

The Land Stewardship

Keeping the Land and People Together

Letter



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Rotating in a New Generation

It's one thing to teach someone the techniques of farming. It's quite another to plant the seeds of sustainable success.

By Brian DeVore

John Wise worked a dozen years taking care of the Japanese garden at a community college in Minnesota. It was demanding work that required a combination of physical toughness and artistic finesse. And a little bit of nerve. One of the hardest jobs was pruning the 120 trees that make up the garden, often while clinging to a ladder perched precariously on a steep hillside.

"People would watch me prune and say, 'Is this guy going to fall and die or what?'" Wise recalls.

These days, Wise and his wife Heidi are taking on a profession that in some ways is about as risky as wielding a pair of pruning shears from the top of a tottering ladder: farming. Even well-established farmers are leaving the land in droves, as commodity prices dive below the cost of production, government programs reward only the largest producers, and corporations gobble up market share while inflating land prices. Throw in the vagaries of weather, disease and pests, and then pruning trees while hanging onto the wobbliest of ladders looks safe by comparison. The age of the average U.S. farmer has now crept past 54. In 1954, 37 percent of farmers were 55 or older. According to the latest Census of Agriculture (1997), 61 percent now fit into that age category. Meanwhile, between 1954 and 1997 the percentage of farmers younger than 35 dropped by almost half, to 8 percent. In the past three



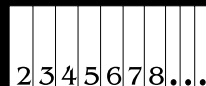
John Wise (right) and his Farm Beginnings mentor, Dan Miller, discuss grazing strategy. "When I said I was interested in farming, he actually was excited about it," Wise says of Miller. "He didn't say, 'You don't want to do that.'" (LSP photo)

years, no graduate of the University of Minnesota's agriculture college has taken up farming as a career.

The Wises are aware of all those statistics—they keep a file of agriculture-related media clippings full of headlines about the dire state of family farming. But the ladder they are perched on is a little less shaky than it might have been, thanks to the combination of an innovative, hands-on education program for people who want to farm, a knowledge that not all farming has to consist of major capital investment and high risk, and a mentor who has taken the time to show what it's really like to try and make a living on the land. The Wises' farming dreams may yet take a tumble, but the experience they've

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An argument for regional economics

By Robert Wolf

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

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Over the past few years increasing numbers of people have been promoting local food systems, locally owned businesses, and local currencies as means by which to retain more dollars within their local economies. These items, along with land trusts, community banks, and other instruments, serve to retard or restrict the reach of transnational corporations and large urban banks into every corner of our economic and cultural life.

Now what some people are coming to realize is that local strategies for economic sustainability must be adopted on a regional level.

Regions lack strict definition since they are creations of nature, not of humans, and therefore are not subject to boundaries but degrees. Regions blend into one another, in imperceptible gradations, as the agricultural land of the Midwest yields to the Great Plains, and these lands in turn are transformed into desert. Within the last few decades, regions have been defined most commonly in terms of their geology and topography, their watersheds, their flora and fauna. When viewed in this perspective, Maine has more in common with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland than with other New England states. And northern California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia share more features with each other than with their neighboring states and provinces.

This view of regionalism is called bioregionalism, and it is my contention that harnessing the idea of the bioregion with the strategies of local economics to develop regional economies is our only effective counter to globalization. What stands in our way is an obstacle of no slight consequence: fragmentation.

The tendency towards fragmentation is an inherent part of the human condition, but it has been a growing force in Western societies since the breakdown of the common culture of the Middle Ages and the birth of the Renaissance. The United States, in particular, is racked by fragmentation. Discord is everywhere, evidenced in our high murder and divorce

rates, in our attachment to lawyers and law courts, and in our ideological party line disputes. But equally destructive of social cohesion are greed and envy, fueled by our consumerist culture of conspicuous consumption.

Globalization, on the other hand, is the latest and most visible tendency of human societies to aggrandize themselves into larger units. The imperial imperative is now driven by commerce, by the transnational corporations, which are creating larger cultural units by a process of homogenization. By the very fact of globalization's success—obliterating folkways, languages, and religions, and creating in their stead secular societies rooted in materialism and consumerism—globalism creates alienation and anger. The destruction of the World Trade Center and a portion of the Pentagon is most likely due not only to America's Mideast military and political operations but to our arrogant assumption that the goods of life equal the Good Life and that nothing should stand in the way of an ever expanding Gross National Product, including the self-determination of other societies. In other words, while globalism imposes a surface homogeneity upon a people, it destroys tradition and alienates people from one another. It creates fragmentation.

Some degree of centralization and decentralization are needed to maintain a healthy society. An adequate degree of centralization in a government coordinates the work of its parts, but too much stifles regional and local decision making, as well as self-reliance. Centralization represents the tendency toward order and coherence; decentralization represents the complementary tendency towards individuality. Pushed to their extremes, centralization becomes totalitarian and decentralization devolves into anarchy.

