

The Land Stewardship

Keeping the Land and People Together



Letter

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Jan/Feb/March 2006

Putting Farming Back in the Driver's Seat

One county wants to use a 'radical' tool to jump-start rural economic development: local family farming.

By Brian DeVore

First of two articles

To a passing motorist, the Roger and Amy Lansink farm in northwest Iowa is a typical collection of rolling fields and well-kept buildings. Neighbors may dismiss the farm as a little bit quirky, since all of its acres are certified organic. As far as the federal government is concerned, it's an agricultural operation that isn't worthy of huge subsidy payments because it chooses to grow crops other than corn and soybeans.

But officials in nearby Woodbury County look at an operation like the Lansink farm and see something quite exciting: a supercharged engine of sustainable economic development.

During the past 12 months, Woodbury County has taken significant, precedent setting steps to make local, organic food produced on family farms a key component of its rural economic development. In June 2005, the Board of Supervisors passed a first-in-the-nation policy that

provides a property tax break to landowners who convert farmland to certified organic production. In January of this year, the Board followed up by passing another breakthrough policy: beginning June 1, when the county buys food it must be organically produced and processed within a 100-mile radius of the courthouse in Sioux City.

Rob Marqusee is Woodbury County's Rural Economic Development Director,

Driver's Seat, see page 16...



Northwest Iowa farmers Amy and Roger Lansink feel their diverse organic system benefits more than their own individual operation. Says Roger, "When you start using different management techniques that keep the money here, that's farm economic growth, that's rural economic growth..." (LSP photo)

2006 Stewardship Food Network

Find the freshest local food available with the help of the 2006 Stewardship Food Network list (see page 20).

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LSL Q & A

Act big or get out

Can farmers gain enough market power to make their operations consistently profitable? Yes, says agricultural economist and author Richard Levins.

Before retiring from the University of Minnesota in 2003, Levins worked directly with farmers, farm groups and public officials for almost 25 years in matters of farm management, farm policy and sustainable agriculture. Levins still writes and speaks extensively on issues of family farming, collective bargaining for farmers and competition in the food system.

In his latest book, *Market Power for Farmers: What It Is, How to Get It, How to Use It*, Levins describes how farmers can team up with other farmers and create enough market power to benefit financially from their efficiency and ability to add value to their production. Levins argues that the agricultural economy has changed so much that farmers can no longer assume all their hard work will pay off when it comes time to market their production.

Levins recently talked to the *Land Stewardship Letter* about how farmers can gain, and keep, market power.

LSL: Two catch-phrases that are popular in agriculture right now are adding value and efficiencies of size. You say in your book that without market power, adding value and being efficient do little good.

Levins: I favor value-added, and I favor efficiency, but the agricultural economy has changed so much that we can no longer assume that those who add the value are going to retain that value. And we can no longer assume that those who get more efficient are going to benefit from that efficiency. All the time you see value-added ventures that eventually end up adding value to some non-farm group. And you certainly see efficiency rewarded with lower prices all the time.

That's not what I want farmers to have. If they're going to add value I want them to keep the value. If they're going to get more efficient I want them to keep the benefits of that. But that doesn't happen automatically. Those benefits go to the strongest players. And a farmer acting alone can hardly expect to be the strongest player when they look at who's buying their products and who's buying from them in the retail sector. It's just not a level playing field.

LSL: What's the difference between being competitive and having market power?

Levins: There's a big difference. Being competitive is always interpreted

as being competitive with your neighbor. In decades gone past that was your immediate neighbor. Now it's your neighboring farmer in another country. Farmers are told the path to salvation is to somehow be the last person standing in a competitive war with your neighbors. That's a very poor way to do business. The problem is how are you going to be competitive with your buyers?

LSL: Farmers are often told to get big or get out. You write that a better strategy is to act big.

Levins: One of the big parts of the get efficient argument is you need to get big to achieve those efficiencies and therefore you'll still be around when your less efficient neighbor is gone. What's large by farm standards is tiny by buyer standards. No farm can get big enough in any reasonable way to have the kind of power their buyer's going to have.

For example, in the dairy industry you're looking at three or four buyers having 60 to 70 percent of the cheese and fluid milk market. You go into beef and you have I think 80 percent of the market controlled by four processors. Farms just don't get that big. They just can't. That's why I'm saying a better strategy would be to focus on marketing, rather than production. In marketing you say act big or get out.

Farmers don't need to lose their

Big, see page 3...

independence to do that but they need to come together and act as one unit—at the moment they sell their product, not the rest of the time. You can farm however you want. Be as independent as you want. But if you're going to get all what your crop is worth, you're going to have to act big in the marketplace.

LSL: You believe one key tool for doing this is a law called Capper-Volstead.

Levins: Capper-Volstead is a magnificent law that I think the more farmers knew about it, the more they would be surprised that they have such potential market power. In 1922, Congress became concerned that farmers were going to lose their independence if they could not act in a way that was comparable to the size of the buyers. So they gave farmers basically an exemption from antitrust. It allowed farmers to act together in pricing their products, so long as they didn't gouge consumers.

That is a very powerful thing to have on your side. Congress wanted them to be able to stay independent and family-sized but at the same time it recognized that independent family size operations acting alone could not expect to receive all they should be getting for their product. It was a nice solution then, it's a nice solution now. It's one of those marketing tools that's kind of waiting to be tried.

LSL: You write that farmers may be concerned about losing independence though banding together, but you feel that in fact it's a way for them to retain independence.

Levins: Look what's happening to farmer independence today when farmers are not acting together. Look at the poultry industry. Look at the hog industry. Look at certain proposals in the grain industry. Look at the number of farmers that are not only independent but they aren't farmers anymore because they're forced out of business by low prices. Look at that trend and tell me that trend is fostering independence. Look at the direction of retailing and processing where they're telling their suppliers exactly what they want, when they want it, how they want it done, no negotiation. Tell me how that contributes to independence? The only way to be fully independent, to have some say in calling the shots, some say in what you're going to get for your product, is to be strong. And in my view the only way to be strong is

to act together.

LSL: One of the examples you outline in your book is OFARM [Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing]. It's an interesting example of not investing in bricks and mortar and not allowing themselves to get pitted against each other by processors.

Levins: OFARM is a very good example of Capper-Volstead in action. I think most of the organic farmers got into this thing so they could get away from these big buyers. Well as things went on, the buyers got bigger and bigger, to the point where they could play whole cooperatives off of each other. So in OFARM the market leaders for each of the co-ops talk to each other about prices before anything is sold. And that prevents what's called a reverse auction—where

• • •
“You can farm however you want. Be as independent as you want. But...you're going to have to act big in the marketplace.”
• • •

the buyer goes around to the co-ops one after another and says they'll give me this, will you give me that, and by the time they get back to the first one, there's \$2 or \$3 gone.

And that's just money straight out of the farmer's pocket and straight into the shareholders of the buyer's pocket. I had a great opportunity to compare side-by-side pricing of organized and unorganized farmers. It turned out that the premiums that the organized OFARM farmers were getting were in the range of 10 to 40 percent higher than those who were outside of this network. That's just pure marketing. That's 10 to 40 percent laying there waiting to be taken by organizing.

Those farmers are every bit as independent as they were before; they can sell it cheaper if they want to, but so far I'm having a hard time finding farmers who think lower prices are better than

higher prices. Most of them take the higher price, and I would too.

LSL: If farmers ever achieve true market power on a wide-scale basis, how would that affect consumers?

Levins: I don't think consumers would see much difference. And there's two reasons for that. One is a provision of the Capper-Volstead Act. The Capper-Volstead Act specifically prohibits price gouging and if that was going on, between the processors, the retailers and consumer groups that would become a point of controversy right away.

But the other thing that's going on is more and more research is showing that the farm price and the consumer price are not related the way they used to be. When the farm price goes down, the consumer price stays right where it was before and shareholders soak up the difference. Which of course is what you can do when you have market power.

For consumers what they're seeing happen in the retail store might have more to do with the retailers and the processors than it does with the farmers. The farmer's share is getting smaller by the day, so it can move around a little bit, plus you've got all that slack in the middle of processor and retailer profits. It's not as clean as it used to be. This is not farmers selling direct to consumers with nobody in the middle. There's a lot of powerful people in the middle.

I'm thinking consumers and the country as a whole would actually benefit by having a stable, independent, reasonably-sized farm economy that was able to do what it has always done, which is produce quality food and keep everybody fed. □

To obtain a copy of *Market Power for Farmers: What It Is, How to Get It, How to Use It*, contact the Institute for Rural America at 1-800-858-6636. For information on how to hear a podcast featuring an interview with Levins (Ear to the Ground No. 14), see page 31.



What's on your mind?

Got an opinion? Comments? Criticisms? 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.

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Dave Serfling: 1959-2006

The family farming and sustainable agriculture community experienced a great loss on Sunday, Jan. 8, when Preston, Minn., farmer Dave Serfling was killed in an automobile accident. He was 46. Dave is survived by his wife Diane, daughter Hannah and son Ethan.

"Dave had his priorities straight," says Mark Schultz, a friend of the Serflings and Policy Program Director for the Land Stewardship Project. "He loved his family, he cared for his farm, and he worked for the betterment of his community and society. He lived his faith. He will be sorely missed."

"Dave practiced every single thing he spoke for," says Austin, Minn., farmer Dwight Ault, who served with Serfling on LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee.

During his short life, Dave Serfling had an extraordinarily huge impact on family farming and sustainable agriculture. In 1987, he and his wife Diane were one of the original farm families to be involved in LSP's Stewardship Farming Program, an on-farm research and information exchange initiative that was the precursor to the current Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. The Serflings continued to be involved in on-farm research and education during the past two decades.

Dave also increasingly took on a leadership role, and frequently spoke and wrote about the need for farm policy that was fair and promoted systems that supported families, a healthy environment and vibrant communities. He was a founding board member for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA).

In 1998, he was one of the original signers of a national petition to end the mandatory pork checkoff. The next year, as a key member of LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee, Dave put his analyti-

cal skills to work in developing the template for a revolutionary farm program that would reward farmers for producing positive environmental benefits on the land. After he and other farmers presented the idea to members of Congress during a trip to Washington, D.C., the idea took shape as the Conservation Security Program, which is part of the 2002 Farm Bill. While working on federal farm policy, Dave testified before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee and visited Washington numerous times to make the case for policy reforms.

Throughout the years, Dave had written extensively for various publications, including the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and *Agri News*. His writings and talks combined Dave's razor sharp

"Outstanding Conservationist" award in Area Seven by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. That same year, their farm was recognized by Niman Ranch as a top producer of high quality pork. In December 2005, Dave received a master's degree in agriculture from Iowa State University after taking classes for nearly two decades. At the time of his death, he was working on new ideas for the 2007 Farm Bill—a new farm initiative for conservation, commodity program reform, and rural development based on local food and farming systems.

Serfling's work on federal farm policy prompted U.S. Senator Mark Dayton of Minnesota to read a statement on the farmer into the Feb. 10 Congressional

Record. "Dave Serfling's absence from farming, farm policy, and Minnesota will be felt for a long time to come," said Dayton in his statement.

"He desired to serve," said Randy Grabau, a neighbor of the Serflings who spoke at Dave's funeral service. "He didn't just serve by helping. He served by leading, and on Sunday Dave finished his race and joined the crowd. Now he's looking down, cheering us all on. May Dave's life

motivate us to participate in the race. And may Dave's death motivate us to finish strong—because we never know when it's finished." □

See page 5 for one of Dave Serfling's commentaries. To read a sampling of his other writings, as well as to listen to an audio tribute, see www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/06/newsr_060109.htm.



Dave Serfling was recently recognized by Niman Ranch for the top quality natural pork his family produced on their Fillmore County farm. (photo by Marlene Halverson/Animal Welfare Institute)

analytical abilities with his own family's experiences as stewards of their Fillmore County farm. The Serfling farm had also been featured in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Des Moines Register*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and on National Public Radio.

In recent years, the Serfling farm had been recognized for its innovative use of production systems that protected the environment and raised animals humanely while making a profit. In 2005, Dave and Diane were selected for the

Why I continue farming (and why you should care)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dave Serfling wrote and spoke extensively on policy, sustainable farming methods and why working and living on the land was important to him. Serfling originally wrote this commentary for the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* newspaper prior to Thanksgiving 1999. We later reprinted it in the December 1999 issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter*.

By Dave Serfling

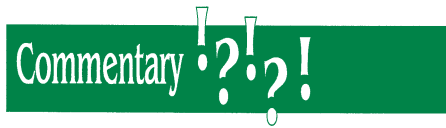
I feel very blessed that I can continue to live my dream and be a full-time family farmer. I have known many people who had to give up their dream or perhaps only farm on the weekends and in the dark while holding down a job in town. The decision to quit farming is the most gut-wrenching change a farmer can go through, especially when it is a multi-generational family farm.

On the average over the past five years, our farm has been able to produce a gross revenue of \$150,000, with a net profit of \$30,000. We're not setting the world on fire, but it's enough to live on and have a decent quality of life. With the help of low overhead and my wife, Diane's, part-time job, we have been able to provide for our two children, Hannah and Ethan.

We make our living by raising cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens. All of the crops—corn, oats, hay and pasture—that we raise on our 350 acres are fed to our animals. This diversity is key to our needs and goals. We feel that a diverse system that blends livestock and crops helps us stay economically and environmentally healthy. Being small and diverse gives us the kind of flexibility larger, more specialized farms can't attain. When beef prices are down, for example, perhaps one of our other enterprises will help get us through. The manure produced by our animals is used on the land that grows their feed, creating the ultimate form of recycling.

But I don't raise livestock just for economic and agronomic reasons. Working with animals has always been one of my loves. I get an adrenaline rush when I play doctor and help a cow deliver a calf successfully. It is a race against life or death. It tears me up when I lose and gets me very excited when I win.

Don't get me wrong: everything isn't rosy in agriculture. Farming for me is the most mentally and physically challenging vocation that I know. Trying to find profit in today's agriculture is extremely difficult, but it helps that we incorporate our values into our economic decisions. I get pretty excited (just ask Diane) when I find a practice that gives me profit and also is good for the environment, my family and society. All the while I have to keep in mind that I have no boss—it is up to me to get the most critical things done first and to keep my schedule intact and have time for my family and the



causes that I believe in. It is a true juggling act.

One of the acts we juggle is to purposely keep some jobs labor intensive. We're not sadists, but this has allowed us to keep our overhead low and teaches my kids not only how to work, but how to sweat. We push ourselves so hard sometimes that we fill our caps with cold water and empty them on our heads. It feels so refreshing after a hot summer afternoon of making hay. We work hard, play hard, eat well, and sleep deep on this farm. Our kids are learning a sense of accomplishment for a job well done.

Nine out of 10 days I enjoy having an outdoors job. To see the seasons change, the lambs playing tag, the cattle contentedly grazing and the pigs rooting in the straw are all visual pleasures that I have daily on the farm. My favorite landscape is a sea of deep green corn just before it tassels contrasted with fields of golden oats ready for harvest. It only lasts a few days but it is very pretty.

As you can probably tell, I love farming. But I have seen agriculture changing. When I was growing up, the small family farm was the foundation of agriculture. The land was cared for by owner-operators. The schools and churches in our rural communities were full. Our social fabric in our rural area was supported by middle class family farmers. But now farming has split into three main sectors. There are still independent, multi-generational family

farmers like myself, but there is also a fast growing segment of part-timers.

The third segment is mega-farms, where the owner simply manages many employees to do the work. These employees get paid whether or not the land is eroding, the water is polluted, or the neighbors don't like the smell. But they are not being paid well enough to support the small town Main Street businesses.

