to larger operators. They expressed frustration with federal farm support programs that didn’t fit their diversified farms; most received no federal farm benefits.

The values and behaviors detailed by those farm families 20 years ago remain as viable today as they were then. And in the years since, thanks to the efforts of LSP and other groups, sustainable systems are being put into practice on a growing number of farms. At the same time, the anxiety those farm families expressed two decades ago about the decline of family farm agriculture, rural communities and the unfairness of government programs remains real today.

And here is where we nonfarmers can do our part to reinforce the values of land stewardship and help LSP achieve its goal of “Keeping the Land and People Together.” We all need to join in LSP’s campaigns to push for positive changes in federal farm legislation. It is all the more important at this moment as the debate on the next Farm Bill is underway in Washington. Closer to home, thanks to the biofuels boom, prices for corn and soybeans are high (for the moment, anyway). History has shown that higher commodity prices generally do not translate into improved stewardship of the

Ethics, see page 5...

land. If the soil, water and wildlife are not to suffer from the rush to ethanol, incentives need to be put in place in the next Farm Bill that will encourage land owners to keep highly erodible lands out of row crops and will stimulate the production of biofuels from sustainable sources, such as perennial grasses.

We also can help make the stewardship ethic real in our own lives through

Letters

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Myth Buster Box that ran in the Winter 2007 *LSL* (www.landstewardshipproject.org/pdf/myth_buster_16.pdf) addressed the issue of whether federal crop programs provide large-scale livestock operations a subsidy by keeping feed prices cheap. It prompted this exchange between farmer Roger Hubmer and Tufts University's Timothy Wise/Elanor Starmer, the authors of a paper on the cheap feed subsidy issue. You can learn more about this research at www.ase.tufts.edu.

Hubmer: Growing own feed isn't always a disadvantage

I agree with most of the Myth Buster Box, but at one point it states a myth itself. It claims that, "when you feed homegrown grains to your livestock, you are in effect paying full cost for that feed (the price of raising it)...."

When your "factory" livestock farmer contracts corn at market price, plus 10 cents over, he is buying on the open market, which may well be below the cost of production. I raise my own corn, and was heavily subsidized on my 270 acres of the 2005 crop. I consider myself a good marketer, and subscribe to services that advise, and even market, my leftover grain for me. They advised me to LDP [Loan Deficient Payment] my fed corn at 50 cents, and then to buy back my CCC [Commodity Credit Corporation] corn. This made my corn 10 to 20 cents under your "factory" farm's cost, with not having to pay commission or trucking.

Opening calls are for corn up another 18 cents today, after a limit up Friday. With that I'm still feeding corn at the cost of production, while those buying corn are paying double that. That also blows the Tufts researchers' theory out of the

the way we eat. Purchase local, sustainably produced food, directly through farmers or from co-ops and other retailers that cooperate with the Food Alliance Midwest. And plant a garden, even if it's just a potted tomato .

These personal acts offer each of us a "project" for our own lives — an opportunity to begin to fulfill our own responsibilities as stewards and co-creators. For as Wendell Berry summed it up in *The Unsettling of America*: "...the care of the

water, because those of us producing our own grain now have an even bigger advantage.

They need to understand how the federal farm program and grain marketing works.

— Roger Hubmer
St. Clair, Minn.

Wise/Starmer: But factory farms still benefit from subsidies

The first point is quite simple: We were working with averages and some farmers in some regions have been better able to make the current system work than others. So your relative success sounds like it puts you well above average in your ability to make the current system profitable. Someone else is as far below average as you are above it, and the average is not so profitable.

The second point is more complicated. The "implicit subsidy" to factory farms that don't grow their own feed is clearly tied to the price of corn. When the market price of corn is lower than the cost of production, factory farms are getting a discount on feed, compared to what they'd pay if the feed price reflected the cost of producing it. As you rightly note, when corn market prices are higher than the cost of production, the situation flips: factory farms are at a disadvantage when they buy feed on the open market.

During the period that we studied (1986 to 2005) though, corn market prices averaged around \$2.17 per bushel in the Midwest. The USDA estimated that the full cost of producing corn during those years averaged \$2.61 per bushel. Our point was that during this period, factory farming had an incentive to buy feed on the open market, and benefited from doing so. The system was set up to keep feed prices as low as possible, and as they got lower, factory farms saved more and more money. You're quite right that the current corn situation changes

earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope." □

LSP co-founder Ron Kroese is the former Executive Director of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership. He is currently the Program Officer for the Environment Program at the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis.

things, but I think our conclusion still holds for the time period studied.

You raise an excellent point, though, that the extent to which the system really drives the growth in factory farms depends in part on whether or not the subsidies to family farmers filled the gap between low market prices and higher production costs. Factory farms weren't paying full cost of production for feed during the period we studied, but it's possible that family farms weren't either. The question really is: which was bigger—the discount to factory farms or the subsidy to family farms? If it costs you \$3 per bushel to produce corn and you're getting 70 cents per bushel in payments, you're effectively paying \$2.30 for your corn. If the market price is lower than \$2.30, factory farms have an advantage over you. If they're higher, you have the advantage.

The questions you raise are ones we've been thinking about as well, and we're examining the subsidy contribution more thoroughly in follow-up research in the hog industry.

— Timothy Wise & Elanor Starmer
Tufts University
Medford, Mass.

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.

Contact: Brian DeVore, *Land Stewardship Letter*, 4917 Nokomis Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417; phone: 612-729-6294; e-mail: bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org.

Myth Buster Box

An ongoing series on ag myths & ways of deflating them

→ Myth:

Conservation tillage reduces global warming by trapping much more carbon in the soil when compared to conventional tillage.

→ Fact:

It has become the conventional wisdom in recent years that conservation tillage, also called minimum or reduced till, traps significant amounts of carbon in the earth because it disturbs the soil profile (and anything in it) as little as possible. Such sequestering of organic carbon keeps it from being released into the atmosphere where it can contribute to global climate change as carbon dioxide gas, goes this thinking.

This is an exciting proposition, given that some soils in the U.S. have lost 30 percent to 50 percent of the carbon they stored prior to cultivation. The average American produces some 20 tons of carbon dioxide and similar gases annually, four times the world average, according to the *New York Times*. The idea that minimum tillage traps a significant amount of carbon has become so widely accepted that coal-burning utilities are forking over greenbacks to no-till farmers via “emissions-trading” arrangements through the Chicago Climate Exchange.

But a little digging shows no-till isn't as carbon hungry as once thought. In fact, according to an analysis of various studies related to carbon trapping and tillage, no-till systems sequester no more carbon than their tillage-intensive counterparts.

In a commentary published in *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, scientists John Baker, Tyson Ochsner, Rodney Venterea and Timothy Griffis conclude that a field under conservation tillage stores its carbon in a different place compared to a field that's being plowed. In no-till systems, sequestered carbon is found near the surface, while

in conventionally-tilled fields that carbon is deeper down. So in the larger scheme of things, the same amount of carbon is stored, no matter how much tillage occurs.

Does this mean we should junk the strip-till planter and dig the moldboard plow out of the weeds? No. As Baker et al. are quick to point out, no-till conservation tillage produces a lot of positive benefits, including reduced erosion, lower production costs and significant fuel savings (that reduced use of fossil fuel is probably helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions). But it's time to take one item off of the no-till “public good” list. “Though there are other good reasons to use conservation tillage, evidence that it promotes [carbon] sequestration is not compelling,” writes Baker and his colleagues.

How did no-till get such a reputation as a carbon catcher? It may be sampling error, pure and simple. Baker and his colleagues found that studies which conclude minimum till sequesters significantly larger amounts of carbon are essentially always based on soil samples taken from depths of around a foot or less, even though crop roots often extend much further. Sure enough, studies that sampled soil beyond a foot found conventional tillage systems stored just as much carbon as their minimum till counterparts.

Don't expect the “no-till sequesters carbon” myth to die a quiet death—too many people and businesses are banking on it being agriculture's answer to global warming. That's too bad, because other farming systems do hold potential for reducing greenhouse gases. Perennial plant systems, such as pasture grass, sequester a lot of carbon. As perennial systems that cover the land year-round have been switched to annual crops, the loss of carbon has been tremendous, no matter what tillage system is being used.

And Baker's field research shows that cover crops (low-value crops planted to

protect the soil between the harvest and planting of more financially lucrative crops like corn and soybeans) hold great potential for trapping greenhouse gases. Cover crops, such as winter rye, are planted in the fall, providing important ground cover and the kind of biological activity that ties up carbon during those times of the year—late fall and early spring—when corn and soybean fields are usually bare. As an added benefit, cover crops cut erosion and can help preserve soil moisture.

A recent paper co-authored by Edward Nater, head of the University of Minnesota's Department of Soil, Water and Climate, concludes that, “Although only limited data are currently available, they strongly suggest that cover crops have the potential to dramatically increase the potential of the corn-soybean system to sequester carbon in Minnesota.”

That news needs to get out to those staffers at the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service who are failing to recognize the benefits of resource-conserving crop rotations when writing up Conservation Security Program contracts.

→ More information:

- To read the commentary, “Tillage and soil carbon—What do we really know?,” see <http://cnmp.unl.edu/Jan24inservicehandouts.htm>.

- A summary of John Baker's study on cover crops and carbon sequestration is at <http://a-c-s.confex.com/a-c-s/usda/techprogram/P29411.HTM>.

- Edward Nater's paper (written with Megan Lennon), “Biophysical Aspects of Terrestrial Carbon Sequestration in Minnesota,” is available at <http://wrc.umn.edu/outreach/carbon>.



Myth Busters series on the Internet

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



LSP News

LSP celebrates its 25th anniversary

Wendell Berry kicks off series of events June 29 in Saint Paul

The Land Stewardship Project is marking 25 years of “keeping the land and people together” in 2007 with numerous public events, a new logo, special publications and the unveiling of a long-range vision.

“This is an exciting time of growth for LSP as we celebrate a quarter-century of working in the Upper Midwest while looking forward to the next 25,” says George Boody, Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project. “We’ve got several initiatives on the front burner these days, from expanding our training for beginning farmers and making sustainably and locally produced foods an economic driver in rural communities, to organizing for policy reforms that are good for rural communities, family farmers and the land.”

25th events

During 2007, LSP is marking its 25th anniversary with several events:

◆ On **June 29**, farmer/author Wendell Berry will be at the College of St. Catherine in Saint Paul to help launch a series of events celebrating LSP’s 25th anniversary. Berry will be featured during an evening of readings and discussion that will also include Minnesota authors Mary Rose O’Reilly and Joe Paddock (see www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/newsr_070529.htm for details. Seating is limited. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased ahead of time by calling 651-653-0618 or e-mailing lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org.

◆ On **July 22**, a potluck picnic/Farm Beginnings® graduation ceremony will be held on the Greg & Jeanne Erickson farm near Lewiston in southeast Minnesota to celebrate LSP’s work. Call 507-523-3366 for more information.

◆ On **Aug. 2**, a 25th Anniversary event in Minneapolis/Saint Paul focused on the accomplishments and future efforts of LSP’s policy and organizing work will feature Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie. Details are available by contacting Mike McMahon at 612-722-

6377 or mcmhaon@landstewardshipproject.org.

◆ On **Aug. 19**, LSP in western Minnesota will mark the organization’s anniversary with a special Farm Beginnings graduation/picnic event from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Memorial Park in Granite Falls, Minn. This event will feature music and storytelling, as well as farmers’ and artisans’ markets. It will be preceded by an ecumenical service at Earthrise Farm in Madison, Minn., from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. For details, contact Michele Skogrand at 320-269-2105 or lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org for details.

◆ On **Oct. 6**, there will be a barn-raising event celebrating LSP’s 25th Anniversary at the Brad & Leslea Hodgson farm near Fountain, in southeast Minnesota. For details, contact Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org.

Publications, poster, logo

LSP is also celebrating its anniversary in other ways, including:

◆ The introduction of a **new logo** (see page 3). A high-resolution version of the logo is available for downloading at www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-aboutus.html.

◆ Publication of “**25 Years of Keeping the Land & People Together**,” a summary of LSP’s history, current work and plans for the future. A pdf version is available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-aboutus.html.

◆ Publication of an outline of LSP’s vision for a sustainable society and how the organization plans on attaining results within the next five years. A pdf version of “**Land Stewardship Project Long Range Plan: 2007-2012**” is available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-aboutus.html.

◆ A **Keeping the Land and People Together poster** (see sidebar).

◆ A **timeline** highlighting LSP’s accomplishments over the past quarter-century is also available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-aboutus.html.

For the latest news on LSP’s 25th anniversary observance, see www.landstewardshipproject.org. □

Get your 25th Anniversary poster

For its 25th anniversary, LSP commissioned a commemorative poster by artist Ricardo Levins Morales of the Northland Poster Collective. For almost three decades, the Northland Poster Collective (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 beautiful piece entitled, *Keeping the Land and People Together*. It is a colorful poster portraying a food and farming system that benefits the land, its people and our communities.

A 17 x 22 high-quality, laminated copy of the artwork suitable for framing can be purchased for \$15 (\$13.50 for LSP members; prices include sales tax) by contacting Louise Arbuckle in LSP’s White Bear Lake, Minn., office at 651-653-0618 or lsplib@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).





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LSP News

Minar, Palmer on LSP Board

Florence Minar and **Helen Palmer** have joined the Land Stewardship Project's Board of Directors.

Florence Minar farms near the central Minnesota community of New Prague. She and her husband Dave operate a pasture-based dairy farm, and process



Florence Minar

their own milk products on-farm. They market these products under the Cedar Summit label. The Minars are considered pioneers in pasture-based dairy produc-



Helen Palmer

tion and have long been involved with LSP initiatives, including the Monitoring Project and Farm Beginnings®. They are the 2007 MOSES Farmers of the Year (see page 11). Florence Minar is featured in the film *Voices of Minnesota Farm Women* (see page 31).