Even before globalism, people worldwide were alienated from industrial capitalism, which exalted materialism over spirituality, plundered the environment in order to sustain itself, and stripped art from work, transforming it into labor and thereby dehumanizing the worker. Growing numbers of people are

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realizing that the individual's meaningfulness lies in whatever he or she contributes to the Gross National Product. Economics, after all, is our master art; all others are subservient, according to conventional wisdom.

Is there, however, a means by which we can construct a society in which the human being is central, not peripheral, with an economy that serves us? One in which it is understood that nature has tolerance limits, and that by crossing them too often we will destroy the foundation of our existence? Can we construct a society in which work is meaningful? And one in which our voices are heard? It is imperative that we construct political and economic units in which people can once again find a home.

What is regionalism?

Regionalism is precisely the means by which we can reconstruct society with a human face—if we have the collective will to do it. What is regionalism and how does it function?

I. Regionalism fosters local culture, with industry and agriculture suited to the region's resources. Regionalism is a form of decentralization, and is at odds with a centralized system, which seeks to impose uniformity in every sphere of activity. Our centralized culture produces developments with cookie-cutter houses, cities that look remarkably similar, and bestselling books that are written by formula. In contrast, people living responsibly within a region and whose sensibilities respond to the environment will create an architecture, art and literature that is shaped by it. A poetry that reflects the pace, activities, and landscape of New England will necessarily differ from verse created in the Great Plains that seeks to interpret the environment and life of that region.

Likewise, a sustainable economy within each region will respond to the availability of its resources, rather than impose an agricultural or manufacturing system that has no place within it. Because our resource-depleting economy pays no attention to limitations of place, it has been using the Great Plains as farm and cattle country, but to sustain crops and cattle there we have had to irrigate and are consequently draining the Ogallala Aquifer.

II. Regionalism creates a home for us. People find greater identification within an area demarcated by a common topography or watershed than within an

area described by arbitrary state boundaries. More important, we can only build a regional civilization upon cooperation and the recognition of mutual interdependence; otherwise we merely replicate our failed civilization. But cooperation cannot begin until we bury rivalries. Community development must precede economic development. A regional program demands that we find our way Home again.

III. Regionalism restores human scale. Our centralized system, from which large numbers are alienated, exists for the sake of the profit and power of a relative minority, and because profit demands efficiency, uniformity and giantism are demanded. The system is therefore beyond human scale and opposed to human needs.

IV. Regionalism fosters local production over the importation of goods. This

VI. Regionalism can enable rural America to maintain population. The development of local business and the encouragement of entrepreneurs creates jobs, enabling the regional population to stabilize and grow. By keeping money circulating within the region, and by enriching its cultural amenities, a rural region would retain more of its youth.

VII. Regionalism is what Lewis Mumford called a "collective art." The establishment of local food systems, industry and cultural activities that help strengthen regional consciousness is an enormous cooperative enterprise. The process of getting people to participate, especially on a large scale, will take time; but getting people on board, a few at a time, eventually creates a momentum that attracts greater numbers.

VIII. Regionalism is cost-effective. If for no other reason, regionalism is



Illustration by Pat Marrin

means, for example, building with local materials, which in turn might mean constructing lumber mills or reforesting the landscape, building a brickworks, reopening limestone quarries, and so on. It means developing a local food system. Regionalism can work to retain its wealth in other ways. It can do this by constructing local currencies (formalized bartering systems) and community development banks to create local housing and business.

V. Regionalism fosters a regional culture. Regionalism promotes the arts as a means of maintaining regional consciousness. Regional consciousness in turn fosters a willingness to work together. But a regionalism that is more than an excuse for economic prosperity recognizes that the making of art is central to our humanity.

necessitated by the lack of Federal and state dollars. Whereas not so long ago, common wisdom had it that any local problem had a state or national government solution, today lack of Federal and state funds makes it imperative that cities and counties provide their own solutions to their problems. It is clear that regional projects, which involve the cooperation of several counties or cities, are far more cost-effective than the same project replicated in multiple towns or counties.

A rural imperative

The argument for regionalism is easier to make with rural than with urban people. Rural Americans see their young migrating to cities in search of jobs, they

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know how little money farmers receive for crops and livestock, they see their towns depopulating and Main Street struggling to survive.

As they see Federal dollars for local projects disappearing, rural Americans can understand the necessity for towns and counties to bury old rivalries and to work cooperatively for economic development. The problem of rivalries is not solved, but a start is being made here and there. A project now underway in central Iowa, along a 60-mile stretch of the Iowa River Valley, is getting men and women, youngsters and elders, to sit around tables writing regional stories and histories, and conducting economic and cultural needs assessments for their sub-region. Their immediate aim is to create a book on the area, including a photo essay developed by high school youngsters that will create a regional consciousness.