I am a big supporter of an agriculture that is characterized by caring, independent, small family farms. I believe in my heart that it is possible. I said earlier that it is a gut-wrenching experience for a farmer to quit. But I also believe all of society loses when a family leaves the land. The urban and suburban people I talk to say they like the kind of farming that relies on independent owner-operators like myself. They tell me that's the kind of agriculture they want producing their food and caring for the land across Minnesota. This isn't a pipe dream: there are many other families like mine out on the land producing food and feeling positive about their future.

But we face many difficult barriers. For example, I've crunched the numbers and I know I can produce quality hogs just as efficiently as the big guys. But all that means nothing if I don't have a market for those animals. It's very frustrating to see packers pay more for hogs raised on mega-sized factory farms based on volume, not superior quality.

We need public policies that target the type of farm that society says it wants and needs: family owned and operated, as well as economically and biologically diverse. We need to keep markets open for family farms. Believe it or not, there are many young farmers just champing at the bit to get established on the land. We need low-cost, viable ways of getting them started. We need organizations like the Land Stewardship Project, which is bringing farmers like myself together with non-farmers to work toward making family-sized operations the foundation of our food system.

The corporate takeover of American farming is not a given. If we can come together and make a commitment to having more small family farmers on the land, we can achieve such a goal. That's what democracy and freedom of choice is all about: not being chained to the wall of inevitability. □

Myth Buster Box

An ongoing series on ag myths & ways of deflating them

→ **Myth:** As long as erosion is kept in check, soil health and fertility can be maintained indefinitely with the help of petroleum-based fertilizers.

→ **Fact:** Excessive use of commercial fertilizers such as urea nitrogen is aging our soil well beyond its natural life-cycle. In fact, the application of agricultural inputs over a three-decade period has aged soil at one research plot the equivalent of 5,000 years. When one considers that the soil in that particular plot is only 10,000 years old to begin with, that's alarming, say the University of Wisconsin scientists involved with the ongoing study.

The plot being studied has been planted to soybeans, tobacco and corn, and it's been exposed to normal amounts of fertilizer. What the scientists have found is that when a crop does not completely use up the nitrogen that's added to the field, the excess nitrogen becomes nitric acid. That acid destroys the soil's "cation exchange capacity"—its ability to hold onto small bits of calcium, magnesium and potassium. These elements are critical to plant growth and soil health, and must be replaced by purchasing more commercial fertilizers. One estimate is that nationwide only about half of all applied nitrogen is actually taken up by plants, leaving the other half to take a youth-stealing acid trip.

All this wayward nitrogen can turn soil geriatric in a hurry, as the Wisconsin study shows. Many military veterans have witnessed a more extreme example of how nitrogen can age soils—as far back as World War II, anhy-

drous ammonia fertilizer has been used to harden soil for makeshift airstrips.

If this trend continues, the rich soils of the Upper Midwest could become like the sandy, less productive soils of the southeastern United States.

"The change is irreversible," says Phillip Barak, a University of Wisconsin associate professor of soil chemistry and plant nutrition. As Jared Diamond documents in his book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, the world is full of examples of

once great civilizations that failed because their soils were simply worn out. In some cases, natural weather catastrophes such as extended droughts accelerated the process. But extractive farming systems that don't allow soil to rebuild itself naturally can be major factors as well. Diamond argues that it is not inevitable for a civilization to fail as a result of environmental degradation. People, particularly in modern times, have a choice when it comes to their ecological future.

In the short term, farmers can keep their soils young by testing fertility frequently and using only as much nitrogen as the plants can take up efficiently (manure and legumes such as alfalfa hay can also be a source of the fertilizer). Applications of agricultural lime, a kind of TUMS for the soil that raises pH levels, can also neutralize acidification.

In the longer term, farming systems that don't rely on heavy, intense doses of nitrogen fertilizer are the answer. Raising corn in the same field year-after-year, for example, requires massive amounts of nitrogen to maintain yields. In other words, it's a recipe for agronomic heartburn. Research (see page 7) is also showing that rotating livestock through fields can help improve a field's nutrient uptake.

→ More information:

To learn more about the University of Wisconsin study of soil acidification, see www.soils.wisc.edu/~barak/.



Soil erosion, like what was occurring in this Iowa soybean stubble in early April, poses a serious (and visible) threat to long-term productivity. But research shows that even soil that's not suffering from severe erosion may be "aging" at a rate that's unsustainable. (LSP photo)



Ganging up for soil stewardship

A single dairy cow can produce 16 gallons of urine and manure every day. That's a lot of potential for air and water pollution. But as one USDA study has found, it can also be an invaluable source of soil-improving nutrients. What scientists in Wisconsin and Minnesota have found is that the traditional method of collecting manure and hauling it out to the field is extremely inefficient. Besides the energy needed for such a system, much of the manure's nutrient value is lost between the barn and the field.

What works better is to move the cattle outside and corral them for short periods of time over plots of land, found the scientists. The plants' nitrogen uptake (nitrogen is a key crop nutrient) went up 35 percent to 50 percent in plots where heifers were corralled when compared to plots where manure was spread. This isn't a new idea: one of the scientists involved in the research project observed a similar system of improving soil in West Africa. Farmers there were able to increase sorghum and millet yields by twofold with the method.

The reason the system works is that all that nitrogen present in the manure and urine gets worked into the soil immediately via the cattle's hoof action. This method also makes another key plant nutrient, phosphorus, more available to plants. Urine has a relatively high pH, and it can help make soil less acidic through direct application. Less acid helps "unlock" the phosphorus present in the soil, making it more usable by plants.

Lowering acidity could go a long way toward reducing premature aging of soil, a condition that has some soil scientists quite concerned (see page 6). Another benefit to this system is that runoff and air emissions are reduced. And then there's the cost savings: this spring high energy prices again fueled high fertilizer and fuel costs for farmers. Utilizing livestock to provide those nutrients directly not only reduces input purchases, but also cuts down on the fuel and equipment expenses involved with hauling manure.

Mark Powell, one of the scientists studying this corraling method, points out that this system is best suited for small- and medium-sized dairies. Mega-dairies are too invested in large-scale

liquid manure management systems. Corraling would also seem to be a natural fit for farms using managed rotational grazing, where animals are moved from paddock to paddock frequently, often on a daily basis.

More on this research is available at www.nps.ars.usda.gov (click on studies #206 and #207). □

Big farms, big checks

More crop subsidies are going to bigger farmers. Half of all federal crop subsidies in 2003 went to farms with household incomes of more than \$75,772, up from \$55,607 in 1997 and \$47,121 in 1991, after adjusting for inflation, according to a recent USDA study. For details, see www.ewg.org/news/story.php?print_version=1&id=5206. □

Generation gap

The majority of farmers in Iowa have not identified someone to take over their operations when they retire, according to the Iowa Farm and Rural Life Poll (www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/publications.html).

Of the 1,298 farmers who responded to the random statewide mail survey, 66 percent said they had not picked a potential successor. When asked what would happen to their operation upon retirement, 30 percent said that one of their children would inherit it, and 26 percent said they would rent it to a tenant.

The average age of U.S. farmers is 55.3, according to the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture. The average age of the principal operator has increased about 1 percent to 1.5 percent in each Agriculture Census since 1982. The average farmer has been on his or her operation almost 21 years. □

Who's behind your food?

Who handles your food before it gets to your mouth? A growing percentage of workers in agriculture are migrants, mostly from Mexico and other Central American countries. Those people do backbreaking work in fruit and vegetable plots, toil in nightmare conditions in meat packing plants and increasingly are the faces behind the counter at fast food restaurants. There are a lot of misconceptions about the nature of the migrant workforce in this country. In an effort to set the record straight, the organization Centro Campesino in Owatonna, Minn., has developed this quiz. See how you do answering the questions. Watch future issues of the *Land Stewardship Letter* for more on the migrant worker issue.

- 1) The average yearly wage of migrant agricultural workers in the U.S. is _____.
- 2) The U.S. national average life-span in 1970 was 70 years of age. By 1996 it had increased to 75 years. In 1970, the average age of farm workers was 49. In 1996 it was _____.
- 3) What percentage of agricultural workers uses public assistance? _____
- 4) Which of the following are true about U.S. law as it pertains to agricultural workers?
 - Employers can fire field workers for collective bargaining.
 - Children aged 12 can work as agricultural laborers.
 - It exempts farm workers from the right to a minimum wage.
 - It admits foreign workers into the U.S. to do agricultural work each year.
- 5) In Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa, what percentage of the workforce is comprised of undocumented immigrants? _____

ANSWERS: 1) \$7,500 2) 49 3) 15 percent 4) All of the above 5) 1.9 to 3.3 percent

Sources: Centro Campesino; National Agricultural Workers Survey of the U.S. Department of Labor; Pew Hispanic Center, Center for Immigration Studies



Johnson & Johnson serve internships

Gina Johnson has been serving an internship with the Land Stewardship Project's White Bear Lake office. She coordinated planning for the 2006 Community Food and Farm Festival and developed profiles for the 2005 Dine Fresh Dine Local event. Johnson also helped create an educational packet for the film, *Voices of Minnesota Farm Women*. She also led group discussions of the film.

Johnson has a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education from Winona State



Gina Johnson

University, and a master's degree in recreation, park and leisure studies from the University of Minnesota. Johnson, who lives in Saint Paul, Minn., has worked as a naturalist, teacher and nonprofit coordinator.

During her recent LSP internship, **Marilyn Johnson** coordinated development of the 2006 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Directory. She also worked on the 2006 Stewardship Food Network listing.

Johnson, of Minneapolis, Minn., is currently pursuing a master's degree in soil science at the University of Minnesota. Her LSP internship was part of her degree requirements for a minor in sustainable agriculture.

Johnson has worked as a researcher, teacher and computer programmer. □



Marilyn Johnson

Capitol breakfast



Land Stewardship Project members got together with Minnesota Legislators over locally produced food during a special LSP Family Farm Breakfast April 19. More than 10 farms supplied meats, eggs, dairy products and baked goods for the meal, which was held at the Christ Lutheran Church across from the Capitol building. LSP member-chef Brad Beal prepared the food, which was served by several volunteers. During the breakfast, Rep. Greg Davids and Sen. Jim Vickerman, chairs of the House and Senate Agriculture Policy Committees respectively, spoke about legislative proposals related to family farming and sustainable agriculture that LSP is working to get passed. Rep. Davids said he is supporting measures such as a tax credit for pasture development in part because of a recent tour he took of the grass-based dairy farm of Vance and Bonnie Haugen, LSP members who live near Preston in southeast Minnesota. "I like how Bonnie and Vance do it," Davids told the crowd of LSP members and legislators. "That made me want to go back to the Capitol and support things that help their style of farming." See page 12 for an update on the legislative session. (LSP photo)

Sister Kathleen Mary Kiemen joins LSP board

Sister Kathleen Mary Kiemen has joined the Land Stewardship Project's Board of Directors.

Affiliated with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Kiemen has a long history of social justice work and has worked with rural life issues in the New Ulm, Minn., diocese.

She is currently based in Saint Paul, Minn., and is coordinator of the Center for Earth Spiritual-



Sister Kathleen Mary Kiemen

ity and Rural Ministry (www.ssndmankato.org/pg_community.htm).

She coordinates the Center's work in Mankato, Minn., and on EarthRise Farm, the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation of Kay and Annette Fernholz.

Sister Kiemen replaces **Sister Mary Tacheny** of Jordan, Minn., who recently stepped down after serving 10 years on the LSP Board. □

Farm Beginnings™ accepting applications

The Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings™ program is now accepting applications for its 2006-2007 session. There will be two class groups: one will meet near the southeast Minnesota community of Winona, and another will convene near Hutchinson, which is west of the Twin Cities. For more information on the Minnesota Farm Beginnings program, go to www.farmbeginnings.org. In southeast Minnesota, you can contact Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org. In western Minnesota, contact Amy Bacigalupo at 320-269-2105 or amyb@landstewardshipproject.org.

Farm Beginnings has expanded to Missouri, Illinois and Nebraska. To contact those programs, contact:

◆ **Missouri:** Randy Saner, 417-256-2391 (SanerR@umsystem.edu); Debi Kelly at 800-433-3704 or 573-882-1905, (kellyd@umsystem.edu); Jim Thompson at 417-532-7126, (ThompsonJO@umsystem.edu).

◆ **Nebraska:** Martin Kleinschmit, 402-254-6893 or martink@cfra.org.

◆ **Central Illinois:** Leslie Cooperband at 217-244-2743 (lcooperb@ad.uiuc.edu); Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at 217-968-5512 (cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu); Terra Brockman at 309-965-2407 (tlcterra@jasmith.net); www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu/index.html.

◆ **Illinois Stateline:** Parker Forsell at 608-498-0268 or CRAFT@csalearningcenter.org; www.csalearningcenter.org.

Sample a class with a podcast

The Land Stewardship Project's *Ear to the Ground* podcast is periodically featuring excerpts from Farm Beginnings classes. See page 31 for details on how to listen to these programs.

Farm Beginnings profiles

LSP has developed an ongoing series of profiles on Farm Beginnings graduates. See page 11 for our latest installment. □

Hunger, farming & policy



Land Stewardship Project member Vicki Poier recently talked about her experience with an LSP fly-in to Washington, D.C., last fall. She and other LSP members traveled to D.C. to discuss with members of Congress the impacts of federal farm policy on conservation, nutrition programs and family farmers. Oxfam America helped organize the fly-in. Poier was speaking at an LSP member meeting in the western Minnesota community of Montevideo. (photo by Laura Borgendale)

Get grounded 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 lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org, and put in the subject line "Subscribe LIVE-WIRE." □

Local food systems



More than 100 farmers, processors, wholesale buyers and citizens interested in creating a southeast Minnesota food system met March 10 in Winona. Speakers addressed such issues as the negative impact of buying food from outside the region, innovative policies that encourage organic farmers and county purchasing from area farmers, and how to get local produce into schools. The Land Stewardship Project and Winona County Development Economic Authority helped put on the event. For more on LSP's work in southeast Minnesota to promote local food systems, contact our Lewiston office by calling 507-523-3366 or e-mailing lpse@landstewardshipproject.org. (photo by Caroline van Schaik)

Food labeling

Will the USDA pass on grass?

By Joe Riemann

Last fall, the *Land Stewardship Letter* reported that the USDA would be releasing grass-fed standards for public comment sometime in October. Over six months later, the USDA still hasn't released the revised standards.

It almost seems like the idea of USDA standards for "free-range," "antibiotic free" and "grass-fed" may be out to pasture.

"We are continuing to work on the grass-fed standard and plan to publish—for public comment—a proposed marketing claim standard once it is developed," wrote William Sessions, Associate Deputy Administrator of the USDA Livestock and Seed Program, in a recent e-mail to the *Land Stewardship Letter*.

"There really hasn't been any pressure on the USDA to get the standards out," says Ann Wright, formerly the Senior Policy Associate for the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. "We need members of Congress talking about the importance of this label."

As the USDA has seemingly placed this entire issue on the back burner, consumer interest in grass-fed beef is on the rise.

"Grass-fed beef sales rose by 30 percent between 2003 and 2004 alone. That's higher than the rise in organic sales, which has an annual growth rate of 20 percent, and I can only assume that's similar throughout the entire country," says Barth Anderson, Research and Development Coordinator for the Wedge Community Co-op in Minneapolis.

The popularity in grass-fed beef has largely been attributed to a growing concern for healthy eating. Adding to this new development, The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has recently published *Greener Pastures*, a report on the differences between grass-fed and conventional meat and dairy products.