Helen Palmer is a retired French professor and is currently a fulltime volunteer living in Minneapolis, Minn. Since 2003 she has been the President of the League of Women Voters Minnesota, a nonpartisan, grassroots organization with 42 local chapters across the state. The League studies public policy issues such as environmental concerns, public education, affordable housing and childcare. It educates the public on these issues through special reports and advocates for reforms when necessary. □

Murphy serves LSP internship

LaVonne Murphy recently served an internship with the Land Stewardship Project's White Bear Lake, Minn., office. Murphy is a 2007 graduate of the Land



LaVonne Murphy

Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings® program. She and her husband Daniel own farmland in northwest Wisconsin, where they plan on raising pastured beef and blueberries.

While serving as an intern, Murphy coordinated the 2007 Community Food and Farm Festival (see page 10), which

was held May 5-6 at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds as part of the Living Green Expo. □

Shed shoe leather for justice & stewardship Sept. 16

Land Stewardship Project is planning to participate in the Headwaters Foundation Walk for Justice on Sunday, Sept. 16. We are hoping to build a team of about 10 walkers to raise funds to support LSP's work as well as the Minnesota Environmental Partnership. Give some thought to participating in this fun event and contact Cathy Eberhart at 651-653-0618 or cathye@landstewardshipproject.org for more information. The walk is 5K so it is easy for kids, seniors and families to participate.

The Headwaters Foundation Walk for Justice represents 130 organizations working on issues ranging from immigration and human rights to environmental stewardship and positive youth development. In addition to raising much-needed money for these important causes, the walk aims to build unity among the various communities and organizations that make up Minnesota. □

An updated *Planting in the Dust* this fall

Planting in the Dust, the 1984 one-woman play that sparked conversations about soil stewardship in rural communities across America and beyond, is returning.

As part of the Land Stewardship Project's 25th anniversary observance, we have commissioned the play's author, Nancy Paddock, to update the piece, taking into account changes that have occurred in our rural communities over the past



two decades. "One huge change is, of course, the much more active role of women," says Paddock.

LSP hopes to be giving performances of the updated *Planting* this fall. Watch our website and future issues of the *Land Stewardship Letter* for details. □

LSP's Farm Beginnings class deadline August 30

Classes in La Crosse, Wis., & Marshall, Minn., this fall

The registration deadline for the 2007-2008 session of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings® program is Aug. 30. The session will begin this fall, and classes are being held in two new locations: La Crosse in western Wisconsin, and Marshall in southwest Minnesota.

Farm Beginnings provides participants an opportunity to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. The course consists of a series of classes that take place twice a month from October through February. After February, course participants have the opportunity to attend on-farm educational field days. Farm Beginnings participants learn goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative production techniques. The course consists of 34 hours of class time, on-farm education, skills sessions and one-on-one mentoring.

This will be the 11th year LSP has offered Farm Beginnings in the region. The course has over 300 graduates to its credit—60 percent of whom are farming.

Other states

For the third year in a row, Farm Beginnings courses are being offered in Illinois and Nebraska. In addition, a version of the course will be offered in North Dakota this fall. That course, entitled, "Farm Beginnings Organic Farming 101," is being offered by the Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Resources Management and Sustainability. Classes will be held in Medina, N. Dak.

Enrolling in the course

For information on registering for LSP's session, contact Karen Stettler (stettler@landstewardshipproject.org) or Karen Benson (lspse@landstewardshipproject.org). More information, including a fact sheet and profiles of Farm Beginnings graduates, is available at www.farmbeginnings.org.

- In **North Dakota**, call 701-486-3569 or visit www.farrms.org.

- In **Nebraska**, call 402-254-6893 or e-mail martink@cfra.org.

- For information on the **Central Illinois** Farm Beginnings program, call 847-570-0701 or visit www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu.

- The **Stateline** Farm Beginnings program (northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin) can be contacted at 815-389-8455, and its website is www.csalearningcenter.org/farmbeginnings.html. □

See page 12 for the latest Farm Beginnings "Fresh Faces-Fresh Farming" profile.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Tex Hawkins (center) discussed bird monitoring during a special Farm Beginnings training at the Dave and Florence Minar farm near New Prague Minn., in April. The field day provided training to seven Farm Beginnings instructors from Illinois, Nebraska and North Dakota. Besides Hawkins, other trainers were Larry Gates, a watershed coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Deborah Allan, a University of Minnesota soil scientist. Kate Twohig, a former Land Stewardship Project staffer, coordinated the training. Allan, Hawkins and Gates, as well as the Minars, were original members of the "Monitoring Team" in the 1990s. For more on the Monitoring Team, see the Winter 2007 LSL, or listen to *Ear to the Ground* podcast episode 32 at www.thepodlounge.com/listfeed.php?feed=34810. (LSP photo)



Chad Kingstrom (right) hosted a Farm Beginnings field day on woody florals in March. The field day, which was on Kingstrom's farm near Sacred Heart, Minn., featured a hands-on demonstration on how to collect cuttings from willow and dogwood for propagation. (photo by Amy Bacigalupo)



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

LSP News

2007 Community Food & Farm Festival

The Land Stewardship Project and the Minnesota Food Association teamed up to put on the 2007 edition of the Community Food and Farm Festival May 5-6. The Festival consisted of almost two dozen booths featuring farms that sell food direct to consumers as well as educational and sustainable agriculture organizations (a list of participants is at www.landstewardshipproject.org/cff/cff.html). New

this year were sustainable cooking demonstrations.

As in the past, the Festival was held in conjunction with the Living Green Expo (www.livinggreenexpo.org) at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in Falcon Heights. The Living Green Expo provides Minnesotans with information, ideas, resources and products related to sustainable living. This year's Expo was attended by a record 20,000 people over a two-day period.



Chef Jenny Breen (www.goodlifecatering.com) led a "Cooking with Kids" demonstration during the Festival. The cooking stage was sponsored by Minnesota Grown and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and presented by Renewing the Countryside and Heartland Food Network. (LSP photo)



Michael Jacobs talked to a consumer about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) during the Community Food and Farm Fest. Jacobs and his wife, Malena Arner Handeen, operate Easy Bean Farm (www.easybeanfarm.com), a CSA operation in western Minnesota. (LSP photo)

LSP members meet with Congressman

Southeast Minnesota farmer Jon Peterson asked about farm policy reforms during a February Land Stewardship Project meeting with U.S. Rep. Tim Walz. Walz visited LSP's Lewiston, Minn., office to discuss priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill such as full Conservation Security Program funding, reform of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, sustainable energy initiatives and support for beginning farmers. Later in the spring, Walz co-sponsored the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act. See page 13 for details. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)



Applications accepted for Serfling scholarship

The Land Stewardship Project is accepting applications for the Dave Serfling Memorial Fund for Sustainable Agriculture Education. The fund is available to participants in and graduates of LSP's Farm Beginnings® program. The fund can also be used to cover the cost of enrolling in the Farm Beginnings course, as well as for continuing education opportunities, such as classes, workshops and conferences.

Dave Serfling was a southeast Minnesota farmer and sustainable agriculture leader who, at the age of 46, was killed in an automobile accident on Jan. 8, 2006. Serfling, along with his wife Diane and children Hannah and Ethan, raised crops and livestock in Fillmore County. Over the years, the Serflings were recognized locally and nationally for their stewardship ethic and use of innovative farming systems such as antibiotic-free pork production.

As a key member of LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee, Serfling helped develop the template for a revolutionary farm program that would reward farmers for producing positive environmental benefits on the land. The idea took shape as the Conservation Security Program (CSP), which is now part of the federal farm program. He traveled to Washington, D.C., numerous times over the years to make the case to policymakers that agricultural policy reforms were needed. Serfling also wrote extensively about the need for such reforms, as well as about his own family's love of farming.

A believer in lifelong learning, Serfling received his master's degree in agriculture shortly before his death after taking classes at Iowa State University for nearly two decades. The Serfling family helped beginning farmers by serving as Farm Beginnings mentors and field day hosts.

"This fund is a fitting tribute to Dave, who believed in sustainable family farming as well as the positive future agriculture could offer young people and our communities," says Mark Schultz, LSP's Associate Director and Director of its Policy and Organizing Program.

Detailed information on applying to the Dave Serfling Memorial Fund for Sustainable Agriculture Education is available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/newsr_070111.htm. More information is also available by contacting Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org. Donations to the scholarship

fund can be made at www.landstewardshipproject.org/index-joinus-donations.html (go to "Special Gifts"). □

LSP members honored

Greg Reynolds, a Land Stewardship Project member who raises vegetables near Delano, Minn., received a Distinguished Service Award from the Sustainable Farming Association (SFA) of Minnesota during the group's annual meeting in February. Greg and his wife Mary own and operate Riverbend Farm, which supplies numerous co-ops and restaurants in the Twin Cities area. Greg has long been active in promoting sustainable and organic agriculture research and education.

The SFA's Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award went to the late **George Yokiel** of Wells, Minn. Yokiel's wife, Leona, and his son, Gary, accepted the award in his honor. The Yokiels, long-time LSP members, are well-known pioneers in organic farming.

LSP members **Dave and Florence Minar** were given the 2007 MOSES Farmer of the Year award during the recent Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. The Minars operate a 170-

cow organic, grass-based dairy near New Prague, Minn. All five of the Minars' adult children are involved in Cedar Summit Farm, which includes an on-farm processing and bottling plant. They have long been involved in researching and promoting sustainable agriculture. MOSES (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service) puts on the annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. □

LSP at Kickapoo Fair July 28-29

For the second year in a row, the Land Stewardship Project will be helping Organic Valley Co-op put on the Kickapoo Country Fair in southwest Wisconsin. This year's fair will be July 28-29 on the grounds of Organic Valley's headquarters in La Farge, Wis. LSP will have a booth at the Fair and will give a presentation.

During the weekend-long event, there will be farm tours, sustainability workshops, canoeing, hiking, biking, food and artisan vendors, nonprofit exhibitors, family "farm-friendly" activities, all-day music and entertainment, a spoken word tent and dancing.

For more information, contact LSP's Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org. Details are at www.kickapoo-countryfair.org. □

Record keeping for the organic farmer

Land Stewardship Project member and long-time organic certification inspector Joyce Ford led a "Record Keeping for the Organic Farmer" workshop at LSP's Lewiston office in March.

Subjects such as "bin inventory forms," how to design a good lot number, when to keep a cleaning record

and why to keep all labels were covered. The workshop is part of LSP's ongoing effort to help farmers keep useful records that lead to better management decisions.

For details, contact LSP's Caroline van Schaik at 507-523-3366 or caroline@landstewardshipproject.org. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)



Never say never

The mercury reads 7 above zero on this January day, and a harsh wind blowing across Justin Leonhardt's ridge-top farm in southeast Minnesota sends the real temperature well into negative territory. Leonhardt takes a break from fixing hog feeders to check on how some baby pigs are doing. He walks toward a group of six hoop houses, lifts the flap on one, and ducks inside. Snuggled into the straw bedding are a half-a-dozen sows. Behind them is a low-slung miniature Quonset hut-type shelter the size of a utility shed where the baby pigs are sleeping under heat lamps. Leonhardt's entrance prompts the pigs to wake up, rocket toward the sows in a noisy tumble and begin feeding. Soon the contented sounds of a late morning breakfast compete with the howling of wind whipping at the hoop building's fabric.

Leonhardt, 33, is raising pigs in a natural, humane environment without the use of antibiotics—a challenge for even veteran livestock producers. In fact, the pork he produces recently received a quality award from Niman Ranch Pork

Company, a natural meats firm that buys most of Leonhardt's production. But what's really impressive is he's farrowing these pigs in a Minnesota winter, a time when many pork industry experts say hogs have to be raised in full confinement. And he's doing all this two years after a farrowing barn was destroyed in a



fire—a potentially career-ending agricultural setback.

Pretty good for someone who once swore off farming forever.

"When I graduated from high school, I said I would never farm," says Leonhardt. He grew up on a dairy operation the next ridge over above the Mississippi River town of Kellogg, where his parents, Larry and Diane Leonhardt, still farm. Justin

liked living in the country, but was less enamored with the seven-day-a-week, twice-a-day routine of milking cows. "I hate it," he says bluntly.

That's why after high school he trained to become an aircraft mechanic, a 9-5 job that can pay \$50 an hour. But when it came time to move to the Pacific Northwest to work for Boeing, Leonhardt couldn't bring himself to leave southeast Minnesota behind. He ended up working a factory job close to home and doing some carpentry. Slowly, steadily, the draw of the land became too hard to resist. In 2000, he and his partner Gayle Hanson took the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings® course in nearby Plainview, Minn.

Farm Beginnings provides participants a chance to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. It provides workshops on goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative production techniques. Established farmers and other professionals present at the seminars. The course also offers a series of on-farm educational field days during the spring and summer where students get to see the production systems they are learning about in action. In addition, class participants have an opportunity to network with established farmers and utilize them as mentors.

Diane Leonhardt had taken Farm Beginnings and recommended it to her son. Justin's brother, Jeremiah, has since taken the course as well, and is raising pigs while working at a factory.

Justin says the course helped him think outside the box as far as what enterprises he could undertake. Today, Leonhardt and Hanson farm Justin's grandparents' land. The farm consists of 135 tillable acres, and they rent an additional 70, raising alfalfa, corn and soybeans. Through Farm Beginnings, Leonhardt and Hanson also got a Heifer International interest-free livestock loan, which they used to purchase 10 brood cows with calves and five heifers. The beef cattle are rotationally grazed on land that's too rough to crop farm on these hilly acres.