Without that consciousness, community development within and between towns and counties will not happen. And without community development, cooperative economic development will remain an impossibility. For self-sufficiency and self-sustainability to occur, it is not enough simply to build a factory here or a processing plant there. If deeper issues such as cooperation were not involved, the problem of economic justice would have been solved long ago. But the root of the problem is with us: it is our individualism that created our fragmented society in which every man, woman, and child is out for himself or herself. Once we recognize individualism as the problem, then we can begin community rebuilding. Jesus asked for more, commanding us to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." But perhaps now, for a start, enlightened self-interest will prevail on the local level as people witness the failure of our government to act against oligopolies, and as we witness the breakdown of civil discourse and behavior across the nation. □

Robert Wolf owns and operates Free River Press (www.freeriverpress.org) in Lansing Iowa, and is the author of *The Triumph of Technique and the Industrialization of Agriculture*, forthcoming from *Lindisfarne Books*. He can be reached at 563-538-4579 or bkrw@salamander.com.

Letters

Good, but long-winded

I was really close to letting my subscription lapse, and then I read the March/April *Land Stewardship Letter* cover story on antibiotics. Thanks for an important and well-written article.

One reason I was close to not renewing is the many *long* articles which I don't always take time to read. While I think the articles are good, and am interested, it seems overwhelming to sit down and read it all.

—Dick Grant, Afton, Minn.

Steward of the table

Many of us know that animals raised in good conditions need very little artificial assistance (May/June 2002 *Land Stewardship Letter*). I remember when growing up on a small dairy farm that a call to the veterinarian was always a last ditch attempt. Nature usually did its job.

This year I was finally able to close the gap in the sourcing system for my restaurant. Lamb was added to my list of local products. So now we have beef, pork, chicken and lamb—all from small scale Ohio farms.

I guess I like challenges and projects so I've launched two more ideas with farmers. One farmer bought four Large Black Pigs, a heritage breed I found in Mississippi through the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. In September 2003, we will have our first crossbred carcasses from this project.

I have several farmers now doing grass-fed beef, and I persuaded the slaughterhouse to let it hang for three weeks. Because it is 100 percent organic and the animals are very healthy the carcass didn't mold or deteriorate.

Amazing is it not that we live in the richest and most resourceful country in the world, yet we who are not willing to accept factory food have to hunt for good, safe, naturally produced food?

—Parker Bosley, chef/owner
Parker's Restaurant
Cleveland, Ohio

Canaries in a corn mine

In its April 29, 2002, edition, the *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* (www.ifbf.org/publication/default.asp) contained an alarming story on sow breeding problems

related to the feeding of genetically engineered Bt corn.

According to the article, Shelby County, Iowa, farmer Jerry Rosman was alarmed when farrowing rates in his sow herd plummeted nearly 80 percent. Eventually, Rosman became aware of four other producers within a 15-mile radius of his farm whose herds had nearly identical pseudopregnancies. The herds had different management styles, different breeding methods and different swine genetics.

A common denominator, Rosman says, is that all of the farming operations fed their herds the same Bt corn hybrids. These are hybrids that have been genetically engineered to kill the European corn borer.

Laboratory tests revealed their corn contained high levels of *Fusarium* mold. Rosman says researchers typed the *Fusarium* down to four strains, and two of them (*Fusarium subglutinans* and *Fusarium moniliforme*) were consistent in all of the producers' samples.

One of the producers subsequently switched back to regular non-Bt corn, and pseudopregnancy is no longer a problem within that herd.

In a follow-up article on May 13, the *Spokesman* reported that shortly after the story detailing Rosman's situation appeared, he was flooded with telephone calls from other farmers experiencing similar problems with Bt corn.

The *Spokesman* articles illustrate that any animal, or human, that eats foods containing conventional corn, soy, canola, and/or cottonseed products is an unwitting guinea pig in a vast, uncharted ecological experiment.

—Jim Riddle, Winona, Minn.

What's on your mind?

Got an opinion? Comments? Criticisms? We like to print letters, commentaries, essays and poems on issues we cover. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

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





Foods Guide for the Upper Minn. River Valley now available

"There's No Taste Like Home" is the theme of the *Local Foods Guide for the Upper Minnesota River Valley* recently published by the Pride of the Prairie program. This 71-page guide features more than 90 farms in the region that are producing vegetables, fruits, herbs, meats, honey, eggs, dairy products, grains, flour and wool for direct sale to consumers. The farms listed utilize a variety of sustainable production practices, including certified organic, grass-based and antibiotic-free. As the guide says, the focus of these foods is on taste, "not on the produce's ability to survive a 2,000 mile journey."

The guide also features processors, restaurants and retailers that handle locally produced food. Included are tips on using whole foods, a seasonal food guide and a map showing locations of the farms.

Pride of the Prairie is an initiative to identify what farm products are being

raised for direct sales in the Upper Minnesota River Valley and to develop an infrastructure where consumers can get access to these locally produced items. The Land Stewardship Project's western Minnesota office is leading Pride of the Prairie, with funding and collaborative support from West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Morris Prairie Renaissance, the Blandin Program, University of Minnesota-Morris, West Central Research and Outreach Center, AURI, University of Minnesota Extension Service, and individual farmers and community leaders.