"... grass-fed beef is often leaner than the beef found on most supermarket shelves," concludes the UCS report. "In addition, beef and milk from animals raised entirely on pasture have higher levels than conventionally raised beef and dairy cattle of beneficial fats that may prevent heart disease and strengthen the immune system."

While these "recent" findings may not

surprise too many members of the sustainable agriculture community, the benefits of consuming grass-fed meat and dairy have been getting increased attention in major publications across the country. If the rise in organics is any indication, more consumers will be chewing on this healthy information as they scan the meat case.

With the growing popularity of grass-fed products, some are wondering if another USDA label is something the sustainable ag community really needs.

"I don't know if we would get USDA verified," says Todd Lein, sales and marketing director for Thousand Hills Cattle Company, which was recently certified by Food Alliance Midwest (see

page 14). "We've done a lot of work to establish our brand. We've built a strong relationship with our customers and feel they have our trust."

While people have found trustworthy ranchers out there, every new grass-fed claim brings a new set of trust issues with it. Without a strict set of regulations for grass-fed, there is no way to assure that customers are actually getting what they pay for.

In the shadow of recent controversy over USDA organic production standards, it's probably more important than ever that concerned farmers, ranchers and consumers make sure integrity is preserved when the USDA releases the grass-fed standards for public comment. □

Joe Riemann is an LSP communications intern.

How we can get a good grass-fed label

By Terry VanDerPol

On April 5, Land Stewardship Project members Greg Koether and Dan Specht, along Sustainable Agriculture Coalition staff member Martha Noble, met in Washington, D.C., with USDA Associate Deputy Administrator William Sessions over the unreleased and delayed grass-fed labeling standard (see page 13 for more on this trip to D.C.).

In the fall of 2005, the USDA informed organizations and farmers invested in meat labeling claims that the grass-fed standard, the first standard out of four, was about to be released for public comment.

Yet unexpectedly and with no reason supplied, this label standard has yet to be released for public comment. Many farmers using grass-based production systems see this potential labeling option as a standard they can use when marketing grass-fed livestock.

During the April 5 meeting with LSP members, USDA officials indicated a timetable to release the grass-fed label for public comment in the next month, followed by a 90-day comment period.

When this grass-fed labeling standard is released for public comment, we need to be ready to launch a campaign that generates thousands of comments advocating for a standard that has integrity and truly means grass-fed. A watered-down grass-fed label is not acceptable.

Look for more on how to comment on

the grass-fed labeling standard in future newsletters, action alerts and mailings.

If you market grass-fed meat, consider how you can engage the people who buy your meat in the effort to establish a clean, 100 percent grass-fed labeling standard. Let us know whether you are a producer, consumer or retailer of grass-fed meat and share any ideas you may have about how we can generate comments on this important label standard.

For more information, contact me at tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org or 320-269-2105.

Terry VanDerPol is an LSP organizer and grass-fed beef producer in western Minnesota.

Comment on grass-fed

The 90-day comment period on the grass-fed label regulations will begin as soon as USDA releases the latest proposals.

Comments can be sent to:

William Sessions
Associate Deputy Administrator
Livestock and Seed Program
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
STOP 0249
Washington, DC 20250-0249
Phone: 202-720-5707
e-mail: william.sessions@usda.gov

Lyle Kruse

The energy of enterprises

In western Minnesota's Lac Qui Parle County, next to the South Dakota border, flat acre after flat acre is devoted to corn and soybeans. There's a lot of chemical-biological-financial energy associated with these crop farms. But in late fall, after the harvest is in, the human activity level around these operations is next to nil.

And then there's the Lyle and JoAnn Kruse farm.

It's November, and about 100 acres of the 200-acre farm is dormant for the winter; the corn, soybeans and small grains that were grown on those acres are harvested. But the other 100 acres is still providing feed to a 30-head herd of brood cows via rotational grazing. Lyle is busy in his diesel shop working on tractors for customers. On the other side of the farmstead, hogs are rooting around in the open, while the 70-head goat herd that's managed by the four Kruse children munches on hay. JoAnn, a Mary Kay Cosmetics Beauty Consultant, does the books for the farm and diesel shop.

"It's hard to find a farm that has any activity," says Lyle while standing in the midst of tractors in various stages of disassembly. "I like having activity on the farm."

And Kruse also likes having all this activity present in one place. He sees the farm as a collection of interrelated enterprises.

"You will always have one thing that won't quite work, so you rely on another enterprise to pull you through," he says.

Kruse learned about the importance of seeing a farm as a whole system consisting of connected enterprises while taking the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings™ course in 2001. The program provides participants an opportunity to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. Students take part in a course that teaches goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative farming techniques. Established farmers and other professionals present at the seminars and provide a strong foundation of resources and networks for those interested in

farming. During that winter, Lyle made the 30-minute drive to Montevideo to listen to established farmers talk about how they were making it on the land and to brainstorm with other beginning farmers about what enterprises can work



on a Minnesota farm.

Kruse, 40, already had extensive experience when he took the course. He grew up on the farm he currently lives on, and started farming when he was 15 on his grandfather's place. After graduating from high school in 1983, he trained as a diesel mechanic and worked for implement dealers. He even operated his own shop for a time before it burned down in 1990. One can make a decent living as a diesel mechanic in an area dominated by large, iron-centered

cropping operations, but farming kept calling to Kruse.

"You know, you're standing on somebody's combine on a service call and you wished you were running the combine," he says.

So in 1990, the Kruse family returned to the home farm and began raising crops and hogs conventionally. But a lot had changed since Lyle was younger. Chemicals seem to dominate more, and that bothered him, especially when he ended up in the hospital once after applying herbicide. Plus, the cash flow just wasn't there, especially after the hog market crash of the late 1990s.

"I was just seeing it wasn't working," recalls Lyle.

They began converting their acres to organic production while Lyle taught diesel mechanics at a local community college. But he soon realized that going the organic route required information and experience not easily attainable through the usual channels such as Extension or even neighboring farmers. Kruse says that's what prompted him to take the Farm Beginnings course.

"You get these farm magazines all the time that have all this advice for you, and they're all doing the same thing. Farm Beginnings really gets you to step out of

Fresh Faces, see page 12...



Lyle Kruse (LSP photo)

the box and look at things differently.”

Through Farm Beginnings, Kruse became convinced that having various enterprises on the farms was a good use of human and natural resources, plus a way to diversify cash flow. So, in 2002, after budget cuts got him laid off at the community college, Kruse erected the shop on the farm. Today he has a steady customer base from a 60-mile radius, and the “phone rings off the hook” every day. Kruse likes how mechanics can diversify his income, particularly during the winter months. He particularly likes having the shop on the farm, where his children, ages 2 to 16, can participate in the small business.

“They are my clean-up crew. My 5-year-old does sink duty,” Kruse says with a smile, looking around the immaculate building. “The kids are very involved in our farm. I guess I have the attitude this

is for them.”

As a Farm Beginnings graduate, he also qualified for a Heifer International no-interest loan that helped him get his beef herd started with 15 cows. Kruse rotationally grazes his growing herd to reduce erosion and extend his pasture season. He says it also helps him raise the animals without the use of hormones or antibiotics. Kruse admits he knew next to nothing about rotational grazing when he got started, and was a little vexed about the idea of breaking a big field up into several paddocks. But Kent Goplen, a neighbor who rotationally grazes beef cattle, has been an important mentor.

Currently, the Kruses’ pasture and hay ground is certified organic, and they are working on converting more acres in the future. Lyle is also transitioning more crop acres into grass and hay.

“Every time I’m out tilling I’m thinking it should be under grass, especially with \$3 diesel.”

That statement is influenced by another

lesson Kruse took away from Farm Beginnings: the importance of taking the time to monitor various enterprises and determine if all that sound and fury being created is producing forward motion, or just digging a deeper rut.

Says Kruse, “A lot of times you can be working your tail off and be so busy you don’t realize if you’re making money at that enterprise.” □

Fresh Faces- Fresh Farming

To read other profiles of graduates of the Land Stewardship Project’s Farm Beginnings™ program, see the Oct./Nov./Dec. 2004 issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter*, or log onto www.farmbeginnings.org/programs_farmbeginnings.html#profiles.

See page 9 for information on enrolling in Farm Beginnings.

Update We the People... Policy

Dairy investment credit, beginning farmer assistance advance in Minnesota Legislature

Dairy investment credit

The passage of a dairy investment tax credit by a key committee of the Minnesota House of Representatives sends a message of support to dairy farmers throughout the state, says Land Stewardship Project member Dan Miller. In March, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee passed the proposal, which would provide tax credits to dairy farmers that make improvements to their operations. The bill (House File 2879 and Senate File 3131) provides a 10 percent tax credit on up to \$500,000 of improvement expenses. The maximum \$50,000 credit can be used over a period of 15 years.

During the committee hearing, Miller testified in favor of including pasture development and on-farm processing in the tax credit proposal. Miller, along with his wife Cara, farms 600 acres of pasture, hay, corn and soybeans near Spring Valley, Minn.

Miller told the Committee that as a Farm Business Management Instructor and former University Extension educator, he has worked on finances and business planning with hundreds of dairy

farmers and seen firsthand how grazing can lower production costs. Through his work with farmers, Miller has also seen how on-farm processing of milk can improve profitability.

After Miller’s testimony, an amendment was added to make expenditures for on-farm processing and pasture development eligible for the tax credit.

Help for beginning farmers

A legislative proposal to provide tax credits to Minnesota landowners who help beginning farmers could be an important tool for getting more people on the land, says Dan French, a Dodge County dairy farmer and LSP member. In March, French testified in favor of the proposal in front of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee as well as the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee. Both committees passed the proposal, which is House File 3843 and Senate File 3437.

The bills provide a landowner who sells land to a beginning farmer a tax credit equal to 5 percent of the sale price. A landowner who cash rents land to a beginning farmer receives a state tax

credit equal to 10 percent of the gross rental income. In a share rental agreement, the landowner would get 15 percent of the cash equivalent of the gross rental income. In addition, beginning farmers enrolled in the program are eligible for a state tax credit of \$500, which can be applied to the cost of participating in the Minnesota Farm Business Management program, or an approved equivalent. Nebraska has a similar program.

French has helped three farmers get started, and has served during the past decade as a mentor and instructor for LSP’s Farm Beginnings™ course.

He told the legislators that renting and purchasing affordable land is a major barrier to getting started in farming. “Any tool that will help them when they go to talk to a landowner is very helpful to getting them started,” French said. □

The 2006 Minnesota Legislature is scheduled to adjourn in late May. At this writing, both the dairy investment tax credit and the beginning farmer assistance proposal were still alive. In addition, attempts on the part of pro-factory farm promoters to weaken local township control were dead for the moment. For the latest updates, check the LIVE-WIRE electronic newsletter, or see www.landstewardshipproject.org.

For information on helping promote positive legislation, call LSP’s Bobby King at 612-722-6377.

LSP airs spots on the importance of local democracy

The importance Minnesotans place on local democracy was featured in a special radio spot created by the Land Stewardship Project. The spots are in part a response to a series of television commercials being run on Twin Cities station WCCO that inaccurately suggest local governments are an impediment to livestock farming in Minnesota. LSP's radio spots ran for two weeks in April on 77 radio stations throughout Minnesota.

The spot features Janet Hallaway, a retired farmer from Ripley Township in southeast Minnesota's Dodge County. Ripley Township has used planning and zoning to guide growth in a way that protects the environment, community and family farms.

"I was concerned when an outside investor proposed a factory farm in my community," said Hallaway in the radio spot. "My neighbors and I knew this project would harm family farmers, the environment, property values—our way of life. Our township supervisors listened to the people and took action to protect us."

Ripley Township enacted planning and zoning ordinances that include a limit of 1,500 animal units for feedlots. Fifteen hundred animal units is equivalent to about 1,070 dairy cows. The average sized dairy farm in Minnesota is less than 100 cows or 140 animal units. Despite such a generous size limit, supporters of a proposed 3,000 animal-unit mega-dairy have fought the township's planning and zoning ordinances.

The Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council is a major funder of the WCCO television advertising campaign. According to documents obtained by the Land Stewardship Project through a Freedom of Information Act request, \$175,000 in soybean checkoff funds is being

Hear the ad

To listen to LSP's radio spot on local democracy, visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/pr/06/newsr_060411.htm.

spent on the advertisements. The soybean checkoff is a mandatory fee paid by every soybean farmer in the country on each bushel of soybeans sold. The checkoff is supposed to promote research and provide information that benefits soybean farmers.

The television ads direct viewers to the website of the Minnesota Farm and Food Coalition—a group spearheaded by the

Agri-Growth Council. The Agri-Growth Council is the lobbying arm of some of the largest corporate agricultural interests in the state, and has been critical of the rights of local governments, particularly townships, to put limits on large-scale livestock operations.

Hallaway is disappointed that soybean checkoff funds are being spent on advertising that undermines local democracy.

"My husband and I paid into the soybean checkoff for years," she says. "Those dollars are supposed to go towards helping farmers, not to undermine township government." □

Taking a stewardship message to D.C.



The Land Stewardship Project and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition worked together in early April on a fly-in to Washington, D.C. Fly-in participants included LSP members who are beginning farmers and mentors, farmers who have signed up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), organic producers, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) growers and others from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. The 13 participants met with more than 30 Congressional offices and national organizations, as well as with Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns.

Participants focused on three priorities for Farm Bill reforms in the meetings: a) further develop and expand CSP as a major part of the conservation title with strong environmental integrity and availability to many more farmers; b) enact the New Farm Initiative to help beginning farmers and ranchers and minority and new immigrant farmers, including the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and a set of credit initiatives; c) enact policy options to optimize the development of local and regional food systems, such as an expanded Farmers' Market Promotion Program and improving the Value-Added Producer Grant Program. They also talked to USDA officials about the delays related to release of a grass-fed label (see page 10).

Pictured here are (left to right): Dennis Johnson, Matt Urch, Brad Hodgson, Dan Specht, Kathy Koether, Adam Warthesen, Kayla Koether, Paul Sobocinski, Mike Johanns, Jon Peterson, Mike Natvig, Leslea Hodgson and Greg Koether. Not pictured: Patty Wright.

For more information on LSP's proposals for the 2007 Farm Bill, contact Adam Warthesen at 612-722-6377 or adamw@landstewardshipproject.org.

Food Alliance Midwest recognizes 'Keepers of the Vision' for 2006

A family swine farm, a beef company and a food service firm have all been awarded "Keeper of the Vision for a Sustainable Future 2006" by Food Alliance Midwest. Food Alliance, one of the nation's fastest growing sustainable food certification programs, announced the awards during its annual meeting in February in the Twin Cities.

Pastures A' Plenty

Food Alliance recognized the VanDerPol family for their commitment to producing healthy livestock products in a manner that protects the environment and is good for the community.

"The VanDerPols have long been recognized as pioneers in sustainable swine production," said Jim Ennis,

Director of Food Alliance Midwest. "And now they are using third-party certification to get rewarded in the marketplace for the extra care they take on the farm."

"We feel sustainability is something you can do over and over again without damage to the environment and to the community," said Jim VanDerPol upon accepting the award.

Jim farms with his wife LeeAnn, along with their son Josh and his wife Cindy near the western Minnesota community of Kerkhoven. Their "Pastures A' Plenty" farm (www.prairiefare.com/pastureshp.htm) produces hogs without antibiotics or hormones utilizing natural production methods such as pasture farrowing and deep-straw bedding. The pork is marketed to natural food cooperatives, restaurants, institutions and directly to consumers.

Pastures A' Plenty pork has been Food Alliance certified since 2000.

Thousand Hills Cattle Company

"Thousand Hills is an example of what happens when livestock producers respond to the needs of consumers who want healthy

meat produced in an environmentally sound manner," said Ennis.