But 95 percent of the farm's income is derived from hogs. When he returned to the farm, Leonhardt knew he didn't want to dairy, but the advantage of milking cows is



Gayle Hanson and Justin Leonhardt use a deep straw system developed in Sweden to produce pork without antibiotics for Niman Ranch Pork Company. (LSP photo)

Fresh Faces, see page 13...

that it produces a steady cash flow. The next best thing is hogs, which can be marketed on a regular basis. The trouble was, Justin had no experience raising pigs. The advantage to his lack of hog experience was that he didn't have any bad habits to unlearn. But still, starting from scratch with a new form of livestock production is a major challenge. Through Farm Beginnings, Leonhardt was able to network with area hog farmers Dennis Rabe and the late Dave Serfling. Through them he learned about producing pork without antibiotics in deep-straw systems, and how firms like Niman will pay a premium price for such hogs. Rabe, who farms a few miles away near Lake City, remains a mentor for Leonhardt.

But Leonhardt and Hanson's farming enterprise almost ended just a few years after it got started. In May 2005, a retrofitted dairy barn that was being used to farrow pigs was destroyed by fire. It was a major blow.

"I either had to quit, or cut back or expand," recalls Leonhardt of his choices after the fire. "I didn't want to go back to work in town so I doubled my sow herd."

They already had one hoop house, and

after the fire built five more. This year 1,500 pigs will be marketed, mostly to Niman, from around 115 sows.

As he heads back to a heated shop to repair pig feeders, Leonhardt expresses frustration that he's not further along in making the farm more financially stable. The fire and expansion has put him further in debt than he's comfortable with, and he's constantly looking for ways to increase income while reducing expenses. Leonhardt says Farm Beginnings helped him develop a business plan and figure out how much cash flow is needed to stay viable, as well as how to determine if certain purchases really help him attain his goals.

"It's a plan, which is better than just blundering forward. Right now my biggest goal is debt reduction," says Leonhardt. "There are a lot of things I want, but don't necessarily need."

But then he brightens up as he talks about the pigs he just checked on. The hut-within-a-hut shelter the pigs were using is a bit of an experiment for Leonhardt. Normally during the winter he would be farrowing pigs inside smaller hutches about the size of a large pup tent—just large enough for a sow and her pigs to lounge comfortably in. But a few weeks before this cold snap he ran out of

hutches, and so improvised with one larger shelter that the sows and pigs use communally.

"I'm always experimenting," Leonhardt says, adding that working with mentors such as Rabe has given him the confidence to try new things. "It actually has gotten to where Dennis is asking me as many questions about pigs as I'm asking him. That's pretty cool." □

The deadline for the 2007-2008 LSP Farm Beginnings course is Aug. 30. Classes will be held in La Crosse, Wis., and Marshall, Minn. See page 9 for details.

Farm Beginnings profiles on the Web

To read other profiles of graduates of the Farm Beginnings® program, see www.landstewardshipproject.org/fb/graduates.html.

To listen to a podcast featuring two farmers who were in the first Farm Beginnings class a decade ago, see *Ear to the Ground* episode 33 at www.thepodlounge.com/listfeed.php?feed=34810.

Update

We the People...

Policy

Beginning Farmer Act introduced in Congress

Beginning farmer and rancher initiatives likely to become a part of the 2007 Farm Bill were introduced May 16 in both chambers of Congress. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act is authored by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and U.S. Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD), House Agriculture Committee member. The legislation also includes Senate co-sponsors Charles Grassley (R-IA), Max Baucus (D-MT), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), as well as House co-sponsors Tim Walz (D-MN) and Betty McCollum (D-MN). At this writing, other members of Congress were signing on as co-sponsors.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act is the first comprehensive policy approach to helping the next generation of farmers and ranchers take advantage of burgeoning opportunities in agriculture. The legislation includes several measures, including support for



LSP's Farm Beginnings Director Karen Stettler went before a Congressional subcommittee in March to testify about beginning farmer issues. (photo by Ferd Hoefner)

beginning farmer and rancher training programs, beginning farmer lending and savings provisions and conservation incentives for beginning farmers and ranchers.

"The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act addresses key obstacles to beginning farmers and ranchers and provides smart, cost-effective start-up support and incentives for America's next generation of family farms," says Rep. Walz.

A central component of the bill is the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which would support community-based organizations doing beginning farmer training programs. At \$25 million a year, this competitive grants program would provide resources to community-based organizations that are in touch with the obstacles beginning farmers and ranchers face in their region.

The 2007 Farm Bill is expected to be completed later this year. With support from key members of Congress, including U.S. House Ag Committee Chair Collin Peterson (D-MN), advocates

Beginning Farmer Act, see page 14...

...Beginning Farmer Act, from page 13

believe chances are good of passing a Farm Bill with polices and funding that support beginning farmers and ranchers.

"Young farmers and ranchers are the future of rural America," says Peterson. "I am looking forward to working closely with my colleagues on the House Committee on Agriculture—Tim Walz and Stephanie Herseth Sandlin—to secure that future in the 2007 Farm Bill."

Work on the Beginning Farmer and

Congressional testimony

To read Farm Beginnings Director Karen Stettler's full Congressional testimony, see www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07_news_070327-2.htm.

Rancher Opportunity Act has been moving forward since earlier this year. In March, LSP's Farm Beginnings Director Karen Stettler testified in front of the U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee on

Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research in support of policies to support beginning farmers and ranchers.

"There is real opportunity in agriculture today. There are people out there who have the desire and commitment for farming," Stettler told the subcommittee. "But obstacles exist for beginning farmers—obstacles that Congress should address." □

For more on the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act, contact LSP's Adam Warthesen at 612-722-6377 or adamw@landstewardshipproject.org.

LSP members take sustainable ag/family farm message to Washington

Fifteen Land Stewardship Project members from four different states traveled to Washington, D.C., in March to talk with their members of Congress about the upcoming 2007 Farm Bill. They joined a 70-farmer fly-in organized by the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

Participants attended a day of trainings and then conducted visits with members of Congress. Issues farmers and others discussed included:

- Further develop and expand the Conservation Security Program (CSP).
- Enacting a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act.
- Support for community-based food systems.

In total, the delegation held 20 meetings with members of Congress and policymakers while in Washington.

One family that participated in the fly-in was the Koethers, who operate a grass-based livestock enterprise near McGregor, Iowa. In 2006, they were awarded a Tier III CSP contract in the Grant/Little Maquoketa watershed. The Koethers are one of only 20,000 farmers nationwide in the past three years to have their watershed open for CSP, qualify for the program, and receive a contract.

"CSP has really made a difference on our farm," said Greg Koether. "With the commodity programs, if you are like us and don't plant corn or beans—you're out of luck. That system is just not fair and does nothing for conservation. CSP gives farmers more flexibility and it's a better use of tax dollars because it secures conservation on working lands."

Participants in the fly-in asked lawmakers to reauthorize and fund a community-based mentoring/beginning



A group of LSP members traveled to D.C. to talk to officials about the 2007 Farm Bill. (photo by Adam Warthesen)

farmer training program, reform federal beginning farmer lending and savings provisions, and target conservation dollars to beginning farmers (see page 13).

"When we talked with Congressman Bruce Braley of Iowa about the Beginning Farmer Initiative, he agreed to co-sponsor the legislation," says Kayla Koether, Greg Koether's 17-year-old daughter. "It is encouraging that our member of Congress recognized the need to support new farmers as part of economic development and a healthy land."

Federal Farm Policy Committee member Patty Wright talked with members of Congress about community-based food systems initiatives. One area a lot of educators, nutritionists and farmers

are particularly interested in is getting local foods to schools through "Farm to Cafeteria" efforts. Farm to Cafeteria is a competitive seed grants program that would link farms and schools to bring locally grown food into school lunches.

"One opportunity in the 2007 Farm Bill we stressed to lawmakers was increasing support for local and regional food systems," says Wright, who, along with her husband Mike Racette, operate a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm near Prairie Farm, Wis. "This support is crucial for the future of independent farmers and the growth of sustainable local economies. Advancing programs like Farm to Cafeteria makes sense for farmers, children and rural communities." □

Tracking the 2007 Farm Bill

Congress is planning on finalizing the 2007 Farm Bill this fall. This provides plenty of opportunity for the public to let lawmakers know what they'd like to see in the law.

Watch future issues of the *Land Stewardship Letter* and the *LIVE-WIRE* for updates on the Farm Bill. LSP's Action Alerts page at www.landstewardshipproject.org/news-alerts.html offers details on how citizens can influence the final outcome of the legislation.

LSP's Federal Farm Policy page (www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_federal_policy.html) has fact sheets and summaries of our Farm Bill priorities.

Report: CSP is an engine of conservation

By Adam Warthesen

A report released in April by a coalition of Midwest farm organizations shows that the Conservation Security Program (CSP) is spurring on-farm conservation. The report finds that farmers enrolled in the Conservation Security Program are taking advantage of the program's incentives by adding new practices to their farms that protect natural resources. The report, *The Conservation Security Program Drives Resource Management: An Assessment of CSP Implementation in Five Midwestern States* (www.landstewardshipproject.org/pdf/csp_report.pdf), was the culmination of a project conducted in the Midwest by a number of farm groups, including the Land Stewardship Project, to assess the regional implementation of CSP. The report and CSP were highlighted this spring at a hearing conducted by the U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research.

The study revealed that continuing and expanding CSP in the next Farm Bill would achieve benefits for wildlife not presently attainable through other means.

Once they are enrolled in the working lands program, the majority of farmers are adding new conservation practices to their operations, the study found.

Most commonly, farmers enrolled in the program are adding new wildlife

habitat to their farms. Those practices can include delayed haying and grazing, fencing off wetlands and wooded areas, adding winter cover to cropland or adding grassed field borders. Farmers are also adding conservation practices that improve nutrient management, reduce pesticide use, address farmstead issues, and more.

Farmers can add new practices as part of their initial CSP contract. They can also modify their contracts and receive higher payments by adding new conservation practices, following their first year of enrollment in the program.

The report reviews CSP in five Midwest states: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. CSP was created in the 2002 Farm Bill, and is up for reauthorization by Congress in the 2007 Farm Bill. Nationwide, nearly 20,000 farms are enrolled in CSP, totaling 16 million acres. In Minnesota, 712 farmers are enrolled in CSP, covering over 200,000 acres. Because of funding cuts, only a third of the farmers nationwide who qualified for CSP in 2006 were enrolled in the program.

Congress and the administration have cut \$4.3 billion from CSP since the program was created in the 2002 Farm Bill. And as the article below outlines, the program is under attack yet again. Inadequate funding has resulted in unfulfilled contracts even when farmers qualify, an inequitable watershed selection process, and narrow sign-up periods.

Yet, as the report concludes, even with funding limitations CSP is still popular and there is strong support to see it grow in the next Farm Bill.

The Conservation Security Program Drives Resource Management: An Assessment of CSP Implementation in Five Midwestern States is the result of a project coordinated by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute in collaboration with LSP, Minnesota Project, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Illinois Stewardship Alliance and Missouri Rural Crisis Center. □

Adam Warthesen, an LSP Policy organizer, can be contacted at 612-722-6377 or adamw@landstewardshipproject.org. More information on CSP and other LSP Farm Bill priorities is available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_federal_policy.html.

Wild gems

Another recent CSP study, *Hidden Treasures: The Conservation Security Program and Wildlife*, found roughly half of 2006 CSP contract payments will provide either wildlife habitat benefits or result in pesticide reduction practices that benefit some wildlife. That report was prepared by the National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League of America and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. It's available at www.msawg.org/pdf/CSP_WildlifeReport.pdf.

CSP's future in jeopardy as Farm Bill debate heats up

By Adam Warthesen

On May 17, U.S. House Agriculture Chair Collin Peterson (D-MN) released a "Conservation Discussion Draft" outlining his priorities for conservation policy in the 2007 Farm Bill. This outline, which was debated May 22, provides the subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Research and Energy a starting point in the development of conservation initiatives.

Unfortunately, the outline left much to be desired. The issue that probably caused the most consternation among Agriculture Committee members and farm groups was the proposal to significantly weaken the Conservation Security Program, a top priority for the Land Stewardship Project in the Farm Bill

(see page 14).

Peterson's proposal freezes funding for CSP and bars any new sign-ups for the program until 2012, essentially killing it. In addition, Peterson's outline shifts billions of dollars, including dollars already dedicated to CSP, to other programs, especially the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which Peterson proposes to nearly double in size to \$2 billion a year.

The problem is, EQIP is not as good as it sounds. In fact, factory farms can get up to \$450,000 in taxpayer dollars from EQIP to build and expand. Without amending EQIP with adequate payment limits and other measures, taxpayer dollars will continue to fuel factory farm expansion at the expense of family farms and conservation.

In short, CSP, a program designed to

support effective conservation on working family farms, would be slashed in favor of a program that subsidizes new and expanding factory farms.

Thankfully there are a number of Agriculture Committee members, such as Tim Walz (D-MN), who are fighting to restore CSP. And Peterson himself—after receiving strong criticism, including a letter from LSP and calls from allied groups and individual Minnesotans—began discussing ways to better support the Conservation Security Program.

Look for additional action alerts and information on CSP and other 2007 Farm Bill priorities this summer. The participation and engagement of LSP members in organizing work around the Farm Bill will be crucial in winning victories that drive us towards a more just and sustainable food and agricultural system. □

Minnesota legislative wrap-up

A good session, but it could have been better

By Paul Sobocinski

The regular session of the 2007 Minnesota Legislature adjourned at midnight on May 21. How did initiatives that benefit sustainable agriculture, family farms and rural communities fare?

Well, it began on a very positive note when in February the House Agriculture, Rural Economics and Veterans Affairs Committee held two days of hearings focused on sustainable and organic agriculture. The hearings, which were coordinated by Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba, Chair of the Committee, involved numerous Land Stewardship Project members. The hearings were a significant sign that legislators are beginning to recognize the growing importance of sustainable and organic agriculture.

Overall, it was a productive session, due to some hard work by LSP members and our allies within the family farm, sustainable agriculture and environmental communities who testified and made key calls to legislators. But while significant steps were taken that won important gains in sustainable and organic agriculture, it was clear the 2007 Legislature fell short of the potential demonstrated at those February hearings. Much more could have been done to bring about positive changes in Minnesota's food and farming system that benefit the environment and family farms.