To get a copy of the local foods guide, call LSP's western Minnesota office at 320-269-2105, or e-mail lsptest@landstewardshipproject.org. □

Conservation Security Program fact sheets available

The Land Stewardship Project has launched a series of fact sheets on a new Farm Bill initiative that holds great promise for rewarding producers who are taking good care of the land. The first two fact sheets in the series, *Get Paid for Real Conservation* and *Resources of Concern*, provide an introduction to the Conservation Security Program (CSP), which was established by the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (see March/April *Land Stewardship Letter*, page 2). Other fact sheets will be added to the series in coming months.

The CSP will reward farmers who are already doing a good job of conservation on working farmland, and will provide incentives for implementing new practices that improve land stewardship still further. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will implement the program in 2003.

"The Conservation Security Program is an exciting step toward rewarding conservation farming practices such as managed rotational grazing and resource-conserving crop rotations that in the past have been ignored or even penalized by government programs," says Mark Schultz, LSP's Policy Program Director. "That is especially true for sustainable

family farmers, who have kept good multiple crop rotations, often along with hay and pasture. Right now, the best thing for such farmers to do is to go into their county NRCS office and talk to the staff about how the CSP can really work to the benefit of the land and family farmers."

Copies of the fact sheets in Adobe Acrobat pdf format can be downloaded from LSP's Web site at www.landstewardshipproject.org. For a free paper copy of the fact sheets, contact LSP's Policy Program office at 612-722-6377. □

Judge orders review of turkey confinement

In an Aug. 8 ruling, District Court Judge Martha Simonett sided with family farmers and rural residents by ordering an environmental review on a controversial turkey confinement proposed for Goodhue County's Pine Island Township (see May/June *Land Stewardship Letter*, page 7). The ruling means that construction of the proposed factory style farm cannot proceed until an environmental review is completed. The proposed turkey facility is a contract operation for the Jennie-O Turkey Store Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hormel. The facility would house 35,000 turkeys, which would generate the waste equivalent of a city of approximately 6,000 people.

The project is strongly opposed by the neighbors who filed the lawsuit because the turkey confinement facility is proposed in an area prone to flooding. As part of a petition for environmental review, the neighbors submitted photos of the area under water from a July 1990 rain. The site is about 250 feet from Pine Island Creek.

"The judge did what our county commissioners should have done," says Ed Gadiant, a Land Stewardship Project member and independent hog producer who lives near the proposed site. "This is a good ruling. It's common sense that a building this size should not be on a site that has been under water."

In March, 38 neighboring farmers and rural residents, including several LSP members, submitted a petition asking Goodhue County to order an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) on the project. On May 7, the county commissioners denied the petition. Fourteen farmers and five rural residents living near the proposed facility challenged the county's decision in court. □

Pride of the Prairie



"There's No Taste Like Home".

Local Foods Guide

for the

Upper Minnesota River Valley

Mo. hog farmers hosted by LSP

A group of Missouri hog farmers came to Minnesota in mid-August to get a firsthand look at what the Land Stewardship Project has done to promote alternative swine production. The 10 farmers are all members of Missouri Rural Crisis. Both LSP and Missouri Rural Crisis are founding members of the Campaign for Family Farms, a coalition of groups that has been fighting to make sure independent family hog farmers remain viable. Other members of the Campaign are Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and the Illinois Stewardship Alliance.

The farmers visited the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, where LSP members helped secure funding for an alternative swine research program (see page 7). The program now includes four deep-straw hoop house facilities and a fulltime sustainable swine systems scientist, Rebecca Morrison. Morrison described to the visiting farmers the research being done to improve feed efficiency, carcass quality, pig behavior and welfare, as well as alternative feed and bedding types. She said that thus far, they've found that the key to success in the deep straw systems is having sows with good maternal behavior and lots of good quality bedding.

Morrison said the unique research facility in Morris would not have been

possible if members and staff of groups like the LSP had not pushed for it. Such research offers hope for beginning farmers with few resources, she said.

"It's a lot cheaper for a young person to put up some hoops and spend twenty or thirty thousand than to spend \$500,000 on a confinement facility."

The Missouri farmers told Morrison that publicly funded research like hers is key to countering the move toward large-scale factory farming.

"It's very important to us to have access to this kind of information and research," said Rhonda Perry, a hog farmer and member of Missouri Rural Crisis. "It is also important to us that this information and research stay pure and not controlled by private companies and commodity groups. Be careful."

The Campaign for Family Farms worked to bring the mandatory pork checkoff tax to a vote in 2000. The pork checkoff is seen by independent hog farmers as a major funder of the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), which promotes factory farming through research and other initiatives. Hog farmers across the nation voted to end the checkoff, but U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman cut a deal with the NPPC to maintain the checkoff. That decision is being appealed in court by the Campaign for Family Farms.

Perry told Morrison that frustration with the NPPC's push toward factory farming was the impetus behind the pork checkoff recall campaign. It also prompted Missouri Rural Crisis Center to create Patchwork Family Farms, a marketing initiative that sells pork raised on independent family farms using natural methods.

LSP staff member Terry VanDerPol said it will be easy for private companies and narrowly focused commodity groups to control research at places like Morris if there's no public support for such funding. That's why it was so key that the Minnesota Legislature provided funding for the Morris hoop houses and Morrison's position, said VanDerPol.