Thousand Hills' cattle are pasture raised by 15 family farms in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota and Nebraska. Thousand Hills (www.thousandhillscattleco.com), which is based in the southeast Minnesota community of Cannon Calls, requires that their producers raise and finish cattle on grass and refrain from utilizing synthetic insecticides or herbicides. The beef is marketed through various retail outlets, restaurants and via institutional accounts.

Thousand Hills beef has been Food Alliance certified since 2005.

"Efficiency and profitability are not the only way to gauge success," said Thousand Hills owner Todd Churchill upon accepting the award. "We care about the land and the livestock. And we care passionately about supplying healthy beef of the highest quality to our neighbors."



Todd Churchill of Thousand Hills Cattle Company.



Jim Ennis (left) presenting Jim and LeeAnn VanDerPol with their "Keeper of the Vision" award. (LSP photo)

Keeper, see page 15...

Food Alliance Midwest

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

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

the Food Alliance, which is based in Portland, Ore.

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 more information about Food Alliance and its certification program, visit www.foodalliance.org/midwest/partners_mw.htm, or call 651-265-3682.



Focus groups: A 'good deal' means fresh, local

SYSCO Minnesota

SYSCO is the largest food service marketing and distribution organization in North America. In 2004, Jeff Larson and Bryce Backstrom of SYSCO Minnesota developed "SYSCO Farmers Market," a partnership with farmers, processors and manufacturers in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.



Jeff Larson of SYSCO Minnesota.

Through this partnership, SYSCO Minnesota (www.syscomn.com) is making locally and sustainably produced food available to restaurants, colleges, hospitals and corporate campuses.

Since 2004, SYSCO Minnesota has collaborated with Food Alliance Midwest on its Farmers Market initiative.

"SYSCO Minnesota's work in getting sustainably-produced food to its customers is a model of how food service providers can support farmers while meeting the needs of increasingly savvy diners," said Ennis.

"We try to educate customers about the importance of sustainable agriculture and what you get for that," said Larson, who is SYSCO Minnesota's Vice President for Marketing and Merchandising. □

Food Alliance at State Fair Aug. 29

The 2006 Food Alliance Midwest "Minnesota Cooks" event will be held at the Minnesota State Fair Tuesday, Aug. 29. This annual event brings farmers, consumers and chefs together over great food. Check www.landstewardshipproject.org for details later this summer. □

Consumers are willing to pay more for food as long as they know they are getting "a good deal" for their money, according to focus groups conducted last fall for Food Alliance Midwest.

Part of getting a "good deal" is making certain that the food is of high quality, says Rob King, the University of Minnesota economist who coordinated the focus groups in Minnesota, Rhode Island and Oregon.

"Quality matters," Rob said during a presentation at the Food Alliance Midwest's fifth annual meeting in February.

The focus groups are being conducted as part of a larger national study on the effects of ecolabels on consumer purchases of produce. The focus groups were asked what their major criteria were for buying food, and their preferences for how their food is produced. King cautioned that a lot of "group think" can go on in focus groups, but they can provide some insights into what consumers consider when out shopping.

For example, health and nutrition is a

key consideration when making food purchases, said focus group participants. They also talked a lot about where the food was produced and how it was packaged, said King.

A short ingredient list equals healthy, according to focus group participants.

However, health, nutrition and production methods don't trump the biggest consumer factor out there: price. King said the consumers recognized that in order to get higher quality food that's produced with sustainable methods, they will have to pay more. However, there is a limit to how much they will pay, and they were very concerned about making sure they were getting their money's worth.

"I'll pay more if I get a good deal for what I'm buying," King said, quoting one typical response from a focus group participant. "Price is an overriding consideration for many people...the key is to provide value."

One surprising finding was that consumers don't always need to know exactly who produced their food. Often trusting the retailer who is selling them the food is enough.

"They said when they trust the retailer, they trust the messages that are there," said King, adding that this is particularly true when a label has a website that allows consumers to check out how the food was produced.

King said the trust consumers have in food stores and restaurants points to the importance of creating networks of farmers, retailers and third-party certifiers such as Food Alliance Midwest. □



More than 85 farmers, market partners and sustainable agriculture allies participated in the Food Alliance Midwest's annual meeting Feb. 8. (LSP photo)

Edwards serving Food Alliance Midwest internship

Katie Edwards is serving an internship with Food Alliance Midwest. A senior in environmental studies and history at Macalester College, Edwards is originally from Seattle, Wash. During her internship, she is updating farmer profiles and helping organize the Minnesota Cooks event at the State Fair Aug. 29.



Katie Edwards

and the main architect behind both the organic tax break and local food purchase policies. Marqusee is also these initiatives' number one cheerleader. He believes wholeheartedly that they provide an opportunity to revitalize the region's rural economy. But the civil servant knows when to temper his enthusiasm with a pinch of pragmatism. "Honestly, I think it's successful in its mere passage. If nobody converts it hasn't cost the county one penny," he says of the organic tax break. "My feeling is it worked the day it passed."

But the passage of these initiatives is starting to look like more than a moral victory. Since these policies were instituted, a major organic processing company has shown interest in locating facilities in Woodbury County. One local landowner with some 630 acres of farmland has already applied to enroll in the organic tax break program. In addition, the local community college has launched a degree program in organic agriculture, farmers pursuing alternatives are starting to feel accepted in the community, and an initiative has been proposed in the Iowa Legislature that would make an organic property tax break statewide. Officials in Florida's Sarasota County are considering adopting elements of Woodbury County's policies, and in general a whole lot of people, both in northwest Iowa and across the country, are excited about the potential of these policies. These policies, and the groundwork that went into creating them, could create a food and farming climate unlike any other in the country, right in the backyard of some of the biggest agribusiness corporations in the world.

"It would be hard to find another county in the United States that has made such a clear commitment to local organic food," says Ken Meter, who does economic analyses of rural communities. "Clearly what Woodbury County has done differently is put an official seal of approval on this."

Keep in mind the organic/local food initiatives passed



in Woodbury County are still more potential than anything. But in a sense Marqusee is right: the mere passage of such policy is a victory in itself. It's an acknowledgment on the part of the community that entrepreneurial family farmers producing food for local consumption can be major economic drivers in a community.

Start making sense

Rob Marqusee is a tireless promoter of Woodbury County and "Siouxland"—a local term for an area that covers a handful of counties in northwest Iowa northeast Nebraska and southwest South Dakota—in general. He's a gregarious man who does everything with deep enthusiasm: from eating to bringing

How the policies work

For the organic tax break initiative, \$250,000 has been budgeted by the county over five years. Up to \$50,000 in tax breaks can be given in any given year, and an individual landowner can qualify for up to \$10,000 in abatements annually.

To qualify for the program, a landowner must agree to begin the three-year transition process toward being certified organic, and complete certification in that period. Landowners who don't complete the transition must return any property tax refunds they received through the program. For a typical Woodbury County farm, the tax rebate would be \$20 per organic acre. So a 500-acre farm would get \$10,000. Over five years, that would be \$50,000.

The local food buying initiative, which takes effect June 1, requires the county to buy organic foods grown and processed within a 100-mile radius of the Woodbury County Courthouse. Organic foods from farther away or nonorganic foods may be purchased if a sufficient supply of a particular organic food item is not available locally. Right now, the county is spending \$281,000 annually for meals fed to inmates at the jail and the juvenile detention center.

The local foods initiative will be monitored so that the county can weigh any benefits buying from local producers can have on the local economy against the costs. If the costs get too high, the county can opt out.

For more on the policies, see www.woodbury-ia.com/departments/EconomicDevelopment/index.asp, or call 712-279-6609.

people together to talk about economic development. He seems genuinely surprised that Woodbury County is seen as a pioneer in using organic and local foods as economic development tools. "When I came up with the idea, I had no idea it was the first in the nation," Marqusee says, sitting in his darkened office in Woodbury County's historic stone courthouse. "It just seems so common sense."

To Marqusee, a \$20 per acre break on property taxes for converting to organic production is an investment in the future. And if you ask farmers to take special care in how they raise food, why shouldn't local government set a good example by buying some of that food?

After all, look at all the subsidies conventional farmers receive via the federal commodity crop programs, he points out. A different angle on rural economic development makes particularly good sense in light of the fact that federal commodity programs are failing our rural communities. "There is little evidence that farmers as a group are reaping significant gains from current U.S. agricultural subsidy programs, even though they are the direct recipients," wrote Tufts University's Timothy Wise in a recent analysis of the commodity

payment system. Census figures show that the counties with the biggest plantings of commodity crops such as corn and soybeans are losing populations the fastest. Small towns are drying up and becoming rest homes for the elderly. Young people are leaving in droves.

Woodbury County, despite the presence of Sioux City, is mostly rural. That means it is afflicted with many of the same problems as other regions dominated by commodity crop agriculture. According to an analysis of USDA figures done by Ken Meter's Crossroads Resource Center, the county's 1,148 farm families produced \$154 million of food per year between 1998 and 2003. But they spent \$178 million to raise it, losing an average of \$24 million in production costs annually. Meanwhile, the region's consumers—around 104,000—spent \$203 million buying food each year during that same period. Around \$150

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million of that was spent for food from outside the region, according to Meter's analysis.

It isn't just economic wealth that's vacating the region. Woodbury County is in the heart of the Missouri River's "loess hills" region, a ruggedly beautiful geological wrinkle that has produced dramatic heights constructed of wind-blown soil. That soil is fertile, but fragile, and intense corn and soybean production has taken its toll, despite efforts to reduce erosion and runoff with terracing and conservation tillage.

There's no doubt commodity agriculture is extracting economic, human and environmental wealth from the region, but how can a local government entity justify using tax money to support a different kind of agriculture?

Marqusee loves it when someone brings up that question; it gives him a chance to discuss one of his favorite topics: costs versus benefits. For example, what if the cheaper, imported food option is chosen? What is the cost?

"You're going to put your own farmers out of business to save \$250," Marqusee says. "So you're going to lose potentially millions of dollars in local benefit in terms of long-term growth in order to save a few dollars."

This is all part of his "parallel universe" theory where subsidized markets are viewed as free markets, and free markets are viewed as subsidized.

"If we are paying the true cost of food, that's not a subsidy, that's paying the true cost of food," he says with more than a hint of exasperation. "In every other purchasing decision made by the county, they look at other costs associated with the purchase. Every purchasing decision takes into account what we have included in the local food purchasing policy."

Indeed, when a county decides on where to purchase trucks or other equipment on the taxpayer's tab, it doesn't just consider the cheapest bid—a local dealer may be chosen over an out-of-county one even though it charges more, just because it's local and will provide easier access to maintenance, etc.

So why not local, organic food? One answer is because, unfortunately, local food producers—farmers, in other words—aren't seen as key ingredients in a strong rural economy. Government policy has created the perception that food and fiber producers are too dependent on subsidies to power Main Street. They are being bypassed in favor of

smokestack chasing ventures such as industrial parks and telemarketing call centers. Even when communities pursue seemingly farm-related ventures such as ethanol plants and factory livestock operations, those aren't really acknowledgments of family farming's role in a healthy economy environment. Rather, they are attempts to capitalize on a rural area's ability to produce cheap raw commodities.

'Extreme' development

"It is a radical notion to have farmers be part of the food economy, and to use the food economy as part of rural economic development," says Meter.

Rich Pirog, who leads the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative at Iowa State University, agrees: "You go to rural economic development conferences and agriculture often takes a back seat."

To put farming back behind the wheel will take a fresh approach. Both Meter and Pirog say Marqusee brings with him an attitude that's long overdue in rural economic development. Marqusee grew up in New York and Florida, and practiced law in California before moving to Sioux City in 1994 to work for Gateway Computers. In other words, when he was hired as the county's first ever Rural Economic Development Director in March 2005, he had next to no experience working in Midwestern rural areas. But as an employee of a large computer firm, Marqusee saw the disadvantage of depending too much on one company to support a region's economy.

To truly revitalize a rural economic, it must be from the ground up, instead of from the top down, he argues. Commodity subsidies are a top down approach. So are smokestack chasing projects such as ethanol plants. There's nothing wrong with bringing in an outside entity to help a rural economy, mind you, it's just that it has to be done after a community figures itself out, says Marqusee.

He tells the parable of the teenage boy who doesn't quite know who he is yet. He makes himself attractive enough to get the attention of a girl, but she soon realizes he doesn't have much direction in life, and she eventually drops him.

"Well, it's the same with rural communities," he says, barely containing his enthusiasm for the subject. "What you need is to develop your own identities and have a strong sense of your own self worth, and your own direction, before companies from out of your area respect you and want to be part of your life."

Without such an identity, he adds, a community is forced to use tax inducements and other bits of bait to basically "pay people to like them."

To Marqusee, places like northwest Iowa have an identity just waiting to be uncovered and developed. All the elements are there: rich soil, a strong farming heritage, a small urban consumer base (Sioux City has 85,000 residents), an infrastructure of roads, railroads and other amenities built up to support agribusinesses such as meat packing. This is farm country, and it should take advantage of that. A committed grassroots group of farmers, consumers, chefs, educators and health care professionals also believes in the area's potential to be more self-sufficient in food production. Called "Sustainable Foods for Siouxland," the group has been using an innovative year-round farmers' market, local foods meals, educational materials and support of Marqusee's efforts to get the word out: northwest Iowa can do more than produce corn and soybeans for the export market.

Granted, other boosters in the area see agriculture as the engine of the economy. An ethanol plant was recently lured to the area with millions of dollars in local, state and federal incentives. In nearby Buena Vista County, egg giant Rembrandt Enterprises is proposing an expansion that promises to produce a dozen jobs in the area, adding to the 110 already employed. The supporters of both the ethanol plant and the egg expansion say farmers will get a few more cents per bushel for their corn as a result. And Terra Industries, one of the largest manufacturers of nitrogen fertilizer in the world, is based in downtown Sioux City. Tyson Foods—the "largest provider of protein products on the planet," as the company likes to say—has warehouse space in Sioux City and a major beef plant just across the Missouri River in Dakota City, Neb.

Yes, agriculture is the economic engine of the area. But Marqusee and the members of Sustainable Foods for Siouxland argue that this is an agriculture based on using farms as sources of raw industrial material, rather than as local businesses that add and retain wealth in a community. Terra, Tyson and Rembrandt employ people; they don't empower them to become entrepreneurs.

That's an important point to rural economic development experts.



Farmers in the Driver's Seat

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"We know the number one indicator for economic development in an area is per capita income," says Marqusee.

Monetary motor

This isn't just a numbers game to Marqusee, a game of getting as many acres converted to organics as possible, for example. If that was the case, then

he'd just try to lure organics giant Cascade Farms into the area. This is about individual entrepreneurs, about per capita income.

That's the argument Marqusee made to the Woodbury Board of Supervisors, and they bought it—partly because of Ken Meter's dire figures, but also because of other studies showing that local organic production can be good for the economy. For example, Luanne Lohr, an economist at the University of Georgia, has studied economic data of 1,208 counties that have organic farms. She's found in general organic farms are an economic plus for a community. The net return to agricultural sales, calculated separately from gross returns and farm expenses, averaged \$3,587 per farm higher for organic farms. Counties with organic farms have \$36,510 more market value in land and buildings. The average farm in a county with organic farmers pays \$10,521 more in property taxes.

Quantifying the benefits

One tool Woodbury County has used to make the argument for policies that support organic/local foods is the Iowa Produce Market Potential Calculator, which was developed by the Center for Transportation Research and Education and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. The "calculator" has an Iowa map that shows both statewide and county-by-county supply and demand figures for each of the 37 fruit and vegetable crops that can be grown in Iowa. By calculating how much wealth could be kept locally if a certain crop was raised and consumed in an area, the economic impact of sustainable agriculture can be measured quantitatively, says Rich Pirog, who leads the Leopold Center's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative.