Here's a rundown of what happened:

Funding for sustainable/organic ag at the U of M increased

The Higher Ed Funding bill contains a \$1,550,000 yearly increase in funding for agriculture at the University of Minnesota. However, the exact amounts for sustainable and organic programs are still under discussion with University of

Minnesota officials. There are no earmarks within the U of M ag budget (called the Ag Special) for any specific work, including LSP's initiatives. The University has indicated support for a

funding level of at least \$400,000 of new money per year for an organics program and alternative livestock work at the U of M's Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). This funding increase is good news for alternative livestock production and organic systems outreach and research, as it will become part of the base budget and is therefore an ongoing allocation.

LSP and other sustainable agriculture and family farm groups support Ag Special funding of at least \$500,000 for organics and \$150,000 for alternative livestock work at MISA.



LSP organizer and southwest Minnesota livestock farmer Paul Sobocinski (center) testified before the Senate Higher Ed Finance Committee on the need for sustainable livestock research at the University of Minnesota. Shown with Sobocinski are Sen. Kathy Sheran of Mankato, who authored an initiative to fund such research, and Mike Fuller, a marketing consultant with Chipotle Mexican Grill. The national restaurant chain offers pork produced without antibiotics and in humane conditions. Chipotle, which has 43 restaurants in Minnesota, gets most of its natural pork from Niman Ranch producers in the Midwest.

"We're really proud to offer naturally raised meats but we can't get enough of it," Fuller told the committee. "We've proven there is a demand for this kind of food and funding these research initiatives would make it possible for us to get more of these products locally." (LSP photo)

We are continuing discussions with the University about the necessary resources for these programs and are hopeful that we will come to an agreement that recognizes the research and outreach needs that sustainable and organic agriculture have. LSP's work played a large part in getting an overall increase in the Ag Special.

A number of legislators were helpful in moving forward the organics/alternative livestock initiatives, including Rep. David Bly, Rep. Ken Tschumper, Rep. Tom Rukavina, Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes, Sen. Kathy Sheran and Sen. Sandra Pappas.

Funding for MDA sustainable/organic ag programs increased

The Ag Funding bill contains increases in funding for sustainable and organic agriculture programs at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), but those increases do not meet the growing demand or make up for past cuts.

Going into the conference committee, the Senate version had healthy funding increases for sustainable and organic agriculture. The House version, under the direction of Agriculture Committee Chair Al Juhnke, had substantially less funding for these provisions. Rep. Juhnke was not convinced by the sustainable ag community of the value of these initiatives, and thus the House provision prevailed with only \$130,000 of new money for two key sustainable and organic agriculture programs.

This means some critical programs will be under-funded. The MDA's Organic Cost Share Program was funded at \$100,000 per year. This program reimburses organic farmers for a portion of their annual certification costs. The Senate proposed increasing the funding from \$50,000 a year to \$150,000 a year; the House proposed only \$100,000 in annual funding. Organic and sustainable farming groups had asked for \$275,000 because of increased demand for the program. During the past year the funds for this program were used up within two

Legislature, see page 17...

months. Rep. Al Doty and Sen. Tony Lourey were the chief sponsors of the funding bills for the organic cost share program.

The Agriculture Bill funds the MDA's Energy & Sustainable Ag Grant Program/*Greenbook* Program at \$160,000 a year. This program provides grants for sustainable and organic farmers to conduct on-farm demonstration projects and research. The results are then published annually in the nationally-recognized *Greenbook*. This program creates innovative farmer-driven solutions and facilitates farmer-to-farmer education.

The Senate proposed increasing the funding from the current \$80,000 a year to \$210,000 a year. The House proposed only \$160,000 in annual funding. Organic and sustainable farming groups had asked for \$250,000. This was a reasonable request: prior to 2003, the funding level for the Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program for a significant number of years had been in the \$200,000-a-year range.

Rep. Aaron Peterson and Sen. Jim Vickerman were chief authors for the demonstration grant program legislation.

A shortsighted veto on energy

Governor Tim Pawlenty line-item vetoed key renewable energy provisions in the Agriculture Funding Bill. Working with LSP and other members of the "Clean Energy Minnesota" coalition, Sen. Gary Kubly introduced a proposal that created a



Rep. Ken Tschumper of La Crescent and Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes of Winona met with Land Stewardship Project members and staff in Lewiston during the legislative session to discuss sustainable agriculture and family farm issues. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)

comprehensive policy to move Minnesota towards producing renewable energy derived from perennial crops. Research done at the University of Minnesota has shown that perennial crops, including native prairie, can produce the most efficient energy output and provide additional environmental benefits in the form of wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, soil protection and clean water. The Senate position had many of the provisions in Sen. Kubly's bill.

However, as Chair of the House-Senate Conference Committee, Rep. Juhnke worked to block these initiatives. Only two were adopted: \$350,000 for MISA to do critical research into perennial crops and a \$1 million revolving loan fund for farmers and seed producers to buy equipment to plant perennials and produce perennial seeds. Despite the innovative nature of these initiatives, and the dire need for sustainable energy options, the Governor targeted these provisions with his veto stamp.

Rep. Aaron Peterson was the chief sponsor for these provisions in the companion House bill.

Efforts to weaken local control & circumvent the Corporate Farm Law defeated

Calls and e-mails from LSP members made a big difference in March when



House File 1254, which weakened local control, was pulled from consideration for the rest of the legislative session. Rep. Tschumper played a leadership role in making this happen. He is Vice Chair of the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, and a strong advocate for local control.

Tschumper called a meeting in his office involving the proposers of the bill (building and development interests), as well as those concerned about its impacts on local government, including LSP, Clean Water Action, the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and lobbyists for local governments. Rep. Tschumper led a debate on the bill and the proposers agreed to come up with language to address our concerns. Later they agreed to pull the bill.

Another attempt to weaken local control that was sponsored by Sen. Steve Dille didn't get a hearing in the Senate Agriculture

Committee due to strong opposition and Chair Jim Vickerman's desire not to undermine local control.

In addition, a last ditch attempt to get around Minnesota's Corporate Farm Law was defeated. Currently state statutes 500.221 effectively prohibit foreign companies from owning or leasing Minnesota farmland. This law is critical for meeting the goal of our state's Corporate Farm Law, which is to "protect the family farm as a basic economic unit, to insure it as the most socially desirable mode of agricultural production, and to enhance and promote the stability and well-being of rural society in Minnesota and the nuclear family."

This well-financed, last-minute legislative push was mounted to allow a Portuguese-based company to lease farmland in Mower County as part of a wind energy project. The project developer, Horizon Wind Energy, is currently owned by U.S.-based Goldman Sachs. Goldman Sachs is selling Horizon to the Portuguese company Energias de Portugal. This would put them in violation of our state laws. Instead of restructuring the deal to be in compliance with our laws, backers of the project pushed for an exemption. Calls by LSP members and others during the session's final hours helped defeat this.

Key leaders in the fight to stop this weakening of the law were Representatives Otremba, Bly and Tschumper.

Beginning farmer tax credit fails to pass

An initiative that would help Minnesota's beginning farmers with access to land passed key committees, but later died on the vine. The bill, based on a similar program in Nebraska, would have created tax credits for landowners who rent land to beginning farmers and would have been for up to 15 percent of the gross rental income.

The initiative would have also made it possible for beginning farmers to receive a state tax credit of \$500 towards the cost of participating in a farm business management program.

The chief authors of this bill were Rep. Lyle Koenen and Sen. Kubly.



...Legislature, from page 17

Dairy investment tax credit goes to larger operations



Early in the session, LSP pushed a proposal that would have provided tax credits to dairy farmers who make improvements to their operations, such as pasture development and on-farm processing. But the Tax Bill

that passed on the final day of the session only allowed grants to dairy farmers who invest at least \$40,000 in improvements on their operation. This provision was put in at the insistence of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Modest-sized dairy operations that choose to spend less than \$40,000 are out. Dairy farms that wish to add value through processing or do pasture development are also not eligible for this credit.

A good provision that could have helped livestock producers, especially those who have pasture, did make it into the Tax Bill. It provided a sales tax exemption for livestock fencing.

In the end, Gov. Pawlenty vetoed the entire Tax Bill, eliminating the above provisions. □

Paul Sobocinski is an LSP Policy Program organizer and a southwest Minnesota farmer. He can be reached at 507-342-2323 or sobopaul@redred.com.

Immigration, pesticides & health care

During the 2007 legislative session, LSP also worked on initiatives in support of immigration rights (the "Dream Act"; see page 22), health care reform, and increased health risk assessments of pesticides, particularly atrazine. Watch future issues of the *Land Stewardship Letter* for details on those initiatives.

LSP's state legislative agenda for 2007 is at www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/policy_platform.pdf.

LSP Family Farm Breakfast at the Capitol



Over 120 citizens and 26 legislators attended the Land Stewardship Project's second annual Family Farm Breakfast at the Capitol Feb. 6. During the breakfast, LSP unveiled "Renewing Family Farms and Rural Minnesota"—its legislative platform for 2007 (www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/07/policy_platform.pdf). The platform called for policies that support the next generation of farmers, stewardship of the land, local democracy and corporate accountability, community based food systems and community based renewable energy.

Thanks volunteers & food producers

Shown below are the hardworking volunteers who assisted chef Brad Beal (in hat) in preparing and serving the Family Farm Breakfast at the Capitol, which was made up of food produced by local LSP farmer-members. (LSP photos)





Home economics 101

By Terry VanDerPol

On April 2, Congressman Collin Peterson sponsored the Homegrown Economy conference in Morris, Minn. More than 300 people attended from across the region. Speakers and panelists, including several Land Stewardship Project members, gave powerful testimonials and presentations on how the growing interest in local, sustainably produced food provides economic opportunity for farms and rural communities.

Peterson, who is Chair of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, has set the bar high in advocating for community based food systems that can bring good food to the tables of western Minnesota, homegrown economic development to our towns and the strength of diversity to our agricultural landscape and economy. His sponsorship of this conference amplifies the message and will greatly aid the good community based food system work being done across Minnesota and the nation. The standard he's set should serve as a clear call to all our elected representatives, especially Senators Amy Klobuchar and Norm Coleman, who serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee and are also involved in writing a new Farm Bill this year.

Local food sales are growing across the United States as consumer interest in connecting with farms and farmers through food increases. Community based food systems require new food supply chains. Often these chains are very short, as in the case of direct farm-to-consumer sales. Increasingly, however, as locally grown food is distributed through restaurants, grocers and institutions, the supply chains stretch to include local entrepreneurs who aggregate, process and distribute the food. But whatever the length of the chain, the relationships, all the way from farmer to consumer, are local and are based on articulated, shared values that uphold a healthy agricultural landscape and a robust rural economy. It is said that in this movement we want "food with the farmer's face on it," a theme that must be carried across all

sectors of the community based food system.

As farmers develop new value-adding food and agricultural enterprises, supply chain issues increasingly come to the fore. Processing and distribution challenges are particularly pressing for the disappearing middle of this nation's farm



Collin Peterson, Chair of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, showed his support for local food systems during the Homegrown Economy conference. (photo by Terry VanDerPol)

and food system. But smart new federal policy written into the 2007 Farm Bill now being debated in Congress can help rural communities and family farmers effectively meet these challenges and take part in the opportunities that are emerging. Agriculture subcommittees are holding hearings now and a completed Farm Bill is expected in the fall.

For example, the Value Added Producer Grant fund, first established by Congress in 2000, is a competitive grant program for farmers and farmer-controlled entities to improve profitability by developing value added businesses. It endured major funding cuts by the Bush Administration and the last Congress. Funding should be restored to at least \$60 million per year, with a priority for the development of food value chains that

help small and mid-sized farms thrive by marketing high value, differentiated products in partnership with local processors, distributors and suppliers.

These partnerships are critical to creating community based food system economies within area institutions such as schools, especially in northern climates. The federal Farm to School Cafeteria program enables schools to offer nutritious choices by providing fresh, locally grown food. It was authorized in the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act. But it has yet to receive any funding. This program can support community based food system economies while helping children develop good, lifelong nutrition habits, and it should be funded at \$5 million in 2008.

In addition, farm policy that actually assists beginning farmers and ranchers who want to produce for local and regional food systems should also be included in the new Farm Bill. Rep. Peterson supports this as well, and other members of the Ag Committee in the House, including U.S. Representatives Stephanie Herseth of South Dakota and Tim Walz in southern Minnesota, took leadership this spring and introduced the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act (see page 13). That's good news, and good policy.

"There's big opportunity for us in local foods," said Congressman Peterson on April 2. "More money will go to farmers producing for local markets because they're further up the supply chain. It's a huge opportunity for us to change the landscape and the way things are organized in agriculture, not only in Minnesota but across the country."

There are opportunities. There are obstacles. And, there are public policy solutions. □

Terry VanDerPol, Director of LSP's Community Based Food Systems and Economic Development program, farms near the western Minnesota community of Granite Falls, Minn. She can be reached at 320-269-2105 or tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org.

More on Homegrown

Text and video versions of the presentations from the Homegrown Economy Conference are available at www.morris.umn.edu/HomeGrownEconomy.

A contentious link in the food chain

Centro Campesino's fight for worker rights

By Brian DeVore

On a crisp night in early fall, Victor Contreras guides his van along corn-lined back roads near the southern Minnesota community of Owatonna. Suddenly, he pulls into a driveway and parks in the midst of a group of low-slung, barracks-like buildings, which are surrounded by a chain link fence. Pickups, vans and other road-worn vehicles sit outside the buildings. Texas seems to be the state of choice on the license plates. Contreras walks into one of the buildings, which turns out to be a communal bathroom for the people living in the barracks. He gestures toward a row of shower stalls. "It took us two years to get curtains put on these showers," he says. "When I lived here I used to bring my son in at midnight so he could have privacy while taking a shower."