The Missourians also visited the farms of LSP members who are producing hogs,

including Jim and LeeAnn VanDerPol, Rodney and Joan Skalbeck and Paul and Candy Sobocinski. In addition, LSP members Don and Bev Struxness, along with their son Dan and his wife Missy, showed the farmers the grazing system they use for their cow-calf operation.

Carl Wiehardt, who raises hogs, small grains, corn, soybeans and cattle near Glasgow, Mo., came up to Minnesota to see if hoop houses would be a good addition to his farm. He raises hogs for Patchwork, and is looking at a way he can reduce the mud and labor that comes with swine production in inclement weather. He also likes that using straw bedding would help him "close the nutrient cycle" on his farm by allowing him to return the composted manure to his farm fields.

"I like raising hogs because they create a cash flow but I hate lagoons for manure storage," he said. "Hoop houses would help me stay diversified."

For more information on the alternative swine research taking place at the West Central Research and Outreach Center, contact Rebecca Morrison at 320-589-1711 or morrisrs@mrs.umn.edu. Wayne Martin, coordinator of the Alternative Swine Task Force, can be contacted at 612-625-6224 or marti067@tc.umn.edu.

For information on Patchwork, contact: 1108 Rangeline Street, Columbia, Mo. 65201; phone: 573-449-1336. □

Corporate vampires

"... [There is] a concentration of economic power and wealth spearheaded by packers who own and feed their livestock. This shift in the economic balance from the rural sector to the corporate headquarters of the very large and monopolized packing industry is sucking the lifeblood out of our rural communities."

— **Land Stewardship Project member-farmer Nolan Junglaus**, testifying before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on July 16 during a hearing on packer ownership of livestock. His entire testimony can be viewed at www.landstewardshipproject.org/opinions/02/opinion_020716.html



Rebecca Morrison explained to a group of Missouri farmers what kind of alternative swine research is taking place at the West Central Research and Outreach Center. (LSP photo)

Public research...public goods

By Paul Sobocinski & Terry VanDerPol

On Aug. 1, the Land Stewardship Project helped celebrate the establishment of a unique research initiative at the University of Minnesota-Morris, in western Minnesota. The Alternative Swine Production Systems Program is more than a collection of buildings and animal science know-how at the West Central Research and Outreach Center. It's a symbol of what can happen when various groups and individuals put their heads together and come up with innovative ideas, and then work with a university to take agricultural research at a land grant facility in a new direction.

The Alternative Swine Systems Appreciation Day began with a tour of the facilities themselves, which are now going into their second year of operation. The program includes four deep-straw hoop house facilities and a fulltime sustainable swine scientist, Rebecca Morrison. Research on pasture farrowing is also being conducted at the center.

Both deep straw production and pasture farrowing are considered viable alternatives to conventional, total confinement methods of hog production. Some of the research at the center is focusing on swine behavior, trying to figure out how farmers can work with a hog's nature, instead of forcing it to do things it wouldn't normally do. Insights gained from such observation are helping farmers shuck some of the negative trappings of factory farming—overuse of subtherapeutic antibiotics and environmental pollution, for example. The Morris research initiative is in striking contrast to the normal animal science fare found at land grant institutions: research into how to keep hogs healthy in total confinement, or what to do with all that liquid manure produced by such facilities.

"We shouldn't talk about this agriculture as just the alternative," Minnesota House of Representatives member Ted Winter told the 200 farmers and others gathered on Aug. 1. "The factory farms are the alternatives and this is the mainstream we should be supporting."

First, a little history behind the development of this alternative swine program. In the early 1990s, Julie Jansen

and other members of LSP's Livestock Concentration Committee were telling legislators that University of Minnesota livestock research was not preventing odors and other pollutants from making them sick. Independent family farmers were also making it clear that research into expensive, mega-sized hog raising was not serving their needs. Members of LSP and other organizations began pushing for an alternative to the conventional research agenda. In 1997, Minne-



More than 200 people participated in the Alternative Swine and Production Systems Program Appreciation Day. (photo by Terry VanDerPol)

sota Representative Gary Kubly questioned the wisdom of just researching the odor factory farms produce, when we could be supporting science that looks at alternatives that don't produce odor problems in the first place. A sense of fairness demanded at least some research into alternatives. At around the same time, agronomist Don Wyse, who was then the Director of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), began making the point that for a truly sustainable agriculture to be developed in the Midwest, livestock need to be part of a diversified mix.

As the appreciation portion of the Aug. 1 event made clear, a lot of people played key roles in finally making this facility a reality, including a number of legislators (some of whom were not able to be present on Aug. 1). Legislators who attended the field day and were recognized included Rep. Kubly, Rep. Winter, Rep. Doug Peterson (now Minnesota Farmers Union President), Rep. Henry Kalis, Sen. Chuck Fowler, Sen. Dallas Sams, Rep. George Cassell, Rep. Mary

Ellen Otremba and Rep. Torrey Westrom. During the recognition ceremony, LSP staff made it clear that public dollars need to be continually directed at supporting all agricultural research at the University of Minnesota. That is the only way land grant research can produce results that help the general public, not just a select few special interests.