"We know some of the qualitative reasons why this is good and that's very important to us in sustainable agriculture," he says. "But we need to quantify it. We need to show it will have a certain impact on the economy. You need to have an answer to the economic development person who says, why should I support local foods versus bringing in this computer business or ethanol plant?"

The calculator shows, for example, that Woodbury County consumes over 1,800,000 pounds of tomatoes annually, but produces only 150,000 pounds. That deficit means \$696,000 in farm revenue

is being lost every year in the county. Now, the county may never come close to supplying all the tomatoes its citizens demand, but fulfilling a percentage of that could make a huge difference. On a statewide basis, if just 25 percent of the fruits and vegetables consumed in Iowa were grown there, the statewide economic impact would be nearly \$140 million in output. Over \$54 million in labor income would be paid to 2,032 jobholders, according to the Calculator.

"It's really exciting," says Pirog.

There is an historical precedent for diversifying rural economies in farm country. In 1920, there were 34 different crop and livestock enterprises present on at least 1 percent of Iowa farms. Today, after decades of fencerow-to-fencerow planting of row crops, there are 11 such enterprises.

The Leopold Institute will do a year-long modeling study to determine the overall economic impact of Woodbury County's new policies, based on various scenarios.

Says Pirog, "Woodbury County is going to be one of the most researched places around."

For more on the Iowa Produce Market Potential Calculator, see www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/calculator/home.htm, or call Rich Pirog at 515-294-1854.

And here's another important piece of demographic data contained in Lohr's research: the average organic producer is seven years younger than the typical U.S. farmer.

That's an important statistic to decision makers like County Supervisor and lifelong Siouxland resident George Boykin. "We need to create an atmosphere where you retain young people on the farms," Boykin, 66, says. "There are graduates every year from our high schools that leave the area. A lot of them would like to stay."

Boykin says the new organic/local food policies are good because they not only benefit individuals, but the region as a whole. "Once it takes hold, it's going to change western Iowa significantly."

A smooth running engine

A changed western Iowa might resemble the Roger and Amy Lansink farm. Roger is 40 and Amy 38. They started farming in 1989, and for a few years pretty much did things conventionally. But they weren't happy with the results, either financially or environmentally. In the mid-1990s they started converting to organic production on the 320 acres they were farming at the time. Organic farming was a \$30,000 turn-around right off the bat.

"Conventionally we were spending \$6,000 for commercial fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides, that sort of stuff," recalls Roger. "And when the whole farm was certified...we eliminated that \$6,000 of expense. Plus we increased the value of our crops by \$24,000."

Their crop and livestock operation has since grown to 850 acres, and is supporting the Lansinks along with their four children, ages 7-18. In fact, their 18-year-old, Derek, is joining the operation after he graduates from high school.

"He can't wait to farm," says Roger with a smile on his face.

They market most of their crop out of state and even internationally. Even though the Lansinks don't live in Woodbury County, they hope the pro-organic agriculture policies there will benefit them by luring natural foods processors to the area, thus providing more local markets for their production.

"When you start using different management techniques that keep the money here, that's farm economic growth, that's rural economic growth," explains Roger as he takes a break in the

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kitchen before the afternoon chores. "If we had stayed farming conventionally I'd have to leave the farm for an eight-hour job to gain \$24,000 in income. But through management we created that job right here on the same acres."

Because of the price premiums they receive for their corn, soybeans, field peas, buckwheat, hay and beef cattle, the Lansinks have more income to spend locally, says Roger. "Everyone benefits down the line."

Grabbing some value

Woodbury County Supervisor Mark Monson thinks the policies could also help retain something else in the area: food and all the value that goes with it. He would particularly like to see these policies spawn local processing and even a regional food label.

"Our county exists because of agriculture, there's no doubt about it," Monson says. "But the agricultural production goes on a train car, and takes the value with it. It goes a thousand miles away and then comes back in a box, and the farmer gets none of that value. If you can capture the value in at least one product before it leaves, that's tremendous."

Just a few blocks down the street from the Woodbury County Courthouse are the low-slung offices of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber sits literally in the shadows of the Terra Industries high-rise, which, with its mirrored glass and sharp angles, is easily the most impressive building in the city. Within spitting distance is the Tyson Events Center, another reminder of a major agribusiness presence in the region. But when the subject of making local, organic agriculture an economic engine in the area is brought up, Chamber officials are very supportive.

"This is a way to introduce people back onto the farms," says Debi Durham, president of the Chamber. "I think they're doing it right," she says of the work Marqusee and the other citizens are doing. "It's very practical and business-like how they are approaching it."

Durham concedes that when these ideas about making the area an organic mecca were first brought up, "people kind of scoffed at it." But as more information has come out about the potential economic impact, people are being won over, she says. Nationally, the organic food market is growing by 20 percent a year, and a new Hy-Vee supermarket in town has a significant organics section.

It doesn't hurt that as of late spring, a national organic processor was considering setting up a facility in the area. In fact, the processor—Durham wouldn't reveal its identity—has made two site visits, meeting with local government officials, the citizens' group and Chamber officials. Durham doesn't beat around the bush when explaining why the processor is showing an interest in the area.

"The only reason they are looking here is because of Woodbury County's policy

on food," she says. "We're attractive to them because they know they can come into this region where people have shown support for organic foods." □

The next Land Stewardship Letter will look at how farmers, grassroots groups and educational institutions in the area are working together in hopes of making Woodbury County's policy initiatives a success.

The great galvanizer

After seeing one of Ken Meter's presentations on how much wealth is leaching out of rural communities, local residents have one of two reactions.

"Some people throw up their hands in frustration, and some get galvanized into action," says Rich Pirog of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University.

The residents of Siouxland apparently have gone for the latter response. Meter gave one of his presentations to the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors before they voted on the local food purchase policy in January. He also presented at an organic conference held in the county in November.

Meter, who is President of the Minnesota-based Crossroads Resource Center, uses USDA statistics to show just how much our commodity programs are hurting communities. His series of "Finding Food in Farm Country" studies are based on the thesis that the more agricultural products that are exported out of the region, and in turn the more finished products that are imported in, the less wealth remains locally. He has done such analyses in Iowa, Minnesota, California and Hawaii.

Meter's figures show that farm cash receipts have plummeted steadily since the 1970s, when government policy pushed mightily for fencerow-to-fencerow plantings of row crops that could be exported overseas. And getting more "efficient" doesn't necessarily help: farmers earned less producing crops in 2002 than they did in 1969, despite doubling their productivity. The biggest losses are in Corn Belt states Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota.

In west central Minnesota, which raises 23 percent of the state's corn and 22 percent of its soybeans, \$1 billion is being sucked out of the region annually by a food and farm economy that exports raw commodities and imports finished

products from hundreds, sometimes, thousands of miles away. It breaks down this way: \$150 million is lost by farmers raising food, \$600 million is lost through the purchase of outside inputs, and \$250 million is lost when consumers buy food produced outside the area.

The impacts on Main Streets are crippling. Census figures show the counties with the most acres in corn and soybeans are losing population the fastest. But the federal government appears to believe that there's nothing wrong with rural areas that more commodity production won't fix.

"The corn and soybean economy is not a food economy, it's an industrial raw commodity economy," says Meter. "Saying the commodity market is going to save rural areas is ridiculous since we don't have control of the commodity market."

But Meter also has some good news: There is a huge unrealized market for local foods in these rural communities. Local consumption and processing of food can be a major way to keep wealth local.

In southeast Minnesota, for example, consumers spend about \$500 million annually to buy food from outside the region. If southeast Minnesotans were to buy 15 percent of their food from local sources, it would generate as much income for the region as two-thirds of what farm subsidy payments produce now.

Meter says increasingly rural economic development officials, frustrated by their lack of effectiveness through traditional smokestack chasing initiatives, are showing up at his presentations, often with county supervisors, lenders and farmers in tow. At one recent meeting he spoke at, five commodity groups were represented.

"I think things are so glaring that people are paying attention," says Meter.

For more on the Crossroads Resource Center's work, see www.crcworks.org, or call 612-869-8664.



2006 Stewardship Food Network

The following eight pages list Land Stewardship Project members who produce food for direct marketing to consumers. Also listed here are LSP member-businesses such as restaurants, natural food co-ops and other retail outlets that carry food produced by our farmers.

The methods these farmers use to produce food vary, and we have chosen not to describe them here in-depth. Sustainable farming practices represented in this list include certified organic, Food Alliance Midwest certified, production methods that do not use antibiotics and hormones, humanely raised and slaughtered, production methods that do not use genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pasture-based, integrated pest management to reduce pesticide use, deep-bedded straw livestock housing and conservation tillage.

We encourage you to contact the farmers personally to find out specifics about which production methods they are utilizing.

We have listed the farms according to location: *Northeast MN, Central MN, Northeast MN, Northwest MN, Southwest MN, South Central MN, Southwest MN, Southeast SD, Twin Cities Metro Area.*

The majority of these farms sell their products in their immediate area via on-the-farm sales or farmers' markets. However, as we have indicated with an "Also services" category, some farms do market outside their region. These farms

may deliver to a different community, participate in a regional farmers' market, or use mail services to deliver products.

If you are looking for farmers nationwide who are direct marketing sustainably produced foods, visit www.localharvest.org.

When contacting the farmers, consider asking these questions in trying to determine if their production methods fit your needs and desires:

- ✓ Are the animals raised on well-managed pastures or deep-bedded straw (hogs) at least part of the time?
- ✓ How are antibiotics and hormones used in animal production? Why are they used?
- ✓ Are vegetables, fruits and grains produced using chemical pesticides? If so, are integrated pest management techniques used to reduce reliance on chemicals as much as possible?
- ✓ Are conservation tillage techniques such as minimum till, no till and ridge till used?
- ✓ Are diverse rotations that involve small grains, forages and perennial grasses used?

A few handy definitions:

◆ **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).** This is a system where consumers buy a "subscription" in a farm before the growing season begins. In return, they receive a weekly delivery of fresh produce throughout the growing season.

◆ **Integrated pest management**

(IPM). An approach to managing pests that combines biological, cultural, physical and chemical means to reduce environmental risks.

◆ **Grass-based livestock production.**

A large part of an animal's nutritional needs are met through grass, in particular via managed intensive grazing systems that rotate livestock through numerous paddocks, spreading manure in a biologically sound manner.

◆ **Little or no use of antibiotics.**

Antibiotics and hormones are not used on a daily basis to increase production performance in animals.

◆ **Certified.** Some of the farms listed here have been inspected and certified by one of several third-party agencies. These agencies document what production methods are (and are not) utilized on the farms. As a consumer, you can ask for a certifying agency's standards. □

2006 CSA Directory

Twin Cities-area consumers who want to receive fresh, naturally-produced vegetables on a weekly basis during the 2006 growing season should reserve a share in a Community Supported Agriculture farm now.

Community Supported Agriculture, also known as CSA, is an arrangement where people buy shares in a farming operation on an annual basis. In return, the farmers provide a weekly supply of fresh, natural produce throughout the growing season (approximately June to October).

More than two-dozen CSA farms have sprung up in the Twin Cities-western Wisconsin region within the past 17 years, providing consumers a wide variety of choices.

For a free guide describing CSA farms that serve the Twin Cities region, visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html. For a paper copy, call the Land Stewardship Project at 651-653-0618. □

Do you want to be listed in the Network?

If you are a Land Stewardship Project member (from any state, not just Minnesota) and are direct marketing food to consumers, we would like to include you in the Stewardship Food Network list. We'd also like to hear from LSP members who are retailing or processing food produced by other LSP members. For information on being included in the list, contact Louise Arbuckle at 651-653-0618 or lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org.

Farms

—Northeast Iowa—

One Step At A Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim Landgraf
1465 120th St.

Kanawha, IA 50447-8060

Phone: 641-495-6367

E-mail: libland@frontiernet.net

Website: www.ostgardens.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation, market garden, pastured poultry raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Our farm members are located in north central Iowa as well as central Iowa.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Central MN—

Eller Family Farm

Barbara Eller

12722 350th St.

Onamia, MN 56359

Phone: 320-532-4946

E-mail: ellerb@mlecmn.net

Website: www.ellerfarm.com

➤ Products: *Grass-fed beef, day-range poultry, pastured pork, eggs & garden produce; farm and livestock managed without added hormones/chemicals/antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Mille Lacs Lake area; Isle area Farmer's Market*

Hoopers' Christmas Tree Ranch

John Hooper

15813 Christmas Tree Rd.

Cold Spring, MN 56320-9644

Phone: 320-685-4489

E-mail: yak-man@yak-man.com

Website: www.yak-man.com

➤ Products: *Yak meat that's grass-fed and raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *USDA*

Whole Farm Coop

33 2nd St. South

Long Prairie, MN 56347

Phone: 320-732-3023

E-mail: wholefarm@earthlink.net

Website: www.wholefarmcoop.com

➤ Products: *Meat, produce, dairy products, eggs, coffee, maple syrup, wild rice & more*

✕ Also services: *Alexandria, Brainerd,*

Duluth, St. Cloud, Twin Cities,

Wadena

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Northeast MN—

Finkes Berry Farm

Diane & Doug Finke

2331 County Road 4

Carlton, MN 55718-8147

Phone: 218-384-4432

➤ Products: *Strawberries, pick-your-own*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Food Farm

John & Jane Fisher-Merritt

2612 County Road 1

Wrenshall, MN 55797-8718

Phone: 218-384-3356

➤ Products: *Vegetables, CSA produce operation, chicken, turkey, eggs. All poultry are raised on grass. Butchering chickens, turkeys and laying hens are raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *O-MOSA*

✕ Also services: *Duluth, Cloquet, Moose Lake, Superior, Wis.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Ken's Lean Beef

Ken Peterson

43138 110th Ave.