Welcome to the world of the migrant worker, where getting a little privacy while taking a shower after a long day toiling in the food system is a major victory. It is Contreras' job to make sure such victories are attained. He is the co-founder of Centro Campesino, which roughly translates as "Farmworker Center." Centro Campesino was launched in the fall of 1998 by migrant workers like Contreras as a support system for the tens of thousands of Latinos/Latinas that work on Minnesota's farms and in its food processing plants. It's headquartered in a second-floor rabbit-warren set of offices in downtown Owatonna, a community that's at the heart of southern Minnesota's vegetable packing industry. The group recently opened a branch in Austin, Minn., a meatpacking town.

Centro's eight staff members work with two groups of Latinos: migrant workers who come to the area, mostly from Texas, in June and go back in October or November; and year-round Latino residents. Centro works to improve working conditions in company-owned migrant camps such as the one Contreras used to live in. It also organizes workers, investigates charges of mistreatment, negotiates with employers for better conditions and advocates for pro-

migrant/immigrant government policy. In addition, Centro Campesino conducts basic education: it informs workers of their rights and responsibilities, and, just as importantly, it teaches the general public about who these migrants and immigrants are, and are not.

"It's like you're bringing in machines to work," says Centro Campesino Youth Organizer Jesús Torres of the attitude industry and government seem to have sometimes when it comes to migrants and immigrants. Torres, 20, came to southern Minnesota from Mexico himself when he was 16. "You're not. You're bringing in



The Sixto and Arceli Mendoza family lives in a migrant camp during the southern Minnesota canning season. They tried unsuccessfully to organize a union at the cannery they work at. After the union vote, Sixto came back the next season to find his pay had been cut and that he was working a job meant for two people. (LSP photo)

human beings. These are human beings we're talking about."

Migrants, immigrants & Latinos

As it approaches its 10-year anniversary, Centro Campesino's work has taken on a renewed sense of urgency in the supercharged atmosphere of immigration politics. This summer, Congress is in the midst of trying to "reform" immigration policy yet again, and the issue has come to dominate discussions from the White House to the state house to local town council meetings. Midwestern states like Minnesota are grappling with the relatively recent influx of huge numbers of Latinos. The U.S. in general, meanwhile, is coming to grips with the fact that a major part of our agricultural economy is dependent on Latinos who are willing to do work others won't do.

The number of immigrants living in

America increased 16 percent between 2001 and 2006. The vast majority of those people came from Mexico, according to the Census Bureau. In the past, those immigrants would settle in "gateway states" like California. But as those states have become more crowded with cheap labor, immigrants have been bypassing them and settling directly in places like the Upper Midwest.

The first record of Latino residents in Minnesota dates to 1860 and migrant workers have been coming to the area since at least the early 1900s to work in the sugar beet fields. But if it seems like there has been a flood of Latinos in recent years, it's because there has been. Since the 1990 U.S. Census, the state's Latino population has more than tripled, increasing from 54,000 to over 175,000,

according to the Minneapolis Foundation. By 2030, the state Latino population will swell by 118 percent, says the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

It's no accident that this huge influx coincides with the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a trade pact that, among other things, opened Mexico up to a flood of cheap Midwestern corn. Corn is a staple of the food system and farming economy in Mexico, and subsidized imports have been devastating for rural communities there. From 1.5 to 3 million rural Mexican families have been driven out of business since NAFTA was implemented, according to the Resource Center of the Americas.

We send our corn to Mexico, and it sends its people to us. The number of immigrants from Mexico *decreased* by 18 percent in the three years before NAFTA went into effect, says the Pew Hispanic Center. During the first eight years of NAFTA, the annual number of Mexican immigrants increased more than 60 percent.

"Once NAFTA started, it basically wiped out the farm economy," says Torres.

Rural influx

Mexico is a rural country, and many of those immigrants have sought work in places they are familiar with. Since 1980, the nonmetro Latino population in this country has doubled; it is now the most rapidly growing demographic group in

Centro Campesino, see page 21...

rural America, according to the USDA's Economic Research Service. You'd think that for rural areas that have been losing population for the last several decades, such an influx of new blood would be welcome. But in fact there is a lot of tension surrounding the growth of Latino populations in small towns, and much of it has to do with the controversy over undocumented immigrant workers.

Despite its reputation as a "land of immigrants," there are limited options for people wanting to enter the U.S. legally. Green Cards and temporary agriculture visas are extremely difficult to come by.

"The ways to come in here are so limited," says Torres.

And so people desperate for a way to make a living swim rivers, climb fences, cross deserts and hitch secret rides. They put up with hunger, thirst, violence, robbery, rip-off artists who promise an easy path up north and border patrol agents under increasing pressure to "solve" the immigration issue,

"In Mexico the pay is very low," says Miguel Gonzalez, who works seasonally at Lakeside Foods, a cannery in Owatonna. He first snuck into Texas in 1992 and has been robbed and arrested. Since then he has received documentation with the help of a sister who is a U.S. resident. "Right here I'm making about \$1,400 every two weeks, and in Mexico in a week I'd make about a hundred. So there's a huge difference."

Raids, deportations, fear

Tensions over the immigration issue have been ratcheted up in recent months by a major government crackdown. Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency agents conducted large raids in the Minnesota communities of Worthington, Austin and Willmar. This is part of a nationwide sweep that, perhaps not coincidentally, is coinciding with the immigration debate in Washington. In fact, there were a record 189,924 deportations throughout the U.S. during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2006. That's a 12 percent increase from the year before. These raids have split up families, left crops unpicked, shut down plants and put the entire Latino community on edge.

Agriculture is particularly reliant on immigrant labor: around half of the 1.8 million farmworkers in the nation are probably undocumented. Many of those workers toil on the produce farms of Florida and California. But many of them

also work on Midwestern vegetable operations. Estimates vary widely on how many undocumented Latinos there are in the Midwest. One estimate is that 18,000 to 45,000 undocumented Latinos live and work in Minnesota alone.

Anti-immigrant groups, like the Minnesota Coalition for Immigrant Reduction, claim "illegals" take jobs away from local, permanent residents. But such arguments ignore an important fact: some sectors of our economy would collapse without immigrant workers.

In south-central Minnesota alone, Latino agricultural workers add nearly \$25 million to the local economy, according to the Minneapolis Foundation.

"We couldn't do it without them," says Rhys Williams, who until recently was a partner in Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables, an organic produce farm in southeast Minnesota (Williams recently left the operation for health reasons). The farm seasonally employs a handful of Latinos who have Green Cards. They are paid \$7 to \$8 an hour and provided free food and housing. Featherstone gave up trying to hire local people when none applied for the jobs, or the ones that did only lasted a day or two.

"They do everything: weeding, seeding, drive tractor," says Williams, who first worked with Latinos when he was in the orchard business in the Pacific Northwest. "They come prepared. They're agrarians."

Tough to organize

The tense environment created by the immigration debate has been exploited by industrial agriculture. Workers put up with sometimes horrific working conditions knowing that making waves could, if they are undocumented, cause them to be deported. Even documented workers face a stark reality: they can always be replaced with others.

For Centro Campesino, it's hard to organize workers who are transient (even the permanent U.S. residents go back to places like Texas to work during the winter months) and even more importantly, are frightened.

Torres describes how a Latino man recently contacted him about his job at a western Minnesota factory dairy operation: no breaks, no lunch time, seven-day-a-week schedule. A refrigerator that was supposed to be for the workers instead was stocked with medications for the cows. In all, Torres tallied up 20 violations. In the end, the worker was unwilling to go public, for fear of losing his job.

"How can you organize and make

change when the people are so scared?" Torres asks. "It all depends on what the workers are willing to do."

Unfortunately, some workers have learned hard lessons about standing up for their rights.

On a recent evening, Contreras and Torres visit the Sixto and Arceli Mendoza household. They live in a camp owned by the federal government in the midst of farm fields near Owatonna. It's a crowded place, but a vast improvement over the company-owned camps, such as the one where Contreras had to fight so hard to get basics like shower curtains. For one thing, each government house has its own bathroom, and the rooms are bright and clean. Sixto, 55, is a friendly, powerfully-built man. Arceli, 46, is energetic and brassy. They are here with five children and two grandchildren, as well as a wife of one of their sons. The Mendozas, along with three of their adult children, work for Lakeside Foods. They come up here each summer from their home in Texas. After November they go back to Texas to work winter jobs. Recently, Sixto worked during the off-season for a company that makes plastic parts for vacuums.

He first started coming to the U.S. when he was 16 to work in orange and tangerine orchards in the southern U.S. He entered the country illegally at first, but in 1974 received documentation through a government amnesty program. Sixto's work career is textbook migrant: he's detasseled corn in Iowa, picked asparagus in Michigan, harvested potatoes, even shaped Christmas trees. His hands show the work history: one finger is missing from a restaurant accident and he's lost the use of another because of a snapped tendon he suffered while shaping trees.

Now Sixto operates a forklift at Lakeside. At one time the money was relatively good for him—\$8.75 an hour. But there was a supervisor who treated people badly. "He'd yell at people and say things to people. He was pushing people. He was very aggressive," recalls Sixto through an interpreter.

Things got so bad that Sixto worked with Centro Campesino to help organize an election to establish a union at the plant. It was looking good in the run-up to the vote, with many workers saying they supported forming a union, but the proposal was eventually defeated.

"A lot of workers will tell you that they were with you, but I don't know

what happened,” says Sixto. “After that I lost a lot of confidence. You don’t feel comfortable anymore just having a conversation with your co-workers.”

Now he’s paying the price for his activism. When the Mendozas came back to Minnesota the season after the election, Sixto was given a harder job that paid only \$7.70 an hour.

“It was supposed to be a job for two people, but they made it into a job for one,” he says. “To be honest with you I’m just here to support my family. Because now it’s five of us working here. If it was just me, I wouldn’t be working here.”

Tough on the children

Such setbacks are frustrating, but the staffers at Centro Campesino take heart from other victories. For example, they’ve been able to get better housing for cannery workers, as well as buffers around migrant camps where crop pesticides can’t be sprayed, making it safer for children to play outside. Centro has also made strides in getting companies to provide childcare. This is a critical issue for migrant workers, who often work 12-hour shifts seven-days-a-week.

“Child care was the thing that ignited the movement,” says Torres of Centro Campesino’s genesis.

On a recent evening, Miguel Gonzalez, 39, slumps in a chair at the government migrant camp after putting in a 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. shift at Lakeside. His wife, Maria, is now doing her 6 p.m. to 6

a.m. shift running a machine that seals cans. He gets paid \$9.50 an hour for maintaining the wastewater system; Maria receives \$8.05. Their three children—ages 9-12—are watching TV or doing homework (they go to school in nearby West Concord).

“I see my wife when she gets in. ‘Goodbye husband’ she says,” Gonzalez says with a wan smile.

In Texas, the school year starts in August, while in Minnesota it’s not until after Labor Day. Migrants like the Mendozas often don’t go back to Texas until sometime in November, when the last of the vegetable canning is done.

“It’s very difficult for the children. Last year when we went back to school in Texas my little girl cried for like six months because she didn’t like school down there,” says Mendoza. “It’s something they have to get used to. I just want to make sure they go to school, and graduate and all that.”

Centro Campesino is raising money for a scholarship fund for the children of migrants and immigrants who want to go to college. One of the group’s main pushes is passage of the “Dream Act,” which would allow undocumented students to go to college and pay in-state tuition. But Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty opposes passage of such a proposal, and was successful in killing it during the 2007 legislative session.

The entrepreneurial spirit

Another important role Centro Campesino plays is to support the Latinos who have settled in Minnesota perma-

nently and are ready to become even bigger players in the economy. The U.S. Census shows that the number of Latino-owned businesses in the U.S. tripled between 1997 and 2002. “More than 1,000 Mexican-American businesses alone operate in Minnesota, generating an estimated \$200 million in sales,” reports the Minneapolis Foundation.

Few of those businesses are farms, but the potential is great, considering the rural background of many Latinos. In 2006, the Land Stewardship Project had consultant and farmer Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin prepare a report on farming possibilities for Latinos/Latinas in Minnesota. Based on an examination of statistics and interviews with members within the Latino community, Haslett-Marroquin concluded that there is great potential in this area. In a 15-county area he studied, Haslett-Marroquin estimated there were 3,289 Latinos who could be farm owners in the future.

“These are individuals who have already experienced farming, have firsthand training and could serve as a core target market to initiate a statewide program,” he concluded.

Haslett-Marroquin found that the growing Latino population in states like Minnesota offers a huge marketing opportunity for farmers willing and able to raise ethnic specialties.

Armando and Bertha Maziel are working to take advantage of such an entrepreneurial opportunity. Armando,

Centro Campesino, see page 23...

Land Stewardship Project & Centro Campesino

For the past year and a half, the Land Stewardship Project’s Policy and Organizing Program has been meeting with organizers at Centro Campesino to discuss how the two organizations can work together to create a fair and just food and farming system. This is part of LSP’s ongoing efforts to pursue opportunities to develop collaborations with minorities that build community, oppose discrimination and advance shared values of stewardship, democracy and justice.

“LSP is dedicated to improving the rural landscape in Minnesota. Rural landscapes are composed of land, air and water, but also people and communities,” says Mike McMahon, an organizer with LSP’s Policy and Organizing Program. “We are grateful for the work of Centro Campesino and look forward to talking

with its members about our shared values of stewardship and social justice, and how we can work together to build communities that care for the environment and uplift human dignity.”

For more information, you can contact McMahon at 612-722-6377 or mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org.

LSP’s Farm Beginnings & new immigrant farmers

In March, the LSP held its first Farm Beginnings® on-farm event targeted at non-English speaking families. The farm tour was held at Dry Weather Creek Farm near Milan, in western Minnesota, which is owned and operated by Mark and Wendy Lange. The presentations were given in Spanish and three Latino families attended.