Jim VanDerPol, a farmer and LSP Board member, helped make the Alternative Swine Program a reality while serving as the MISA Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems from 1999 to 2000 (VanDerPol has continued to serve as a consultant). Another key force behind this initiative has been the Alternative Swine Task Force, which is made up of farmers, researchers, agency staff and sustainable agriculture experts.

Now that this unique swine facility is up and running, what does that mean for the typical family hog farmer? On Aug. 1, Morrison and other scientists made it clear that the research being done at Morris has practical applications, while Iowa farmer Colin Wilson described his experience with hoop house production. The day ended with a talk on marketing alternatives for sustainably-produced swine.

Speaking of marketing alternatives, another key component of the event was the noon meal, which was served at the research center's beautiful horticulture gardens. This lunch was also a teachable moment. The meal was organized by Pride of the Prairie, an initiative to create a regional food system in the upper Minnesota River Valley which was developed by LSP, along with other groups. It was catered by the Meat Center of Appleton owners David and Alyce Fust. The whole roasted hog that served as the centerpiece of the meal came from the VanDerPol farm, and the accompanying sweet corn was raised by Brad and Kristi Fernholz, recent participants in LSP's Farm Beginnings program (see page 1 and page 8). We wanted to plant the seed in legislators' minds that in order for rural residents to take economic power back, we must add value to our production by producing, processing and eating it at home. We can build real wealth by keeping more of the value our

Swine Research see page 8...

rich soils produce at home.

This was the first major event where we had on hand the new *Local Foods Guide for the Upper Minnesota River Valley* (see page 5). This guide lists more than 90 farmers in the area who are producing food for direct sales to

consumers. We put it in the hands of legislators to show what local food systems exist, and that there is potential for developing them further.

As far as LSP is concerned, the Aug. 1 event represented a dovetailing of our work to develop policy that supports family farms with our promotion of sustainable agriculture and efforts to

promote local food systems. A home run? No, but it's a heckuva triple play. □

LSP Policy organizers Paul Sobocinski (507-342-2323) and Terry VanDerPol (320-269-2105) both farm in western Minnesota. VanDerPol also helps coordinate the Pride of the Prairie program.

Update

Southeast

Farm Beginnings: the next step

By Karen Stettler

In July, I attended the Farm Transition Network's annual meeting and conference in California's Sonoma County, an agricultural region north of San Francisco. The Farm Transition Network is a coalition that was started over a decade ago by people from across the nation who are working on beginning farmer and rancher issues. Nonprofit groups, government agencies and university employees all are part of this network, making for an interesting mix. In this case, the whole is definitely greater than the parts.

As the coordinator of Land Stewardship Project's southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings program (see page 1), I've attended these conferences for the past three years. They are a great opportunity to see what's working (and what's not) as like-minded people strive to help our next generation of farmers get established.

It's exciting to see that the interest in getting beginning farmers on the land is not exclusive to Minnesota or the Upper Midwest. More than 20 states, as well as Canada, were represented at this year's conference. There was even a delegation from Japan.

There's even interest on the Federal level. For example, there is a beginning farmer and rancher educational development program in the new Farm Bill. This is the first time the USDA has looked at anything besides giving financial credit to beginning farmers and ranchers. The Senate version of the Farm Bill funded it, but the funding was eliminated in the final version of the bill. There's a chance it could get funded in the near future. Stay tuned. Whatever happens, this is recognition by the Federal government that beginning farmers need more than low-interest loans to get started. It's a step in the right direction.

Smart state programs

Some of the state initiatives I heard about at the conference are quite creative. For example, there's a beginning farmer apprenticeship program in Pennsylvania that's developed a working relationship with that state's labor department. In fact, in order to graduate from the program, beginning farmers must reach a certain proficiency level approved by the agency.

A group called California FarmLink is working with a land trust organization to allow farmers to produce food on acreages that have been protected from development in perpetuity. We visited one farmer who was raising organic vegetables on trusted land. This experience drives home to me the importance of preparing for the future here in the Midwest. We can't assume our land will always be available for farming. If we don't act now to protect some of our most fertile farm fields, we may be dealing with the same problems as highly developed states like California 10, 20, 30 years down the road.

Coalition building

One of the most exciting trends I learned about in July was the coalition building that's going on in the name of getting more people on the land. In Nebraska, there is a "Beginning Farmer Task Force," that consists of representatives from state government, the non-profit Center for Rural Affairs, the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation and the University of Nebraska. These groups may not see eye-to-eye on everything, but at least one issue—beginning farmers—is seen as critical enough to bring them together. Similar coalitions are being built in Wisconsin and Virginia.

These coalitions not only increase the number of resources that can be directed at helping beginning farmers, but they are a recognition that this is an issue worth

paying attention to. Too many times we hear that no one is interested in getting started in farming these days, or that it's not to the benefit of our rural communities to encourage new farmers. These coalitions are proof that a diversity of people and groups think otherwise. Investing time and resources is a very concrete way of recognizing the importance of supporting beginning farmers.