Tamarack, MN 55787-4633

Phone: 218-768-4116

➤ Products: *Grass-fed beef halves & quarter cuts; no feed antibiotics used*

✕ Also services: *On-farm pick-up*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Northern Harvest Farm

Rick & Karen Dalen

1003 N. Central Ave.

Duluth, MN 55807-1368

Phone: 218-727-8309

E-mail: rickdalen@yahoo.com

➤ Products: *Vegetables*

◆ Certified by: *MOSA*

✕ Also services: *Duluth/Superior*

Shary's Berries

Shary Zoff

1651 Two Harbors Rd

Two Harbors, MN 55616-8013

Phone: 218-834-5221

➤ Products: *Raspberries, PYO or pre-picked blueberries, tomatoes &*

lettuce

◆ Certified by: *O-OCIA*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Northwest MN—

Northern Light Farm

Paul Conklin

2048 Agate Ln. NW

Solway, MN 56678-4212

Phone: 218-467-3584

E-mail: martonklin@alumni.duke.edu

➤ Products: *Extracted honey, comb honey, bee pollen, beeswax, CSA vegetables, brown and green free-range eggs, pastured broiler chickens, Highland beef*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Wilson's Organic Strawberries

Laura & Brian Wilson

8375 Sethney Lane SW

Alexandria, MN 56308

Phone: 877-817-0331

➤ Products: *U-pick strawberries, other vegetables also for sale*

◆ Certified by: *ICS*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Southeast MN—

Bramble Hill

Diane Crane

21727 Randall Dr.

Houston, MN 55943-8131

Phone: 507-864-7585

E-mail: bramble@acegroup.cc

➤ Products: *Lamb—grass-fed until winter. No antibiotics, no growth hormones. No pesticides or herbicides used on the farm.*

Dancing Winds Farmstay & Retreat

Mary Doerr

6863 Co #12 Blvd

Kenyon, MN 55946

Phone: 507-789-6606

E-mail: dancingwinds@lakes.com

Website: www.dancingwinds.com

➤ Products: *Pasture-raised without feed antibiotics goat meat (chevon), full blood Boer breeding stock for sale, & farm retreat. Energetic healing and therapeutic massage (certified massage therapist) available on site; 60 ft. outdoor labyrinth.*

✕ Also services: *On-farm pick-up*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Farms

—Southeast MN—

❑ Dreamacres/Tillers Int'l/ Flourish Camp

Eva Barr & Todd Juzwiak
RR-1, Box 1243
Wykoff, MN 55990-9772
Phone: 507-352-4255

E-mail: evalibarr@hotmail.com
Website: www.tillersinternational.org

➤ Products: *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) produce operation; farming/rural skills workshops (Tillers International), Arts and Agriculture Summer Camp (Flourish)*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Earth Be Glad Farm

Mike & Jennifer Rupprecht
18828 Cty. Rd. 20
Lewiston, MN 55952-9622
Phone: 507-523-2564

E-mail: ebgfarm@hbc.com

➤ Products: *100% grass-fed beef; certified organic free-range chickens & turkeys, pasture raised pork & eggs; fresh cut flowers. All livestock raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *O-MOSA*

✗ Also services: *Winona Farmers' Market, Winona-Bluff Country Co-op, Rochester-Good Food Store*

❑ Farm on Wheels/Cozy Meadows

Mike & Linda Noble
53288 110th Ave.
Kenyon, MN 55946-4330
Phone: 507-789-6679

E-mail: farm.on.wheels@juno.com

Website: www.cannon.net/~farmonwh/

➤ Products: *Heirloom beef, pork, eggs, chicken, turkey, goose, duck, lard.*

✗ Also services: *Farmers' markets in Northfield and St. Paul; Just Food Store in Northfield.*

◆ Certified by: *O-Oregon Tilth*

❑ Hershey Acres

Arlene Hershey
13300 Green Acres
Saint Charles, MN 55972
Phone: 507-932-3285

➤ Products: *Eggs, chicken, turkey,*

beef, ducks, specialty meats. All livestock are grass-fed and raised without feed antibiotics.

✗ Also services: *Rochester*

❑ Hidden Stream Farm

Lisa & Eric Klein
27079 County Road 25
Elgin, MN 55932-9703
Phone: 507-876-2304

E-mail: hiddenstreamfarm@hiddenstreamfarm.com

Website: www.hiddenstreamfarm.com

➤ Products: *Chicken, pork, beef. All livestock are raised without feed antibiotics. Grass-fed beef and chicken; pork sometimes; winter hogs are housed in a deep bedded system and are never confined.*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✗ Also services: *Midwest; shipping available*

❑ Hill & Vale Farms

Joe & Bonnie Austin
RR-1, Box 152
Wykoff, MN 55990-9750
Phone: 507-352-4441

E-mail: jobon@hmtel.com

➤ Products: *Lamb, beef & goat; all livestock are grass-fed, and raised without feed antibiotics.*

✗ Also services: *Natural food stores, Twin Cities, MN, IA, WI, ND, SD (mail order), IL, MI, MO, KY, KS, NE, OH, KS (1-2 day ground delivery)*

❑ Lively Stock Farm

Diane Serfling
16779 Killdeer Road
Preston, MN 55965-9553
Phone: 507-765-2797

E-mail: dsdserf@yahoo.com

➤ Products: *Lamb, beef & rabbits; all raised without feed antibiotics*

✗ Also services: *On-farm pick-up*

❑ Nature's Little Farms

Larry & Diane Leonhardt
60035 Hwy. 42
Kellogg, MN 55945-9605
Phone: 507-767-4435

➤ Products: *Chicken, beef, white & heritage turkey, bison, duck, pork, eggs, vegetables & fruit. All livestock except pork are grass-fed. Pork is raised according to Niman Ranch standards. All livestock are*

raised without feed antibiotics. No meat by-products & non-GMO grain.

✗ Also services: *Richfield Farmers' Market*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Rock Spring Farm

Chris & Kim Blanchard
3765 Highlandville Rd.
Spring Grove, MN 55974-1230
Phone: 563-735-5613

E-mail: realfood@RSFarm.com

Website: www.RSFarm.com

➤ Products: *CSA vegetable production*

◆ Certified by: *MOSA*

✗ Also services: *Twin Cities*

❑ Root Prairie Galloways

Brad & Leslea Hodgson
RR-1, Box 139
Fountain, MN 55935-9750
Phone: 507-867-4004

E-mail: hodgsonranch@aol.com

➤ Products: *All natural grass finished beef, free range chicken, hay & some produce. Beef and chicken are grass-fed & raised without feed antibiotics.*

❑ Southeast Food Network

Pam Benike
12124 75th St. NE
Elgin, MN 55932

E-mail: board@localfoodnetwork.org

Website: www.localfoodnetwork.org

➤ Products: *Foods from 50 regional producers, with products ranging from dairy and vegetables to meats and honey. Poultry, beef & lamb are grass-based. All animals are raised without feed antibiotics.*

✗ Also services: *Twin Cities*

❑ Sunfresh Foods

Paul & Karen Schmidt
RR-2, Box 155
Preston, MN 55965-9545
Phone: 507-765-4782

E-mail: pschmidty@earthlink.net

➤ Products: *Grass-fed beef raised without feed antibiotics, pork raised without feed antibiotics, organic corn, organic soybeans, organic small grains, organic garlic, soy-wax candles. Pork & beef is offered once a year in December.*

◆ Certified by: *ICS/FVO*

—**Southwest MN**—

☐ **Valley Angus Farm**

Dan & Cara Miller
Route 1, Box 241
Spring Valley, MN 55975-1029
Phone: 507-346-2261
E-mail: dmiller@myclearwave.net

➤ Products: *Grass-fed beef raised without feed antibiotics, chickens, custom haying & grazing.*

◆ Certified by: *American Angus Association*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

☐ **Whitewater Gardens**

Sandy & Lonny Dietz
17485 Calaco Hill Rd.
Altura, MN 55910-9752
Phone: 507-932-5225
E-mail: londietz@aol.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation; grass-fed beef, pastured chickens, ducks, heritage turkeys & pork. All livestock receive GMO-free feed, & are raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Pick-up sites in Rochester, Winona & on-farm; farmers' markets at Rochester & Winona.*

☐ **Wolf Hill Farm**

Caroline van Schaik
40002 Wolf Hill Dr.
La Crescent, MN 55947-4317
Phone: 507-643-6395
E-mail: wolfhill@acegroup.cc

➤ Products: *Grass-fed lamb raised without antibiotics.*

—**South Central MN**—

☐ **Don & Rhonda Hermanson**

44893 County Road 15
Nicollet, MN 56074-4245
Phone: 507-246-5335
E-mail: drhermy@prairie.lakes.com

➤ Products: *Produce, poultry*

✕ Also services: *Gaylord and LeSueur farmers' markets*

☐ **Yokiel Farm**

Leona & Gary Yokiel
58653 190th St.
Wells, MN 56097-6710
Phone: 507-553-3008

➤ Products: *Corn, soybeans, oats, alfalfa & beef.*

◆ Certified by: *O-COI*

—**Southwest MN**—

☐ **Double D Natural Meats**

Donald & Bev Struxness
14015 Highway 40 NW
Milan, MN 56262-2412
Phone: 320-734-4877
E-mail: dbstruxness@fedteldirect.net

➤ Products: *Beef*

◆ Certified by: *MOSA & Food Alliance Midwest*

☐ **Dry Weather Creek Farm**

Mark & Wendy Lange
8095 40th St. NW
Milan, MN 56262-3003
Phone: 320-269-9617
E-mail: dwcreek@fedteldirect.net

➤ Products: *Goat meat, stone-ground wheat products, flax, cornmeal, & oatmeal. All livestock raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *80-mile radius around Montevideo; flour products only are available for the Twin Cities area.*

◆ Certified by: *MOSA*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

☐ **EarthRise Farm**

Kay & Annette Fernholz
2580 250th St. Apt. A
Madison, MN 56256
Phone: 320-752-4700

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation; surplus produce may be purchased. We also produce and market Omega 3 eggs along with vegetables & fruits at our farm; chickens are free-range.*

✕ Also services: *Madison Farmers' Market & part of the Pride of the Prairie Market Basket*

☐ **Honey & Herbs**

Marcia Neely
155 60th St. NW
Benson, MN 56215-1050
Phone: 320-843-3363
E-mail: marciagarden@yahoo.com

➤ Products: *Apples, honey, garlic, medicinal & culinary herbs.*

☐ **Moonstone Organics**

Audrey Arner & Richard Handeen
9060 40th St. SW
Montevideo, MN 56265-3136
Phone: 320-269-8971

E-mail: aarner@maxminn.com

Website: www.prairiefare.com/moonstone/index.html

➤ Products: *Grass-fed (finished on grass & hay) beef raised without feed antibiotics, PastureLand cheese & butter, honey, "Farmstay" overnight lodging.*

✕ Also services: *Saint Paul & western Twin Cities suburbs*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

☐ **Morning Has Broken Farm**

Larry & Carolyn Olson
2931 480th St.
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1601
Phone: 320-564-2571
Website: www.prairiefare.com/MHBFARM.htm

➤ Products: *Grass-fed beef, chicken (seasonal pastured) & lamb all raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Western Minnesota & Twin Cities*

☐ **Murphy's Organic Farm**

Craig & Joanie Murphy
51487 320th St.
Morris, MN 56267-4313
Phone: 320-392-5176
E-mail: cjemurph@fedteldirect.net
Website: www.prairiefare.com/murphyhp.htm

➤ Products: *Beef raised without feed antibiotics, golden flax*

◆ Certified by: *O.C.I.A. International*

✕ Also services: *All of Minnesota*

☐ **Pastures A' Plenty**

Jim & Lee Ann VanDerPol
4075 110th Ave. NE
Josh & Cindy VanDerPol
4077 110th Ave., NE
Kerkhoven, MN 56252-9650
Phone: 320-367-2061
E-mail: vanderpol@prairiefare.com/pastureshp.htm
Website: www.prairiefare.com

➤ Products: *Grass-fed pork, chicken, eggs & beef; all raised without feed antibiotics*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✕ Also services: *Western Minnesota, Twin Cities food co-ops, Duluth Food Co-op; monthly frozen meat delivery*

Farms

—Southwest MN—

□ Prairies Past

Allen & Lisa Smith
406 U.S. Hwy. 75
Pipestone, MN 56164
Phone: 507-825-3845

- Products: *Vegetables, melons, herbs, dried flowers & grass-fed pork raised without antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Pipestone Farmers' Market*

□ Prairie Pride Farm of MN

Roger & Dawn Hubmer
59597 185th St.
Mankato, MN 56001-8472
Phone: 507-245-3117
E-mail: rdhubmer@prairiepridefarm.com
Website: www.prairiepridefarm.com

- Products: *Berkshire pork, grass-based Omega 3 chicken & cornish game hens, all without feed antibiotics & animal by-products. BBQ catering service.*

✕ Also services: *Saint Paul Farmers' Market, Burnsville, Lakeville, Mankato, Apple Valley, St. Peter Farmers' Market*

□ Prairie Wind Farms

Gerard & Mary Radermacher
1219 340th St.
Bellingham, MN 56212-2051
Phone: 320-568-2310

- Products: *Beef, lamb, ducks, chickens, ground beef & organic wool*

□ Red Tail Valley Beef

Terry VanDerPol
235 7th Ave.
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1423
Phone: 320-564-1877
E-mail: redtailvalleybeef@yahoo.com

- Products: *Grass-fed beef raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Minneapolis*

□ Ron's Veggies

Ron Hanson
86750 150th St.
Sacred Heart, MN 56285-1252
Phone: 320-765-2379

- Products: *Vegetables (especially*

onions & potatoes) & cactus plants

—Southeast SD—

□ Johnson Farms

Charles & Bette Johnson
45169 243rd St.
Madison, SD 57042-7101
Phone: 605-256-6784
E-mail: c-bjohnson@svtv.com

- Products: *Beef, pork, eggs raised without feed antibiotics*
- ◆ Certified by: *FBO-ICS*

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

□ Ames Farm

Brian Fredericksen
11325 County Road 20
Watertown, MN 55388
Phone: 952-955-3348
E-mail: info@amesfarm.com
Website: amesfarm.com

- Products: *Raw varietal honey & bee pollen, 20 varieties of apples & pears.*

✕ Also services: *Fruit & raw honey sold at Minneapolis Farmers' Markets on Lyndale Ave. & Nicollet Mall. Raw honey & bee pollen sold at Twin Cities natural food co-ops and Kowalski's Markets*

□ Anderson Farm

Randy & Lynn Anderson
N6501 Manore Lane
Arkansas, WI 54721-8603
Phone: 715-285-5226
E-mail: andersonfarm@nelson-tel.net
Website: www.andersonfarm.us

- Products: *Organic grass-fed beef, chickens, pork; all raised without feed antibiotics; certified organic feed.*

✕ Also services: *Western Wisconsin*

□ Axdahl Farms

Brian & Leslie Axdahl
17120 116th St. N.
Stillwater, MN 55082-8911
Phone: 651-439-3134
E-mail: info@axdahlfarms.com
Website: www.axdahlfarms.com

- Products: *Sweet corn, green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, peppers, pumpkins, squash, bedding plants & hanging baskets*
- ◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

□ Badger Ridge Garden

Ruth Viste
N2041 430th St.
Maiden Rock, WI 54750-8221
E-mail: rviste@redwing.net

- Products: *CSA produce operation*

□ BC Gardens

Kathy Botten & Ruth Capp
20355 408th Ave.
Belgrade, MN 56312-9584
Phone: 320-254-8820
E-mail: bcgardens@willmar.com

- Products: *CSA produce operation*
- ◆ Certified by: *Global Organic Alliance*

✕ Also services: *Home delivery to Twin Cities, Willmar & Saint Cloud*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

□ Big Woods Farm

David & Laurie Hougen-Eitzman
10752 Nerstrand Blvd.
Nerstrand, MN 55053-2715
Phone: 507-334-3335
E-mail: bigwoodsfarm@ll.net

- Products: *CSA produce operation*

✕ Also services: *South Minneapolis & Rice County*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

□ Blue Roof Organics

Sean & Annie Albiston
14611 Manning Trail N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-1307
E-mail: sean@bluroofoorganics.com
Website: www.bluroofoorganics.com

- Products: *Garlic, heirloom tomatoes, dry beans, herbs and seasonal produce, eggs and chickens raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *NOP through OCIA, Naturally Grown*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

□ Cedar Summit Farm

Dave & Florence Minar
25816 Drexel Ave.
New Prague, MN 56071-8834
Phone: 952-758-6886
E-mail: daveandflo@cedarsummit.com
Website: www.cedarsummit.com

- Products: *Pork, grass-fed beef, milk, chocolate milk, yogurt, ice cream, & cream. All livestock are raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest & MOSA*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

❑ **Common Harvest Farm**

Dan Guenther & Margaret Pennings
212 280th St.
Osceola, WI 54020-4113
Phone: 715-294-2831

- Products: *CSA produce farm*
- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Community Homestead**

Christine Elmquist
501 280th St.
Osceola, WI 54020
Phone: 715-294-3038
E-mail: garden@communityhomestead.org
Website: communityhomestead.org

- Products: *Bread, meat, supplements, CSA produce operation*
- ◆ Certified by: *MOSA*
- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Edgewood Farm**