The tour/workshop focused on Dry Weather Creek’s goat and organic flour milling business.

Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, a vegetable farmer and business consultant from Northfield, Minn., shared his business planning expertise with participants. Haslett-Marroquin recently authored a report for LSP entitled “Farming Possibilities for Latinos/Latinas in Minnesota.” In the near future, LSP’s Farm Beginnings program is planning to do more outreach to populations that have not been involved in traditional beginning farmer initiatives.

For more information, contact Farm Beginnings Program Director Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org.

44, and Bertha, 49, crossed the border illegally into California in 1979 and received amnesty from then-President Ronald Reagan in 1986. In 1996 they came to Minnesota and Armando started working as a welder. They eventually bought 10 acres near Hayfield. They have four adult children—three live in Minnesota, and one is in California.

“We always had the idea of having a business where we would raise animals or something,” says Armando during a recent visit to Centro Campesino’s Owatonna office. “My dad used to work in agriculture.”

Bertha’s family raised chickens in Mexico, so after a decade of planning and saving, she and Armando are in the midst of a poultry enterprise. They recently completed construction of a small chicken house. They raise some 3,000 chickens a year—inside during the winter and outside in nice weather. The birds are sold fresh to a Latino market on Lake Street in Minneapolis.

The fledgling enterprise has gotten a jump-start via the New Immigrant Agriculture Project, an initiative of the Minnesota Food Association. The project assisted the Maziels with construction plans for their chicken house. It also helped them develop feed rations and marketing options.

Bertha’s eyes shine as she talks about their growing enterprise. “I’m pretty positive that things are going to work out,” she says.

The need for better policy

But even long-time permanent residents like the Maziels express concern about how lawmakers are making political hay at the expense of migrants and immigrants, pushing for policies that are redundant, ineffective or even counterproductive.

“I’ve noticed more discrimination towards Latinos recently,” says Bertha. “The environment gets more tense.”

“They try to dehumanize the issue. They talk about ‘illegal aliens’ and ‘criminals.’” Torres says of anti-immigrant groups and their political allies.

Centro Campesino is allied with 1,500 organizations, including a group that is literally next door to them in Owatonna and which represents recent immigrants from Somalia who work in meatpacking plants. Such coalitions of groups are pushing for immigration policies that don’t make workers criminals and don’t

create situations where families are separated on opposite sides of the border for months, sometimes years, at a time. Centro Campesino has also been very active in fighting state initiatives that in their opinion would make life much tougher for immigrants and migrants—legal and otherwise. There are concerns that tougher criminal penalties for being undocumented will punish all Latinos in Minnesota, no matter what their status, and increase “racial profiling.”

“We need reforms that reunify families,” says Torres. “What we are looking for is a better process.”



Bertha and Armando Maziel, shown here in Centro Campesino’s Owatonna office beneath a picture of the legendary farmworker organizer Cesar Chavez, recently launched a chicken-raising business on their small southern Minnesota farm. (LSP photo)

Despite the climate of fear created by the recent raids, people are starting to stand up for their rights by participating in local, state and national rallies. They are also getting the immigrant/migrant side of the story out to the media, government officials and lawmakers.

“The important thing is individual people are coming and speaking out,” says Torres.

One of the things Centro is pushing for is fair working conditions. In some cases, that just means getting enforcement of already existing laws. For example, Minnesota law requires that employers provide health insurance for migrant workers. The law was passed but regulations were never written. So companies have pretty much ignored it. “The laws are there, but they are kind of pointless,” says Torres.

Fair trade

In April, the organization hosted the first National Farmworker Conference for Fair Trade in Owatonna. A major victory came in this area when it was announced

this spring that the fast food giant McDonald’s would work with one of Centro’s allies, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, in dealing with wage and working condition issues in Florida’s tomato industry.

Fair trade rules are becoming a staple of “green” certification labels in an attempt to make sure food that’s produced in an environmentally sound manner also doesn’t come at the cost of human dignity. For example, Food Alliance Midwest, the sustainable certification system founded by LSP and Cooperative Development Services (see page 24), has a set of criteria related to safe and fair working conditions for farmworkers. The criteria give farms high points if they offer such things as protection for farmworker children, grievance procedures and support services. The criteria also cover sanitation, housing and employee benefits. (For more on these criteria, see www.foodalliance.org/certification/standards.htm.)

Such fair trade rules are key if groups like Centro Campesino are to deal with a contentious issue in rural areas: how industrial ag has benefited from exploiting a seemingly bottomless pool of cheap labor. As long as workers are unable to get better conditions, wages won’t improve, giving factory farms and large processors an advantage in their race to the bottom, and keeping economic development in rural areas at poverty levels.

The damage a cheap labor economy inflicts upon all members of a rural community could actually help unite rural residents, no matter what their ethnic background, nationality or circumstances of arrival. When Torres speaks before local schools and service organizations about these issues, he finds people are often surprised at what they have in common with newer residents.

“People have stereotypes about migrants. People have stereotypes about year-around Latino workers,” he says. “I think people are surprised when they learn these workers want the same things everyone does: a good job and a chance to improve things for their families.” □

More information

Centro Campesino can be contacted at 507-446-9599 (voice) or 507-446-1101 (fax). It’s on the Web at www.centrocampesino.net. The address is: P.O. Box 525, 104 1/2 Broadway Street West, #206, Owatonna, MN 55060.

Relationship marketing

One of the nation's most successful natural beef cooperatives has a simple, but firm, philosophy underlying all that it does: "Every time we grow, we have a discussion about why we want to grow and we decide we want to grow if it benefits other ranchers," said Oregon beef producer Dan Barnhart, a western Oregon cattle producer and member of Country Natural Beef cooperative.

Barnhart keynoted the sixth annual meeting of Food Alliance Midwest, held in February in the Twin Cities. Country Natural Beef, which is certified by Food Alliance as sustainably raised, is a "demand-pulled, not market pushed" enterprise, according to Barnhart, who is on the cooperative's marketing team. That means cattle are not raised for market until co-op members have set up a buyer for the finished product. This has allowed the co-op to grow at a sustainable rate since it was founded by ranchers Doc and Connie Hatfield in 1986.

In the 1980s, things were not going well for cattle producers like the Hatfields. Connie visited a local health club and talked to the management to find out what they were recommending that their clients eat. To her surprise, the health club managers were telling people to eat lean, hormone-free beef three times a week. They felt they couldn't get that kind of meat in this country, so they were recommending that people buy Argentinian beef.

"That blew Connie away because she and Doc were raising lean, hormone-free beef," recalled Barnhart.

The Hatfields pulled together 14 cattle producers and started selling beef to

grocery stores and food co-ops on the West Coast. The beginnings of that marketing venture were about as humble as they come: three animals a week. But they slowly built their market over time by working with individual meat managers and communicating directly with consumers via in-store products demos. The cooperative also adapted to changes in the retail food industry. When the co-op was first launched it was selling whole animals to stores that had their own meat cutters. Now many of those retailers need beef that's already been cut up and boxed—Country Natural Beef has accommodated this demand by boxing its beef after it's processed.

Despite the lack of an advertising budget, the cooperative has also grown because of the reputation of its product: both the taste and the way it's produced have received rave reviews. Many consumers are drawn to it because of its health benefits, but also because Country Natural Beef producers adhere to a set of "graze-well" principles (www.oregoncountrybeef.com) that protect the environment. These standards, which are certified by Food Alliance inspectors, address everything from wildlife habitat protection to clean water, and are an important part of the co-op's story that's communicated to the public via its website, news articles and in-store demos.

"When the ranchers come into the stores to do demos, they learn that a lot of their customers are environmentalists, and that helps them apply their graze-well



Dan Barnhart: "When the ranchers come into the stores to do demos, they learn that a lot of their customers are environmentalists...." (LSP photo)

standards better," said Barnhart.

Also part of the cooperative's set of principles is the belief that everything they do should benefit everyone who is part of the process. This "Shin-Rai" concept, which the Hatfields learned from a Japanese customer, has helped keep the cooperative accountable to everyone from the ranchers to the retailers to the consumers, said Barnhart.

"As one of our ranchers says, 'All we are is a series of relationships.'"

'Keeper of the Vision' awards

A major produce distribution company and one of Wisconsin's leading blueberry farms were given "Keeper of the Vision for a Sustainable Future" awards during the Food Alliance Midwest's annual meeting.

Bix Produce

Bix Produce Company, based in Saint Paul, Minn., has been a Food Alliance Midwest partner since 2003. The company, which was started in 1930 by the

Food Alliance, see page 25...

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 Ser-

vices. It is the Midwestern affiliate of the Food Alliance, 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, and in select restaurants and food service dining halls.

For details on Food Alliance Midwest and its certification program, visit www.foodalliance.org/midwest/partners_mw.htm, or call 651-265-3682.



Bix family in Austin, Minn., services customers throughout Minnesota, western Wisconsin and eastern North Dakota. It delivers produce to restaurants, educational institutions, hotels, country clubs and other segments of the food service industry.

Bix recently started carrying an organic line of produce, and it tries to buy as much as possible from within a 200-mile radius.

"We want to buy as much local as we can, because our customers are local, our employees are local," said Duane Pfleiger, the chief operating officer of Bix during the awards ceremony. "Our customers want to know where the food comes from."

Food scares such as the recent e-coli outbreak in spinach will raise some major challenges for the local foods movement and the produce industry, said Pfleiger. For example, because of tighter health standards, it will be harder for firms like Bix to handle food produced by individual farmers who are local. On the other hand, certification systems such as what Food Alliance offers will become even more critical as customers demand to know how and where produce is raised, he said.

Highland Valley Farm

Rick and Janet Dale launched Highland Valley Farm in 1977 near Bayfield, a Wisconsin community on the shores of Lake Superior. Today, the farm is

recognized as a leading producer of blueberries in the region—in 2005 they produced 60,000 pounds of the fruit on 10 acres. The 50-acre farm also produces maple syrup, honey, currants, grapes and red raspberries.

The Dales use a system of production that grows perennial plants such as blueberries in a sod culture. Such a system protects the soil throughout the year, naturally builds fertility and preserves moisture. They also maintain a significant portion of their farm in timber to accommodate the bees that pollinate their crops and produce honey. Highland Valley was the first farm in the Bayfield area to utilize a new conservation easement program to preserve the land in perpetuity. This past year, the Dales' son, along with his wife, moved back to the farm to begin the transition to the next generation.

Rick Dale, speaking at the awards ceremony, said his family realized after doing a business plan that the farm couldn't stay viable just selling through an on-farm stand, or relying on tourists. Although they still have a farm stand, today the bulk of their income comes from wholesaling blueberries in major markets like the Twin Cities. The Food Alliance seal has allowed them to get rewarded for the extra care they take in producing that fruit.

"They were the organization that could give us credit for the values we were espousing," said Dale. "With Food Alliance we get recognized as being local, as being family, as being sustainable." □

Minnesota Cooks Aug. 28 at State Fair

The fifth annual Food Alliance Midwest "Minnesota Cooks" event will be held at the Minnesota State Fair's Carousel Park (near the Grandstand) Tuesday, Aug. 28. This event, which is sponsored by Food Alliance Midwest, Minnesota Farmers Union and Renewing the Countryside, brings farmers, consumers and chefs together over great food.

This year it will consist of eight cooking shows featuring some of Minnesota's top chefs. The shows will start on the hour between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help out at this event. For more information, contact Jill McLaughlin at jill@foodalliance.org or 651-265-3684. □

Kirsch leaves FA

Ray Kirsch has left his position as the Food Alliance Midwest's Certification Coordinator to pursue a law career. He recently graduated from Hamline Law School.

Kirsch joined Land Stewardship Project's staff as an intern in 1999. He eventually became Farm Coordinator and then Certification Coordinator for Food Alliance Midwest. Over the years, he developed certification standards for various production methods and coordinated training of certifiers. □



Ray Kirsch

Keeper of the vision for a Sustainable Future



Rick Dale & Jim Ennis



Duane Pfleiger & Jim Ennis

The Food Alliance Midwest's Keeper of the Vision for a Sustainable Future 2007 award was given to Rick Dale of Highland Valley Farm and Duane Pfleiger of Bix Produce. Shown handing out the awards at the annual meeting is Food Alliance Midwest Director Jim Ennis. (LSP photos)

McLaughlin joins Food Alliance staff

Jill McLaughlin has joined Food Alliance Midwest as its new Assistant Program Director.

McLaughlin has a degree in architecture and urban design from the University of Kansas, and received a certificate for holistic health counseling from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. Most recently, she was the office manager for Bridging the Gap, a nonprofit organization based in Kansas City.

While at Food Alliance, McLaughlin will provide administrative support, coordinate the annual Minnesota Cooks program and write about Food Alliance's work for various publications.

She can be contacted at jill@foodalliance.org or 651-265-3684. □

Healthy food & health care – no longer mutually exclusive

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Land Stewardship Project has recently joined the Health Care Without Harm initiative in an attempt to get locally-produced food in hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. Jamie Harvie is coordinator of the Health Care Without Harm initiative, and is based in Duluth, Minn.

By Jamie Harvie

Think of typical hospital food and you're likely to conjure up a tray full of unappetizing images. Hospitals seem to be one of the hardest places to find a plate of fresh, healthy food, which is ironic considering that poor nutrition is a risk factor for at least four of the six leading causes of death in the United States. And while obesity is an obvious problem, there are even more systemic health issues with the way our food is grown and distributed.

Yet, the health care menu is rapidly changing. Across the country health care leaders are beginning to recognize that our food system is not only misaligned with U.S. dietary guidelines, but hidden behind these nutritional imbalances is a food production and distribution system

that is harmful to people, communities and the environment. There is a new understanding in that the way we produce food has so radically changed that it is fundamentally undermining public health.