I've come to believe that these coalitions could hold a key to the future of beginning farmer programs, including the one LSP coordinates here in Minnesota. Whether someone is trying to make a go of it farming in New Mexico, New Prague or New York, there are four main barriers to overcome: financing, markets, land and education/training.

Compared to similar programs around the country, LSP's Farm Beginnings program does a really good job in one area: we provide an excellent education/training component through our workshops, on-farm visits and farmer-to-farmer networking. But such training needs to be in concert with providing access to credit, markets and land. In many ways, LSP is already working to overcome these barriers, but these are issues that go beyond just one organization. In order to cover all four areas well we need to build coalitions with groups that not only have a stake in agriculture, but have an interest in the future of our rural communities and good stewardship of the land. Such coalition-building is something LSP's Farm Beginnings program is going to investigate in the coming months. □

Karen Stettler coordinates LSP's southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings program. She can be reached at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org. For more information on the National Farm Transition Network, contact John Baker at 515-331-8900 or jrbaker@iastate.edu. The network's Web site is www.extension.iastate.edu/nftn.



Reaching new audiences

By Dana Jackson

How's the book doing?" is a question that friends and acquaintances frequently ask. What they mean is: how many copies have been sold of *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*? Well, for the record, more than 1,000 copies have been sold as of July. According to our publisher, Island Press, that's very good for just a few months of sales.

But how is the book really *doing*? Is it reaching the people we want to reach with the message we want to reach them with? Yes. Through the book, Land Stewardship Project is reaching a diverse audience, prompting people to think about the relationship between farming and nature, between food systems and ecosystems. The book gets the message across to readers that industrial agriculture is not inevitable, even though agribusiness says it is, and that rural landscapes do not have to be ecological sacrifice zones. In interviews and presentations about the book, I've been able to talk about people who farm as if nature mattered and still earn a good living for their families. I can promote the societal changes sought by LSP that will provide incentives for this kind of successful stewardship farming.

The timely publication of *The Farm as Natural Habitat* in April landed me an invitation to appear on Minnesota Public Radio's Mid-Morning show on Earth Day, with Melanie Sommers as host (to listen to the interview, log onto www.landstewardshipproject.org). Melanie asked good questions, as did some knowledgeable callers, which gave me the opportunity to discuss the work of LSP in the context of ideas in the book.

Three other radio interviews followed, one with a Seattle radio station, and two with California stations that also included my co-editor and daughter Laura Jackson.

Reviews or articles about the book have appeared in the *Des Moines Register*, the *Ames Tribune*, *Agri News*, the *Anita Tribune*, *Foreword* (book reviews for librarians in Michigan) *The Midwest Book Review*, and newsletters of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, Practical Farmers of Iowa,

and the University of California-Santa Cruz Center for Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems. As of this writing, the scientific journal *Science* and the environmental magazine *Sierra* are also scheduled to carry reviews of the book.

Over the summer Laura and I've had several opportunities to speak about the book. In July I did two workshop sessions at the annual convention of the Izaak Walton League of American and a workshop for the Women, Food and Agriculture Group at the Springbrook Conservation Center in Iowa. Laura and I also spoke at the Big Table bookstore in

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***"It's the most necessary book
I've read in a long time."***

— Wendell Berry

• • •

downtown Ames, Iowa, an event sponsored by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Practical Farmers of Iowa. A lively discussion followed, and the store sold 30 books that evening. I also talked about the book at the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group meeting in early August and at the Environmental Grantmakers Association meeting in September.

Even though we intended for the book to reach a broad audience, we also developed it to be a textbook for college classes. Laura gave a paper about ideas in the book to an academic audience at the International Ecological Society Conference in Tuscon, Ariz., in August. The book will be used as a text in the University of Minnesota Sustainable Agriculture Colloquium this fall semester.

But just as importantly, we are hearing from farmers, consumers and citizen-activists. They tell us that despite its heavy subject matter, they find the book to be an accessible, practical and even entertaining read. Those kinds of reviews make all the effort that went into this publication more than worth it.

More readings & discussions

The Farm as Natural Habitat will be discussed at many public forums this fall. For example, on Nov. 20 at 7:30 p.m.

there will be a program about the book at Ruminator Books, 1648 Grand Avenue in St. Paul. This event is co-sponsored by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club and LSP. Several contributors to the book and one or two stewardship farmers described in it will be available for book signing and conversation.

LSP is also holding discussion evenings about the book for small groups in the homes of LSP members in the Twin Cities area. Two will be held in Minneapolis and two in St. Paul. Dates for book discussions are Oct. 29, Nov. 7, Nov. 25, and Nov. 26, but exact locations have not been set as of this writing. You can select a discussion evening that fits your schedule and location and sign up to attend by calling 651-653-0618.