Carl Schwermann
40511 581st Ave.
New Ulm, MN 56073
Phone: 507-359-4567

- Products: *Beef & pork naturally raised without feed antibiotics or growth hormones*

❑ **Footjoy Farm**

Chad Forsberg
5512 Canine Road
Sparta, MN 54656
Phone: 608-272-3821
E-mail: footjoyfarm@yahoo.com

- Products: *CSA produce operation, grass-fed dairy goats, poultry & eggs. All livestock are raised without feed antibiotics.*

✗ Also services: *North Minneapolis*

- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Foxtail Farm**

Paul & Chris Burkhouse
124 280th St.
Osceola, WI 54020-4111
Phone: 651-257-9162
E-mail: foxtailcsa@yahoo.com

- Products: *CSA vegetable production*

❑ **Fresh Earth Farms**

Chris & Susan James
6455 Oakgreen Ave. S.
Hastings, MN 55033
Phone: 651-436-2778
E-mail: freshearthfarms@earthlink.net

Website: www.freshearthfarms.com

- Products: *CSA produce operation*
- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Gale Woods Farm**

Tim Reese
7210 County Road 110 West
Minnetrista, MN 55364
Phone: 763-694-2001
E-mail: rconser@threeriversparkdistrict.org
Website: www.galewoodsfarm.org

- Products: *Vegetables, beef, lamb, chicken, turkey, honey, apples. Grass-based production methods used for beef and lamb. No feed antibiotics for beef, lamb, chicken & turkey.*

✗ Also services: *West Metro*

❑ **Garden Farme**

Jen Adams & Bruce Bacon
7363 175th Ave. NW
Ramsey, MN 55303
Phone: 612-250-3929
E-mail: adam0054@umn.edu

- Products: *CSA produce operation, potted tree nursery & native shrubs.*
- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Gilbertson Farms**

Gary & Annette Gilbertson
12791 Oakhill Rd. N.
Scandia, MN 55073-9420
Phone: 651-433-2227
E-mail: gilbertsongilbey@aol.com
Website: www.gilbertsonfarms.com

- Products: *Sweet corn, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins, preserves, pickles, hanging baskets, bedding & potted plants. Corn maze in the fall.*
- ◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

❑ **Harmony Valley Farm**

Richard DeWilde & Annake Witkop
S3442 Wire Hollow Rd.
Viroqua, WI 54665-8078
Phone: 608-483-2143
E-mail: harmony@mwt.net
Website: www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

- Products: *Certified organic CSA operation; certified organic grass-fed Angus beef raised without feed antibiotics.*

◆ Certified by: *MOSA*

✗ Also services: *CSA in Madison, Twin Cities, Viroqua & LaCrosse. Retail and wholesale to Madison, Twin Cities & Chicago.*

- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Hoch Orchard and Gardens**

Harry Hoch
RR-2, Box 114
La Crescent, MN 55947-9530
Phone: 507- 643-6329
E-mail: hoch1@acegroup.cc
Website: www.hochorchard.com

- Products: *Berries, plums, apricots, apples & cider*
- ◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*
- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **Hog's Back Farm**

David & Melinda Van Eeckhout
680 Hyacinth Ave. E.
Saint Paul, MN 55106-1911
Phone: 612-756-0690
E-mail: david@hogsbackfarm.com
Website: www.hogsbackfarm.com

- Products: *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) produce operation*

❑ **Igl Farms**

Brian & Tom Igl
W9689 Cherry Rd.
Antigo, WI 54409-8734
Phone: 715-627-7888
E-mail: bigl@g2a.net

- Products: *Potatoes, oats, yellow field peas, grass-fed beef without feed antibiotics.*

✗ Also services: *Wisconsin, northern Illinois & eastern Minnesota*

◆ Certified by: *O-MOSA*

- ✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ **In The Valley Community Farm**

Kurt Rentschler & Dean Stynsberg
1615 Manning Ave. S.
Afton, MN 55001-9692
Phone: 651-436-4795
E-mail: mail@itvfarm.com
Website: www.itvfarm.com

- Products: *Organic turkeys & eggs without feed antibiotics*
- ◆ Certified by: *FBO-ICS*

Farms

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

❑ Krauel Angus Ranch

Tom Krauel
25715 55th Ave.
Ogilvie, MN 56358
Phone: 320-272-6533
E-mail: tkrauel@krauel.net

➤ Products: *Natural Angus beef raised without feed antibiotics.*

✕ Also services: *Central Minnesota*

❑ La Finca

Charlie & Tzeitel Kersey
PO Box 93
Bruno, MN 55712
E-mail: lafinca@earthlink.net

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Loon Organics

Laura & Adam Frerichs
8199 257th St. W.
Farmington, MN 55024
Phone: 952-985-5446
E-mail: loonorganics@hotmail.com

Website: loonorganics.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation*

❑ May Farm CSA

Josh Bryceson
14220 Ostlund Trail North
Marine on St. Croix - May, MN 55047
Phone: 651-433-3676

E-mail: jbryceson@mnfoodassociation.org

Website: www.mnfoodassociation.org

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation*

❑ Natura Farms

Paul Otten
19060 Manning Trail N.
Marine on Saint Croix, MN 55047
Phone: 651-433-5850

E-mail: pmo@chof.net

Website: www.foodalliance.org/certification/producers/profiles/mw/natura_farm.pdf

➤ Products: *Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, grapes, apples, melons, vegetables & herbs.*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✕ Also services: *Limited wholesale accounts; on-farm marketing*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Nitty Gritty Dirt Farm

Robin Raudabaugh & Gigi Nauer
10386 Sunrise Road, PO Box 235
Harris, MN 55032-0102
Phone: 651-216-9012

E-mail: nittygrittyfarm@aol.com

➤ Products: *CSA vegetable production*

❑ Pahl Farms, Inc.

Gary Pahl
6885 160th St. W.
Apple Valley, MN 55124-6651
Phone: 952-431-4345

E-mail: gary@pahls.com

Website: www.pahls.com

➤ Products: *Sweet corn, green beans, pumpkins, winter squash, cabbage & cucumbers*

✕ Also services: *Upper Midwest*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Philadelphia Community Farm

Christina Beck
PO Box 668
Osceola, WI 54020-0668
Phone: 715-294-3136

E-mail: pcomfarm@centurytel.net

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation: six week spring share, 22 week regular share. Retreat house, grass-fed lamb raised without feed antibiotics. Wool, pork, firewood, maple syrup, turkey, chicken, eggs & beef.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Pine Tree Apple Orchard

Bill & John Jacobson
450 Apple Orchard Rd.
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-1212
Phone: 651-429-7202

E-mail: bill@pinetreeappleorchard.com

Website: www.pinetreeappleorchard.com

➤ Products: *Apples, strawberries*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

❑ Rare by Nature

Brian & Kari Vassar
53686 County Road 1
Winthrop, MN 55396
Phone: 507-647-3586

E-mail: info@rarebynature.com

Website: www.rarebynature.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation,*

specialty/gourmet vegetables & herbs, garden design & installation services. Grass-fed Icelandic sheep and free range chickens & eggs, all raised without feed antibiotics.

✕ Also services: *Primarily local area (Sibley and Brown counties), also southwest Twin Cities suburbs & Saint Paul*

❑ Riverbend Farm

Greg & Mary Reynolds
5405 Calder Ave. SE
Delano, MN 55328-8014
Phone: 763-972-3295

E-mail: riverbend@usinternet.com

➤ Products: *Wholesale vegetables*

◆ Certified by: *O-MOSA*

✕ Also services: *Twin Cities*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Shepherds Hill Farm/PastureDirect

Cindy & Steve Calvin
10970 Cody Lake Trail
Montgomery, MN 56069-1984
Phone: 612-729-2553

E-mail: info@pasturedirect.com

Website: www.pasturedirect.com

➤ Products: *Beef raised without feed antibiotics*

❑ Simple Harvest Farm

Kathy, Theresa & Nick Zeman
9800 E. 155th St.
Nerstrand, MN 55053
Phone: 507-330-2151 (cell)

E-mail: zeman@myclearwave.net

➤ Products: *CSA vegetable & herb operation; eggs, broilers, beef, pork, lamb, meat goats, dairy goats, meat rabbits, ducks, Icelandic wool & yarn, goat milk soap and a farm retreat. All animals grass-fed and raised without feed antibiotics.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Spring Hill Community Farm

Michael Racette & Patty Wright
545 1 1/2 Ave.
Prairie Farm, WI 54762
Phone: 715-455-1319

E-mail: springhill@chibardun.net

Website: www.springhillcommunityfarm.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation*

✕ Also services: *Prairie Farm, Wis., area*

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

☐ **Valley Creek Community Farm**

Gene & Rose Ann Steenhoek
15150 Giefer Ave.
Northfield, MN 55057-4606
Phone: 507-645-6414

E-mail: genesteenhoe@hotmail.com

➤ Products: *CSA produce operation*

☐ **Webster Farm Organics**

Nett & Tamarack Hart
PO Box 53
Foreston, MN 56330-0053
Phone: 320-983-2289

➤ Products: *Salad Days—CSA vegetable & herb operation.*

◆ Certified by: *O-FVO; IFOAM*

✕ Also services: *Saint Cloud*

☐ **Whistling Well Farm**

Carol & Charlie Johnson
8973 St. Croix Trail S.
Hastings, MN 55033
Phone: 651-998-0301
E-mail: charlie@whistlingwellfarm.com
Website: www.whistlingwellfarm.com

➤ Products: *Apples*

◆ Certified by: *Food Alliance Midwest*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

☐ **Zweber Farm**

Jon & Lisa Zweber
25420 Natchez Ave.
Elko, MN 55020-9562
Phone: 952-461-3428

E-mail: zweber@integra.net

➤ Products: *Beef, chickens, pork (all raised without feed antibiotics) & pumpkins*

✕ Also services: *On farm pick-up*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

Retailers

—Southeast MN—

☐ **Blue Heron Coffeehouse**

Larry Wolner
162 W. 2nd St.
Winona, MN 55987-3109
Phone: 507-452-7020

E-mail: bluheron@hbc.com

Website: www.blueheroncoffeehouse.com

➤ Products: *Soup, salad, sandwiches, pastries made from scratch using fresh, organically grown local ingredients whenever possible; breakfast.*

☐ **Bluff Country Co-op**

121 W. 2nd St.
Winona, MN 55987-3446
Phone: 507-452-1815
E-mail: bccoop@chatermi.net
Website: www.bluff.coop

➤ Products: *Natural foods co-op.*

—Southwest MN—

☐ **Culinary Seasons**

Karen & Nancy
252 60th Ave. NE
Willmar, MN 56201
Phone: 320-214-1331
➤ Products: *Caterer using local foods.*

☐ **Java River**

Cathy
210 S 1st St.
Montevideo, MN 56265-1413
Phone: 320-269-9042
E-mail: javariver@info-link.net
Website: www.javarivercafe.com
➤ Products: *Coffee & sandwich shop.*

☐ **Meat Center of Appleton**

David & Alyce Fust
Hwy 7 / 250 W. Snelling
Appleton, MN 56208
E-mail: ainw@maxminn.com
➤ Products: *Deli, meat center & caterer featuring food from local farmers.*

✕ Also services: *Within 150 miles of Appleton.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

☐ **Auriga**

1930 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Phone: 612-871-077
E-mail: melinda@scatterbright.com
Website: www.aurigarestaurant.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

☐ **Birchwood Cafe**

Tracy Singleton
3311 E. 25th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Phone: 612-722-4474
E-mail: info@birchwoodcafe.com
Website: www.birchwoodcafe.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

☐ **Black Dog Coffee & Wine Bar**

Stacy & Sara
308 Prince St., Suite 100
Saint Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 651-228-9274
E-mail: blackdogcafe2@comcast.net
Website: www.blackdogstpaul.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes organic, locally produced & fair-trade food.*

☐ **Cafe Brenda**

Brenda Langton
300 1st Ave. North
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1600
Phone: 612-342-9230
E-mail: www.cafebrenda.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally & sustainably produced food.*

☐ **Clancey's Meats & Fish**

4307 Upton Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55416
Phone: 612-926-0222
E-mail: clanceymeats@aol.com
➤ Products: *Butcher shop specializing in fresh, local meats.*

☐ **French Meadow Bakery & Cafe**

Lynn Gordon
2610 Lyndale Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
Phone: 612-870-7855
E-mail: cafe@frenchmeadow.com
Website: www.organicbread.com
➤ Products: *Certified organic breads, bagels, rolls, tortillas. Cafe features*

Retailers

—Twin Cities Metro Area—

vegetarian and vegan options for breakfast, lunch & dinner, as well as vegan sweets.

❑ Heartland

Lenny Russo
1806 St. Clair Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55105
Phone: 651-699-3536
E-mail: heartland5@qwest.net
Website: www.heartlandrestaurant.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ Linden Hills Co-op

Jean Lakso
2813 W. 43rd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55410-1537
E-mail: info@lindenhillscoop.com
Website: www.lindenhillscoop.com
➤ Products: *Natural foods co-op.*

❑ Lucia's Restaurant

Lucia Watson
1432 W. 31st St.
Minneapolis, MN 55408-2605
Website: www.lucias.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ May Day Cafe

Andy Luning
3440 Bloomington Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Phone: 612-729-5627
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ Restaurant Alma

Alex Roberts
528 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414-1716
Phone: 612-379-4909
E-mail: info@restaurantalma.com
Website: www.restaurantalma.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes organic & locally produced food.*

❑ Sapor Café & Bar

Tanya Siebenaler
428 Washington Ave. N.
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1317
Phone: 612-375-1971

E-mail: julie@saporcafe.com
Website: www.saporcafe.com

➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ Signature Café

130 Warwick St. SE
Minneapolis, MN
Phone: 612-378-0237
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ St. Martin's Table

2001 Riverside Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55454
Phone: 612-339-3920
Website: www.communityofstmartin.org
➤ Products: *Dining room service-volunteers donate their tips to groups working to alleviate hunger, improve food production & distribution systems, and more. Seeking volunteers.*

✓ Volunteers/Interns? *Yes*

❑ Tanpopo Noodle Shop

Koshiki & Ben
308 Prince St., Suite 140
Saint Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 651-209-6527
E-mail: info@tanpoporestaurant.com
Website: www.tanpoporestaurant.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ Trotter's Cafe and Bakery

Pat & Dick Trotter
232 N. Cleveland Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55104
Phone: 651-645-8950
E-mail: trottersfour@usfamily.net
Website: www.trotters-stpaul.com
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*

❑ Wedge Co-op

Customer Service Desk
2105 Lyndale Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55405-3027
E-mail: wedge@wedge.coop
Website: www.wedge.coop
➤ Products: *Natural foods co-op.*
◆ Certified by: *O-MOSA; Food Alliance Midwest retail partner*

❑ Zander Cafe

Mike Hart
525 Selby Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1728
Phone: 651-222-5224
➤ Products: *Restaurant that promotes locally produced food.*



LSP's local food initiatives

Farmers using sustainable methods cannot prosper without the help of urban and rural consumers. As farmers explore creative new ways to market their carefully grown products, the Land Stewardship Project is helping link them to consumers



who can support their choice to farm sustainably by purchasing these products.

Pride of the Prairie, Food Alliance Midwest and Farm & City Food Connections are three of the initiatives LSP is working with. For details, call one of our offices: 507-523-3366 in Lewiston, Minn.; 320-269-2105 in Montevideo, Minn.; 651-653-0618 in White Bear Lake, Minn. Information is also available at www.landstewardshipproject.org/foodfarm-main.html.