Though the connection between food production and health seems intuitive, it has taken some time to link health care purchasing practices with this understanding. Consider antibiotics, one of the keys to the success of Western medicine, now threatened by a crisis in resistance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists antibiotic resistance as one of its "top concerns."

In the U.S., an estimated 70 percent of all antibiotics are now fed to swine, poultry, and beef cattle—not to treat illness but to promote growth or to compensate for raising the animals under crowded conditions. This needless yet routine use of antibiotics creates the ideal environment for resistant bacteria to develop, and there is strong consensus among medical experts that agricultural use of antibiotics contributes to resistance among humans.

Yet, while the U.S. Institute of Medicine, World Health Organization, American Public Health Association, American Nurses Association and American Medical Association have all called for decreasing or eliminating the use of agricultural antibiotics, until

recently these professionals have not looked at the purchasing policies within their own health care institutions.

Recognizing the systemic health issues with our food system, some leading hospitals are asking how they can be part of the solution instead of part of the problem. As huge buyers and distributors of food, hospitals not only have the power and responsibility to advocate for healthier food systems, but they are actually beginning to use this purchasing power to bring about change. Furthermore, changing the food a facility purchases sets a powerful example that extends beyond the hospital door, especially as a significant majority of the food a hospital serves is to visitors and staff. If health care is truly interested in disease prevention and health promotion, it makes sense for hospitals to integrate a systemic approach to buying food that is healthy for the people who eat it, healthy for the workers and communities in which it is grown and raised, and healthy for the environment.

Consider examples from some of our country's largest health systems: Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) and Kaiser Permanente (KP), which have both begun implementing sustainable food practices and policies. CHW recently passed a vision statement that explicitly recognizes that healthy food is defined, "not only by nutritional quality, but equally by a food system which is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and which supports human dignity and justice." KP's vision includes the aspiration to "provide healthier food...in a manner that

Health Care, see page 27...

Want to help get our health care community involved?

For background information and a wealth of case studies and educational tools, visit www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org.

Whether you are a producer or consumer:

- ✓ Print some of the fact sheets and case studies at www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org and send a letter to your hospital board of directors. Many of these board members are recognized community members.

- ✓ Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and ask why your hospital is not supporting local, sustainable production. Make reference to the great examples cited in the article above.

- ✓ Most faith-based institutions are guided by a faith-based mission. Explore a meeting with those responsible for mission integration and share how local, sustainable production is in line with their mission.

- ✓ If you are a producer and want to engage your local facility, recognize that like you, they are extremely busy and face tough economic challenges. Explore win-win opportunities and start small.

- ✓ If your hospital is implementing even small steps, support them with a letter to the editor, or send them an e-mail.

- ✓ If you work within health care, download the Health Care Without Harm "Menu of Options" ideas at www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org. Create a "food team" to

develop ideas on getting started.

- ✓ Remember: most consumers have purchased sustainably-raised food. You will likely have many allies within your facility (and some detractors).

- ✓ Build an equitable opportunity based on farmer supply, and take your time. The supply, and demand, will grow when a foundation of mutual respect and transparent protocols is established. Going slow is good.

- ✓ Contact the Land Stewardship Project's Lewiston (507-523-3366) or Montevideo (320-269-2105) office and arrange for a presentation. These can be tailored to upper management, medical and nursing staff, grand rounds or medical/nursing schools.

promotes agricultural practices that are ecologically sound, economically viable, culturally appropriate, and socially responsible.”

Kaiser Permanente’s work has included setting criteria for healthy food and creating guidelines for implementing sustainable food sourcing. This includes a two-page sustainable food addendum to the Request for Information (RFI) process for their food supplies that specifies local sourcing and antibiotic/hormone-free meats and dairy. Kaiser Permanente has also established farmers’ markets at 25 of its medical facilities, providing locally grown fresh produce and flowers for KP workers and the community. CHW, among other initiatives, is implementing an education program about the ecological impacts of the food system and is surveying its dairy providers to eliminate rBGH use. Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz, Cal., buys produce from a local organic farm and has an on-site garden that provides produce and flowers for the facility.

Examples of hospitals supporting local foods systems and sustainable agriculture are spreading across the country. Many of these facilities have signed the “Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge” (www.noharm.org/us/food/pledge), a commitment to initiate support for nutritious, local sustainable food. Hackensack University Medical Center, the fourth largest medical center in the U.S., has signed the pledge. Midwest Pledge signatories are represented in Iowa and Duluth, Minn. St. Luke’s Hospital in Duluth, serves only fair-trade coffee, offers organic fruit, serves rBGH-free milk, is introducing a locally grown organic salad bar, and serves Lake Superior herring. St. Luke’s also composts its food waste and has a comprehensive food recovery program where unused food is given to the local food bank.

More recently, LSP staff and members have entered into conversation with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., on how to get local, sustainable food served at the health care giant’s facilities.

Across the country, health care organizations are implementing policies and programs, in stepwise fashion, that demonstrate a commitment to “first, do no harm.” They are treating food and its production and distribution as preventive medicine. While the bigger medical and faith based systems in Minnesota have



Locally produced food was served March 9 at the second annual Local Foods Forum and Expo in Winona, Minn. The Expo, which featured a keynote by Jamie Harvie of Health Care Without Harm (see page 26), focused on ways to connect local, sustainable farmers with health care facilities, corporate campuses and schools. The event was coordinated by the Winona County Economic Development Authority/Local Foods Subcommittee, with financial and organizational support from the Land Stewardship Project, Signature’s Restaurant and the University of Minnesota’s Experiment in Rural Cooperation and Southwest Research and Outreach Center. (LSP photo)

not yet embraced this vision of preventative health, it is likely only a matter of time before they too will join in this broader understanding. □

Jamie Harvie can be reached at 218-525-7806 or harvie@isfusa.org.

Healthy listening

Jamie Harvie gave a keynote at the second annual Local Foods Forum and Expo in March (see above). To hear a podcast of his speech, see *Ear to the Ground* episode 31 at www.thepodlounge.com/listfeed.php?feed=34810.

Donate to get fresh produce to the hungry

In its continuing efforts to connect Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) with hungry families, Ploughshare Farm has joined forces with the Emergency Foodshelf Network of Minnesota to launch Harvest for the Hungry. The April/May/June 2005 *Land Stewardship Letter* (www.landstewardshipproject.org/news-lsl.html) reported how Gary Brever of Ploughshare was getting some of his fresh, organic produce to low-income people through the Food For Folk Project.

Now Brever and the Emergency Foodshelf Network have recruited eight other CSA farms to provide top quality produce for hunger relief. Harvest for the

Hungry needs financial donations so that the farms can be paid for their produce, which will be distributed to foodshelves and on-site meal programs for free. To donate, visit www.emergencyfoodshelf.org and click on “Harvest for the Hungry.” On that page, you can select which CSA farm you would like the produce purchased from (you can also choose to have the produce purchased from all of the farms). You can then make a tax-deductible donation online.

For more information, contact Pat Kerrigan, transportation coordinator for the Emergency Foodshelf Network, at 763-450-3867 or pkerrigan@emergencyfoodshelf.org.

Food & the St. Croix River

By Dana Jackson

St. Croix County in Wisconsin and Washington County in Minnesota face each other across the St. Croix River, and both are among the fastest growing counties in their respective states. Large numbers of residents from these counties travel Interstate Highway 94 to their jobs in Minneapolis and St. Paul every day. Workers living in Chisago and Polk, the next counties north along the river, use Interstate 35 for their commute into the Twin Cities, although some from Wisconsin cross the St. Croix in Stillwater and enter the cities on Highway 36.

The migration is often reversed on weekends as city tourists head to the St. Croix River Valley to browse the antique shops in charming historic towns or celebrate anniversaries with romantic dining in riverside restaurants and overnights in Victorian B & B's. City folks escape to camp, fish, hike and ski in Afton and William O'Brien state parks in Minnesota, the Kinnikinnick and Willow rivers in Wisconsin, and a bit upriver, the Interstate Parks across from each other in Minnesota and Wisconsin. On summer days, the St. Croix National Scenic River hosts thousands of boaters, offering quiet paddling upstream, sailing on Lake St. Croix, and cruises by yachts downstream from Hudson to the Mississippi.

The area is in danger of being loved to death.

More and more people want to recreate there, and they want to live there. The number of residents in the whole watershed is expected to increase 39 percent by 2020, and much of the population growth will be within commuting distance of the Twin Cities.

Small rural towns along the river want prosperity, yet they don't want to lose their cultural heritage and the blessings bestowed by the beautiful St. Croix River on private land outside the parks. But new streets and parking lots will mean more surface runoff carrying contaminants into the river.

City, township and county govern-

ments in the valley are starting to work on updating their comprehensive, long-range plans. Each unit of government has its own vision for the future of the area within its boundaries. Some planning



commissions see their role as the developers of orderly annexation plans for the inevitable growth of residences and businesses. Some also pay attention to how growth will impact water quality and scenic beauty along the St. Croix River or how cultural and historic traditions can be preserved. Other communities are working to lure huge condominium developments close to the river and big box stores to the outskirts of town.

Economic development is necessary for all communities if they are to provide jobs, community services and amenities for residents. A diverse economic base is widely recognized as more resilient and secure than one dependent upon one or two industries. Yet the history of European settlement along the St. Croix River shows the economic base shifting from one industry to another: fur trading to logging, then wheat farming to dairying, then tourism and recreation, and now urban development. Land speculation was always a strong factor in the economy, but up until the 1950s agricultural land values were fairly compatible with farming opportunities. Today, most people who want to start new crop and livestock farms can't afford to buy land

or pay taxes on it. Traditional, conventional agriculture is hanging on by its nails on the banks of the St. Croix River Valley. Existing crop fields are seen as land waiting to be "developed."

But there is some unconventional agriculture in the St. Croix River Valley, unconventional in the sense that farmers are not in the business of growing commodity crops dependent upon federal subsidies, and unconventional in the sense that farmers need fewer acres than those in the past. They grow apples, berries, vegetables, flowers, herbs, wine grapes and Christmas trees. They produce honey and maple syrup. Farmers add value by making jams and jellies, cheese and wine. Some traditional crop farms of larger acreage have transitioned to grass farms, using rotational grazing to raise beef cattle, lamb and pork, and produce organic milk. Such land uses are generally compatible with wildlife habitat, open space and protection of the river's water quality. But communities and local governments pay little attention to these enterprises, ignoring cultural and economic assets that could contribute much more to their economic base.

Building a community based food system in the St. Croix

The Land Stewardship Project has begun an effort in the St. Croix Valley to encourage unconventional agriculture and build community-based food systems. Our goals are to expand local markets for local growers, increase the consumption of fresh, healthful food in the St. Croix River Valley, diversify the economic base, and protect ecological and scenic resources in the region by reconnecting food systems with ecosystems.

This project is guided by a steering committee that includes staff from the Minnesota Food Association, Women's Environmental Institute, University of Wisconsin Extension and the West Wisconsin Land Trust. A Community Supported Agriculture farmer and an independent organizational development specialist are donating time to the steering committee, and an advisory committee of farmers, chefs and community activists has agreed to help shape the project.

The steering committee has worked since November 2006 to organize the St. Croix River Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local*

BFBL, see page 29...

Buy Fresh Buy Local in Minnesota

The St. Croix River Valley is the second *Buy Fresh Buy Local* (BFBL) campaign that the Land Stewardship Project has helped initiate. In 2001, LSP collaborated with several other community organizations and agencies in west central Minnesota to organize Pride of the Prairie. These groups identified over 100 farmers in the region doing some kind of direct marketing and published their first *Local Foods Guide* in 2002. The national Food Routes Network was organized in 2003 by 10 regional organizations, including LSP, under a Kellogg Foundation Grant. Pride of the Prairie was one of the first groups to take advantage of Food Routes' market research and to use the special *Buy Fresh Buy Local* logo.

The 2006 *Local Food Guide* published by Pride of the Prairie identifies farmers who are direct marketing meat, produce, flowers and other products in the Upper Minnesota River Valley. It also lists retailers who carry local food products in their grocery stores and restaurants.

The *Local Food Guide* available in western Minnesota businesses and at LSP's Montevideo office (320-269-2105).



It can also be found at www.prideoftheprairie.com.

LSP has agreed to serve as the Minnesota regional chapter affiliate of Food Routes for the coming year. The national Food Routes Network is managed by an executive director and governed by a steering committee. It licenses regional nonprofit organizations like LSP to help local groups form local chapters and develop BFBL campaigns. Iowa, Pennsylvania and California each have four to nine local campaigns, and Minnesota has the potential for several more, in addition to Pride of the Prairie in west central

Minnesota and the St. Croix River Valley chapter. A local foods initiative in northwest Minnesota is currently forming a Red River Valley BFBL chapter. Any Minnesota group interested in starting a new local BFBL campaign must be licensed by LSP. Contact Dana Jackson in the White Bear Lake LSP office at 651-653-0618 or danaj@landstewardshipproject.org to start the process.

...BFBL, from page 28

(BFBL) chapter of the Food Routes Network. During the summer and fall of 2007, the St. Croix River Valley chapter will be inviting growers, processors, retail groceries, restaurants, tourist agencies, arts organizations and other community groups to become BFBL partners and support the larger movement to develop sustainable local food systems in the St. Croix River Valley.

Through outreach, advertising and point of purchase materials, *Buy Fresh Buy Local* makes it easy for consumers to buy fresh, local food from farmers they can know and trust. Through the Food Routes Network, LSP has access to a toolbox of thoroughly tested, professionally designed, low-cost materials that are being used in approximately 40 campaigns across the U.S. to promote local food to consumers.

The key messages and graphic designs in the toolbox are based on extensive market research in diverse regions to appeal to a broad audience. Each campaign works with the same company, Design for Social Impact, to adapt the basic background to the region's character and depict foods widely available in its geographic area. The new St. Croix

River Valley design (see page 28) will be available to market partners during the 2007 growing season for point of sale signs and cards, brochures, banners and other promotional tools.

To become a market partner and receive a set of services, including use of the logo, a grower, farmers' market, processor or retail business will pay a small partnership fee to the St. Croix local BFBL chapter. All chapters and their partners are required to follow specific guidelines in using the trademarked materials that have been developed by the Food Routes Network to keep the brand consistently recognizable by the public.

The BFBL campaign will become more visible in the St. Croix River Valley this summer as it begins promoting local food and its contribution to regional economic development through newspaper stories, special events at food co-ops and meetings with many organizations. BFBL will assist farmers' market partners that want to add vendors and/or a greater variety of products and attract more customers through special events and publicity.

The St. Croix River Valley BFBL Chapter will support other projects that promote local foods, such as Minnesota Food Association's Big River Foods, a

new local food distribution service, and efforts at the Women's Environmental Institute to explore the establishment of a processing facility on its property near Wild River State Park. It will help distribute the *West Wisconsin Food Atlas* and publicize other directories to food in the St. Croix Valley, with a future goal of producing an extensive online food guide to Wisconsin and Minnesota growers and retail establishments selling local products in 2008. A major goal is to collaborate with many other groups and add value to the work they are doing to create regional food systems and economic development.

We invite LSP members and friends living in the St. Croix River Valley to participate in the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign. In addition to partner growers and businesses, an individual can support the campaign by becoming a "Vocal Local." □

Dana Jackson coordinates the St. Croix River Valley Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign out of LSP's White Bear Lake office. For more information or to get involved, contact her at 651-653-0618 or danaj@landstewardshipproject.org. On the Web, see www.landstewardshipproject.org/foodfarm-main.html.

Food Fight

The Citizen's Guide to a Food and Farm Bill

By Daniel Imhoff
2007; 167 pages
Watershed Media
www.watershedmedia.org

One of my favorite graphics in Daniel Imhoff's new book shows a tray of school cafeteria food with the following caption: "The food industry spends \$15 billion per year marketing to children. The Federal School Lunch Program spends only \$7 billion to feed our children in the public schools. The Federal School Lunch Reimbursement is \$2.32 per meal. Approximately 95 cents is spent on food and 97 cents on labor."

Imhoff's book, *Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide to a Food and Farm Bill*, is full of these kinds of infuriating eyeopeners. In a succinct, clear, *USA Today* type format, the book relates that the food and farming policy in this country is dysfunctional and expensive, as well as harmful to the environment, human health and our communities. Imhoff, who is the publishing force behind such books as *Farming and the Fate of Wild Nature* and *Farming with the Wild*, knows the power of images. In his latest book he is using that power to address an issue that's been long ignored by the public: our federal farm policy.

Imhoff's book provides an invaluable service in a year when a new federal Farm Bill is being written up. He summarizes the studies, media reports and sleep-inducing statistics in brief, easy to digest graphics and text. Don't let the readability of this book fool you into thinking this is lightweight material. These are some heavy topics Imhoff is addressing. For example, "...nearly 40 million Americans, 12 percent of all households, confront food insecurity, meaning that they often experience hunger or need to skip meals to get by. Many are children," reads one sentence above a photo of a homeless man sleeping on the sidewalk.

Imhoff also uses clear explanatory writing to address complicated matters like the history of U.S. farm programs, how New Zealand reformed its system and what can be done here, now, to reform ours. This is a quick read and that's good, because the 2007 Farm Bill deliberations are upon on. Read this book and call your Senators and Representatives armed with facts, figures and a little bit of anger. □

Dirt

The Erosion of Civilizations

By David R. Montgomery
2007; 295 pages
University of California Press
www.ucpress.edu

Years ago I happened upon a 1953 pamphlet called *Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years*. Written by renowned soil expert Walter Lowdermilk, it describes how care of the soil has determined the fate of some of the most powerful civilizations in history. Most of the stories don't end well. The collapse of societies in Greece, Rome, Maya and the Middle East can be traced in large part to rampant soil erosion and degradation.

Lowdermilk's writings were a "mod-



ernized" version of what George Perkins Marsh had written about almost a century before in his seminal, and all too often ignored, *Man and Nature*.

Now, our generation has a report from the soil erosion vs. civilization battle. In *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*, David Montgomery builds on Lowdermilk and Perkins' evidence and lays out in clear language what is at stake.

"The history of dirt suggests that how people treat their soil can impose a life span on civilizations," he writes.

Like global climate change, our destruction of soil is in general a long, drawn-out process, one that's hard to observe on a daily basis. The lack of a visible, immediate threat makes action on the part of society even harder.

Today's society certainly has the tools needed to choose agroecological success. First of all, we have historical perspective, thanks to people like Lowdermilk, Marsh, and now, Montgomery. And other researchers are using cutting-edge science to provide accurate predictions of what the future holds if current trends continue, as well as what positive outcomes will result if we make some adjustments toward a more sustainable use of land.

Finally, we have a growing group of farmers who are combining the best of organics, conservation tillage, perennialism and biodiversity to protect and build our soil. They are working to make history a lesson, not a rerun. □

From the Farm to the Table

What All Americans Need to Know about Agriculture

By Gary Holthaus
2006; 363 pages
The University Press of Kentucky
www.kentuckypress.com

Gary Holthaus spent three years gathering material for *From the Farm to the Table: What All Americans Need to Know about Agriculture*. With a ponderous title like that, one would think you could spend 30 years researching the subject and still not be ready to write a book.

But Holthaus chose to tackle his subject matter by looking at it through the eyes of some 40 farm families presiding in a specific geographic area: southeast Minnesota, northern Iowa and western Wisconsin. He uses interviews with these families—they almost read like oral histories at times—to explore what's wrong with agriculture as well as what can be done to make it more sustainable. These farmers (they range from graziers and organic vegetable growers to conventional crop and livestock producers) aren't as parochial as one might think. From their vantage point in the Upper Midwest, Holthaus finds them to be quite cognizant that "distant" entities like NAFTA and the WTO affect them just as much as a local rainstorm.

Holthaus, who undertook this project under the auspices of Minnesota's Experiment in Rural Cooperation, also spent time interviewing economists and other agricultural experts to get a wider view of the issues. But it's when he returns to the interviews with the farmers themselves, many of them Land Stewardship Project members, that the geopolitical and economic impacts hit home most effectively. The book also provides insights into how a truly sustainable agriculture can be developed. Holthaus calls his interviews with these farmers "healthy stories" that "teach us how to be human."

"If you do not believe in the power of stories, consider this: There have been cultures that have persisted for thousands of years without agriculture, industry, banking, and literacy," writes Holthaus, "but there has never been one, as far as we know, without stories, poems, and music." □



LSP blog

LSP has entered the “blogosphere.” We are writing a weekly “food and sustainable agriculture” web-based blog for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership at <http://looncommons.org/category/food-and-sustainable-agriculture>. Check out our well-reasoned rants and give us your equally well-reasoned reactions. ☐

Ear to the Ground audio podcast

The Land Stewardship Project’s *Ear to the Ground* audio magazine is available on our website. This podcast features interviews and field reports related to LSP’s work.

These shows can be listened to on a computer, an MP3 player or via compact disc (despite the name, you don’t need an iPod to listen to podcasts).

To sample some of the podcasts, see www.thepodlounge.com/listfeed.php?feed=34810. For a step-by-step guide on how to subscribe to the free *Ear to the Ground* service, visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/podcast.html. ☐

Get connected with

LIVE WIRE

Sign up for *LIVE-WIRE* for regular e-mail updates and news from the Land Stewardship Project. Stay current on information and activities related to land stewardship, local food and grassroots organizing.

To subscribe, call Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or e-mail lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org, and put in the subject line “Subscribe LIVE-WIRE.” ☐

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. 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. Information is also available from LSP’s offices in Lewiston (507-523-3366), Montevideo (320-269-2105) and White Bear Lake (651-653-0618). ☐

Voices of Minnesota Farm Women

Voices of Minnesota Farm Women is a 30-minute film documentary produced by Cynthia Vagnetti that presents a positive, hopeful story about family farming based on good land stewardship and the production of healthful food that farmers direct market to people locally or in their region.

The Land Stewardship Project is offering two options for groups that may want

to use this program:

→ Purchase an educational packet containing a *Voices* DVD, background material, introduction, discussion guide, handouts, “take action guide,” and more. Use these materials to do multiple *Voices* programs for your group or church.

→ Purchase the *Voices* DVD for your own showings.

For more information, call LSP’s Dana Jackson at 651-653-0618, or visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_linking.html. ☐

League report on MPCA

Examining a State Agency: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is a new report by the League of Women Voters Minnesota. The 40-page study examines whether the agency is fulfilling its charter of protecting Minnesota’s air, land and water resources.

Copies of the report can be downloaded from www.lwvnmn.org. More information is available by calling 651-224-5445. ☐

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.

STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ **JUNE 29—LSP 25th Anniversary event featuring Wendell Berry, Mary Rose O'Reilley & Joe Paddock**, St. Paul, Minn.; Contact: 651-653-0618 (see page 7)

→ **JULY 7—Organic Vegetable Farm Tour**, August Earth Farm, Hutchinson, Minn.; Contact: 320-543-3394; jerry@marienne.com

→ **JULY 11—LSP's Dana Jackson will participate in a "Rethinking Agriculture for a Living Land" panel at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Ag 20th Anniversary Celebration**, Iowa State University, Ames; Contact: www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/leopold/home.html; 515-294-3711

→ **JULY 11—SWROC field day featuring organic no-till systems**, Lamberton, Minn.; Contact: 507-752-7372; www.organicecology.umn.edu

→ **JULY 11—Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society Summer Symposium**, Wimbledon, N. Dak.; Contact: 701-883-4304; www.npsas.org

→ **JULY 20-22—Seed Savers Exchange 27th Annual Convention**, Decorah, Iowa; Contact: www.seedsavers.org; 563-382-5990

→ **JULY 21—Grazefest Minnesota 2007: A Day for Eaters**, Cedar Summit Farm, New Prague, Minn.; Contact: 866-760-8732; www.sfa-mn.org

→ **JULY 22—LSP's southeast Minnesota 25th Anniversary celebration/Farm Beginnings graduation picnic**, Greg & Jeanne Erickson farm, Lewiston; Contact: 507-523-3366; lspse@landstewardshipproject.org (see page 7)

→ **JULY 28-29—Kickapoo Country Fair, featuring LSP booth & presentation**,

La Farge, Wis. (see page 11)

→ **AUG. 2—LSP's Policy & Organizing Program 25th Anniversary event featuring Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie**, Twin Cities; Contact: 612-722-6377; mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org (see page 7)

→ **AUG. 3—Cold Climate Permaculture Public Film Festival**, Montevideo, Minn.; Contact: Cheryl Landgren, 320-269-6164; cheryllann@earthlink.net

→ **AUG. 4—Cold Climate Permaculture Introductory Workshop**, Montevideo, Minn.; Contact: Cheryl Landgren, 320-269-6164; cheryllann@earthlink.net

→ **AUG. 8-9—Field Day on Veggie Markets & Post-Harvest Handling**, Harmony Valley/Driftless Organics, Viroqua, Wis.; Contact: www.CSALearningCenter.org/craft.html; 815-389-8455

→ **AUG. 9—PFI Field Day on Swine Herd Health, Conservation Security Program & Grazing**, Tom & Irene Frantzen, New Hampton, Iowa; Contact: 641-364-6426; www.practicalfarmers.org

→ **AUG. 16—Parade of Community Gardens tour**, Twin Cities, Minn.; Contact: GardenWorks, 612-278-7123; www.gardenworksmn.org/events.html

→ **AUG. 16—PFI Field Day on Grazing & Grains, Wilson Farm**, Paullina, Iowa; Contact: 712-448-3870; www.practicalfarmers.org

→ **AUG. 18—2nd Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival**, Howard Lake, Minn.; Contact: Jerry Ford, 320-543-3394; www.sfa-mn.org/garlicfest/index.html

→ **AUG. 19—LSP's western Minnesota 25th Anniversary event/Farm Beginnings graduation & ecumenical church service**, Granite Falls & Madison; Contact: 320-269-2105; lspwest@landstewardshipproject.org (see page 7)

→ **AUG. 26—Stateline Farm Beginnings potluck picnic graduation event** (location to be announced); Contact: www.csalearningcenter.org/fbschedule.html; 815-389-8455

→ **AUG. 28—Food Alliance Midwest Minnesota Cooks Event**, State Fair Grounds (see page 25)

→ **AUG. 30—Registration deadline for 2007-2008 Minnesota Farm Beginnings course** (see page 9)

→ **SEPTEMBER—Central Illinois Farm Beginnings graduation/potluck picnic**, central Illinois (details to be announced); Contact: www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu; 847-570-0701

→ **SEPT. 8—14th Annual Lake Superior Harvest Festival**, Bayfront Festival Park, Duluth, Minn.; Contact: www.lakesuperiorfarming.org; 218-393-3276

→ **SEPT. 8—DreamAcres Organic Farm Open House**, Wykoff, Minn.; Contact: www.tillersinternational.org/classes/public.html#107; 507-352-4255

→ **SEPT. 16—Headwaters Foundation Walk for Justice**; Contact: Cathy Eberhart, 651-653-0618; cathy@landstewardshipproject.org (see page 8)

→ **SEPT. 22—PFI Field Day on Community Supported Agriculture**, One Step at a Time Gardens, Kanawha, Iowa; Contact: 641-495-6367

→ **OCT. 6—Barn-raising event celebrating LSP's 25th Anniversary**, Brad & Leslea Hodgson farm, Fountain, Minn.; Contact: 507-523-3366; stettler@landstewardshipproject.org (see page 7)

→ **OCT. 20—Stateline Farm Beginnings Session 1**, Grayslake, Ill.; Contact: www.CSALearningCenter.org/craft.html; 815-389-8455

Check www.landstewardshipproject.org for the latest on upcoming events.



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