Simply in Season

Recipes that celebrate fresh, local foods in the spirit of *More-with-Less*

By Mary Beth Lind & Cathleen Hockman-Wert

2005; 336 pages; \$19.99 (comb binding) \$13.99 (paper)

Herald Press, 616 Walnut Avenue
Scottsdale, PA 15683

www.worldcommunitycookbook.org

Reviewed By Dana Jackson

In recent years I've looked at a lot of cookbooks, searching for one that could help families make the commitment to buy and serve fresh, local foods. Bookstore shelves hold a plethora of cookbooks, many by well-known chefs or advocates of this diet or that. The chefs' books appeal to those whose hobby is to cook gourmet meals on the weekends, but they don't meet the needs of moms and dads whose responsibility is to prepare nutritious, but economical, meals every day for a family. Chefs may have jump-started the movement to use local foods by their search for unique, high quality ingredients to create distinctive dishes, but now "routine" home cooking must sustain the movement and local food economies in the long term.

Home cooking with whole foods is no longer a part of everyday life. In fact, in households where all adults have jobs outside the home, processed foods are the dietary staples. We can no longer assume that cooking skills are passed on from parent to child and that high school home economics courses teach what's missing. Most cookbooks are recipe books with little or no basic instruction on how to cook. Dietitians recommend that adults eat two to three cups of vegetables a day (depending on gender and age), but to follow this advice people need to know about seasonal availability, and how to choose and quickly prepare fresh vegetables. They need basic preparation tips, not complicated recipes that call for large amounts of other ingredients with the vegetables.

Thanks to JoAnne Rohricht, who gave *Simply in Season* to the Land Stewardship Project's White Bear Lake office library,

I've discovered a cookbook with a practical section for people who want to prepare more vegetables. Several pages in the front of the book contain columns of information about particular vegetables and fruits that tell readers how to select, store and handle each. For each fruit or vegetable, there is a paragraph about preparation and another with serving suggestions. For example, the parsnip probably will be less of a foreign food when you see the photo, and read in the brief paragraphs below it how to peel and core parsnips, then boil, steam or microwave them. The serving suggestions are simple—just season with butter, salt, pepper and herbs. But they also refer to pages in the recipe sections, like the one for "Maple Parsnip Cream Soup," that calls for more complicated preparation.

This is a cookbook about eating seasonal foods, but its recipes aren't just for vegetables and fruits. Each section contains recipes for breads, soups, salads, sides and main dishes that feature meat, desserts and "extras," like vegetable dips, pickles and hummus. This spiral-bound book is carefully organized to include a lot of material in accessible form, and its pleasing design enhances function. Each of the five sections—Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and All Seasons—is distinguished by a special color in the headings and along the edges of all the pages. Sections begin with bright photos and tables of contents and end with menus for the season and invitations to action. Yes, invitations to action.

Like the *More-with-Less* cookbook, this book was commissioned by the Mennonite Central Committee, a relief, community development and peace organization of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada and the United States. *Simply in Season* was written to "promote the understanding of how the food choices we make affect our lives and the lives of those who produce the food." It's a cookbook, but also a guide to eating local foods. The recipes appear in large print, easy to read and follow, so the recipe seeker isn't shortchanged by a didactic overemphasis. But small paragraphs about agribusiness, grass-fed cows, hunger, high fructose corn syrup, gardening and many other topics appear under the recipes in a squintable font with the first sentence in color to attract readers' eyes. These are described in the preface as "tidbits of information to reflect upon while the onions sauté, the soup simmers, or the bread bakes."

The tidbits also include anecdotes and

inspirational pieces from farmers, gardeners and cooks. One piece that caught my eye in the Spring section, "A Farmer's Walking Meditation," was written by Community Supported Agriculture farmer Dan Guenther, a member of LSP's Board of Directors.

Thirty years ago, the *More-with-Less* cookbook joined *Diet for a Small Planet* on the bookshelves of people who wanted to help solve the world food crisis. Editor Doris Janzen Longacre called on readers to consider eating and spending 10 percent less. "We are looking for ways to live more simply and joyfully, ways that grow out of our tradition but take their shape from living faith and the demands of our hungry world," she wrote. *More-with-Less* became a favorite cookbook for people of many religious faiths, and I'm sure with 47 printings and 840,000 copies sold by 2001, many readers of the *Land Stewardship Letter* own this book. That year Herald Press published a 25th anniversary edition featuring a new foreword by Mary Beth Lind, co-author of *Simply in Season*, along with the original collection of recipes—spiced with anecdotes, comments, and tips gleaned from 25 years of cooking.

More-with-Less emphasized frugality, using less expensive ingredients for meals and sharing dollars saved with people in need around the world. So it's a difficult mental shift for Mennonites to consider spending more for food to support local producers. Cathleen Hockman-Wert explains this in her statement in the front of the book. Though she grew up eating homemade bread from a *More-with-Less* recipe, her "journey with local food" began when she and her husband became more aware of environmental issues in the 1990s. They started seeking out local, sustainably-grown foods which sometimes meant paying more. She says it hasn't always been easy for two people ingrained with the frugality ethic. "Sometimes we chant a little mantra: 'Cheaper is not always better,'" she writes.

Graham Kerr, known internationally as the Galloping Gourmet on PBS, wrote in his foreword that the voice of the book is "pastoral, not judgmental." I found that to be true. The writers are Mennonite women, clearly guided by their religious faith and inherent feelings of gratitude, humility and accountability. But they are professionally suited to create this book. Cathleen Hockman-Wert has been an

Simply, see page 30...

editor for several Mennonite magazines and Mary Beth Lind is a registered dietitian, a nutritional consultant and a market gardener in West Virginia.

Simply in Season is a valuable resource for learning about nutritious eating, and there are many delicious sounding recipes in it that I am eager to

try, such as "Lemon Asparagus Pasta" (Spring), and "Curried Beans and Potato" (Summer). The glossary in the back describes how to can, dry and freeze foods, and explains alternative proteins, whole grains and flours. The Summer section contains a list of 10 nutrition tips, and discusses the tough question, "How do I get my child to eat healthy?"

I know one thing: this grandma is buying gift copies for the households of

each of my three children. □

Dana Jackson is a Senior Program Associate in charge of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm and City Food Connections program (www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_linking.html).

Opportunities



Resources

Voices package

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 three options for groups that may want to use this program:

→ Schedule a showing and discussion of this film for your group or club led by a specially-trained LSP volunteer.

→ Purchase an educational packet containing a *Voices* DVD, background material, introduction, discussion guide, hand-outs, "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 Dana Jackson at 651-653-0618, or visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/programs_linking.html. □

Youth farming

Gale Woods Farm in the Twin Cities is recruiting youth ages 13-16 for its summer community farm project. Youth who would like to spend their summer working on a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, learning life-skills and digging in the dirt, are welcome to apply. Transportation will be provided from South Minneapolis to the farm 25 miles west of the city.

For more information, see www.threeriversparkdistrict.org/parks/galewoods_csa.cfm, or call Melissa Hochstetler at 763-694-2005. □

WEI internships

The Women's Environmental Institute (WEI) is offering several internship oppor-

tunities associated with its farming activities near North Branch, Minn., one hour north of the Twin Cities. The Institute operates a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, a certified organic orchard and a retreat near Wild River State Park. Internships, some of them with paid stipends, are available in the areas of CSA farming, orchard production, ecological research, and environmental justice and gender equity research.

The application process runs until the positions are filled by June 1. For more in-

formation, visit www.w-e-i.org, or call 651-583-0705. □

Salting away liquid assets

Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch features a range of innovative methods to save water, including composting, conservation tillage, cover crops, rotations, low volume irrigation and water recycling. For a free copy, visit the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education website at www.sare.org/publications/water.htm, or call 301-504-5411. □

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.



MINNESOTA
Environmental Fund

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.

Ear to the Ground podcast offers an audio journey through LSP's work

The Land Stewardship Project's *Ear to the Ground* audio magazine is now available on our website. This podcast features interviews, reviews and special features 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).

For a step-by-step guide on how to subscribe to the free *Ear to the Ground* service, visit www.landstewardshipproject.org/podcast.html.

Looking for story ideas

We are looking for story ideas for future *Ear to the Ground* podcasts. Do you know of someone who would make a good interview? Know of any good talks related to LSP's work that should get out to a wider audience?

We'd like to hear from you: Contact Brian DeVore at 612-729-6294 or bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org. □



• • •
"The CSA concept to us has always been about more than just vegetables. It's about relationships—the relationship we have with our members, the relationship that they have with each other, and then also with the land."

— Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmer Patty Wright, speaking on *Ear to the Ground* No. 16
• • •

Ear to the Ground so far:

- **No. 1:** First of a three-part series on Frances Moore Lappé and living democracy.
- **No. 2:** Second of a three-part series on Frances Moore Lappé and living democracy.
- **No. 3:** Third of a three-part series on Frances Moore Lappé and living democracy.
- **No. 4:** A farm family unearths some unpleasant environmental history, pushing them even harder to be good stewards of the land.
- **No. 5:** The role of women in agriculture is examined through the "Planting in the Dust" play, and the *Voices of Minnesota Farm Women* documentary film.
- **No. 6:** How Farm Beginnings™ helps new farmers set goals and put tools in their place.
- **No. 7:** Launching a financial plan for a new farming operation.
- **No. 8:** A tribute to the late Dave Serfling, a farmer, leader, husband, father and steward of the land.
- **No. 9:** A research initiative examines how farming can produce multiple benefits for society beyond food and fiber production.
- **No. 10:** A scientist working on the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture project talks about how working farms can help reduce fish-killing water pollution.
- **No. 11:** A dairy farmer talks about how he has used rotational grazing to improve water quality on his land.
- **No. 12:** Fred Kirschenmann talks about the future of agriculture in the first of a two-part series.
- **No. 13:** Second of a two-part series on Fred Kirschenmann and his views on the future of agriculture.
- **No. 14:** Economist Richard Levins describes how farmers can use market power to get paid a fair price for their production.
- **No. 15:** Farmer Audrey Arner talks about her experiences with globalization.
- **No. 16:** How Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) brings farmers and consumers together.
- **No. 17:** A Farm Beginnings™ discussion about planning for profit.
- **No. 18:** An introduction to innovative direct marketing for beginning farmers.
- **No. 19:** Beginning farmers learn how to successfully obtain credit.

'Family Farms' art show



Paintings, illustrations, sculptures, photographs and "found art" were featured at the "Family Farms: A Tribute" show this winter at the Northfield (Minn.) Arts Guild. Through the exhibit, a group of 14 artists from around the state provided a glimpse into the rural landscape as they see it—the farm fields, the livestock, the fields of grain, the small towns and the Main Streets. In connection with the show, the Northfield League of Women Voters moderated a "What is the Future for Family Farms?" panel discussion. The art show was sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota COACT, Minnesota Farmers Union and Clean Water Action Alliance. (LSP photo)

STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ MAY 14—Voices of Minnesota Farm Women showing & discussion,

Macalester Plymouth United Church, 658 Lincoln Avenue, Saint Paul, Minn.; Contact: Leslie Reindle, 651-633-4410

→ MAY 15—Grazing workshop on managing sensitive areas in pastures, Troy, Minn.; Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; caroline@landstewardshipproject.org

→ MAY 15-JUNE 20—Voices of American Farm Women Photo Exhibit, Mid-South Community College, West Memphis, Ark.; Contact: 1-800-4733-38772; cynthia.vagnetti@pressroom.com

→ MAY 20—"A Day at Chan's Dance Barn," Glenwood, Minn.; Contact: Friends of Minnesota Barns, www.friends ofminnesotabarns.org; 612-338-2276

→ MAY 20-21—CURE River, Culture & History Weekend, Granite Falls, Minn.; Contact: 1-877-269-2873; www.curemn river.org

→ MAY 22—Grazing workshop on managing sensitive areas in pastures, Troy, Minn.; Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; caroline@landstewardshipproject.org

→ MAY 22-23—Wild Foods Summit on Identifying, Harvesting & Preparing Wild Edible Plants, Maplelag Resort, White Earth Reservation, Minn.; Contact: Sunny Johnson, yeehawunny@yahoo.com; 218-936-5620

→ JUNE 2-3—"Well-Managed Forests for Community Well-Being," Palisade, Minn.; Contact: www.forestguild.org

→ JUNE 3—Southeast Minnesota LSP Sustainable Garden Tour & Dinner, Barb & Martin Nelson Gardens, Winona;

Contact: Karen Benson, LSP, 507-523-3366; lspse@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JUNE 3—Farm Beginnings™ public tour of a dairy grazing operation, Canton, Minn.; Contact: Karen Stettler, LSP, 507-523-3366; stettler@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JUNE 3—Dairy Goat Tour, Donnay Dairy Farm, Kimball, Minn.; Contact: Brenda Postels, 763-682-7381

→ JUNE 5—Grazing workshop featuring a tour of an established grazing system, southeast Minn.; Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; caroline@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JUNE 6-7—Small Towns Symposium/Rural Summit, University of Minnesota-Morris; Contact: www.centerfor smalltowns.org; 320-589-6451

→ JUNE 5-AUG. 16—Voices of American Farm Women Photo Exhibit, Boone County Fair Board, Harrisburg, Mo.; Contact: 1-800-4733-38772; cynthia.vagnetti@pressroom.com

→ JUNE 12—Deadline for commenting on proposed USDA organic dairy rule related to pasture access; Contact: www.ams.usda.gov/news/085-06.htm; 202-720-3252

→ JUNE 12 & 19—Grazing workshop on pasture monitoring, southeast Minn.; Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; caroline@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JUNE 14—Chippewa County, Minn., CROP Walk, Montevideo; Contact: LSP, 320-269-2105; amyb@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JUNE 23—Southeast Minnesota Grazing & Forage Expo, Dan & Cara Miller farm, Spring Valley, Minn.; Contact: 507-346-2261; dmiller@myclearwave.net

→ JUNE 23-25—Renewable Energy & Sustainable Living Fair, featuring Long

Emergency author James Howard

Kunstler, Custer, Wis.; Contact: www.themrea.org/energy_fair.php; 715-592-6595

→ JUNE 26—Grazing workshop featuring a tour of a grazing operation in development, southeast Minn.; Contact: Caroline van Schaik, LSP, 507-523-3366; caroline@landstewardshipproject.org

→ JULY 21-22—Farm Beginnings™ public tour of a CSA produce operation, Rushford, Minn.; Contact: Karen Stettler, LSP, 507-523-3366; stettler@landstewardshipproject.org

→ AUG. 5—Annual LSP Celebration of Food, Family & Farming, Bedtke Family Farm, Plainview, Minn.; Contact: LSP, 507-523-3366

→ AUG. 12—Minnesota Garlic Festival, Wright County Fairgrounds, Howard Lake, Minn.; Contact: Jerry Ford, 320-543-3394; jerry@marienne.com; www.sfa-mn.org

→ AUG. 15-17—National conference of the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program, featuring a presentation by LSP, Oconomowoc, Wis.; Contact: www.sare2006.org; 402-472-5678

→ AUG. 23-25—IFOAM International Conference on Animals in Organic Prod., U of M, St. Paul, Minn.; Contact: Jim Riddle, 507-454-8310; www.cce.umn.edu/conferencecenter/services

→ AUG. 29—Food Alliance Midwest Minnesota Cooks Event, Minnesota State Fair, Falcon Heights, Minn.; Contact: 651-265-3682; www.foodalliance.org/midwest/partners_mw.htm

→ SEPT. 1-OCT. 5—Voices of American Farm Women Photo Exhibit, Sedalia Chamber of Commerce, Sedalia, Mo.; Contact: 1-800-4733-38772; cynthia.vagnetti@pressroom.com

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



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