Everyone is invited to participate, whether or not you have read the book. However, it might be more interesting if you look it over ahead of time. See page 18 for information on ordering the book through the mail, by telephone or via the Internet. If you're in the Twin Cities, buy it at Ruminator. □

Praise for *The Farm as Natural Habitat*

"It's the most necessary book I've read in a long time. I hope it can be the start of a conversation between the farmers and the conservationists...."

"I think it speaks well for the vital link between agriculture and ecology. It shows us how to order the issues of the land economy and the issues of conservation in the same pattern of thought. This is a good book and an inspiring one, dealing with matters of the greatest urgency."

— **Wendell Berry**, farmer & author

"*The Farm as Natural Habitat* is a thoughtful, extensively researched and meticulously presented compendium of essays by a variety of learned and expert authors focusing on the interaction between agriculture and the environment."

— **The Midwest Book Review**

"It really is a great work. I liked the chapter about the farm stories a lot. I am reading the chapter about the restoring prairie processes now. You paid great honor to Leopold with this work. Your observations of the failing of the industrial farming world are right on."

— **Tom Frantzen**, farmer

LSP Celebrates 20 years of Keeping the Land & People Together

On Aug. 24, Land Stewardship Project members gathered at Good Counsel Hill in Mankato, Minn., to celebrate our 20th anniversary. The event featured storytelling, music, a recognition ceremony and locally produced food.



Several LSP members gathered for a group photo during the celebration.



Mary and Leo Rowekamp talked about the early days of LSP during the storytelling session. Also pictured are (left to right) Vic Ormsby, David Minge and Dwight Ault.



Steve Larson, along with his children Nick and Rachel, provided a musical greeting to LSP members near the registration table.



Former LSP organizer Steve O'Neil served as master of ceremonies for the storytelling session.



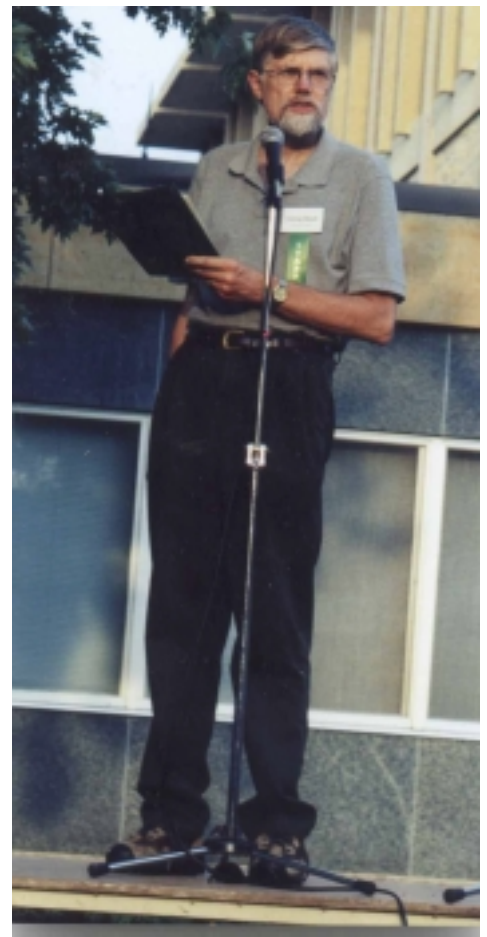
Pig's Eye Landing provided dance music.



Art and Lorraine Redig described some of LSP's earliest meetings during the storytelling session.



The St. Peter Co-op catered a meal made from locally produced food.



LSP Executive Director George Boody spoke about the organization's past, present and future.



Dan French (left to right) was among those members honored for their many years of service to LSP. Also pictured: Muriel French, LSP staff member Mark Schultz, Board Member Sister Mary Tacheny and LSP staff member Karen Stettler.

Ron Kroese, who founded LSP with Victor Ray in 1982, was on-hand to help celebrate.



A silent auction made up of materials donated by LSP members helped raise needed funds.

A special thank you to everyone who made the 20th Anniversary Celebration possible.

Financial Sponsors

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Winona
 Julia & William Crozier
 Mary Doerr, Dancing Winds Farm/ B& B Retreat
 Tony Doom
 John & Cindy Gaterud
 Rhoda Gilman
 The Hanleys
 Judy & Allan Hoffman
 Jeff Klinge & Deb Tidwell
 Ron Kroese & Kimberly Colburn
 Don Maronde
 Helene Murray
 Don Roberts, Elsie's Farm
 James Wellman
 Myron & Betty Zimanske

A very special thank you to the School Sisters of Notre Dame and Sister Kathleen Storms and Sister Mary Tacheny of the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry for hosting us and graciously taking care of a multitude of details.

Finally, *thank you* to everyone who attended and participated in many different ways.

Food & Farm → → → → Connection

Great foods-great stewardship, easier than ever to find

Ray Kirsch

As the summer rolls up, local foods are rolling out. Find it where you may—gardens, farms, markets, grocers—the bounty of the season is here. And to help all of us identify and share in this bounty, Midwest Food Alliance (MWFA) is kicking off its third year of celebrating local, responsibly-grown foods and making them easier than ever to buy.

This year you'll be able to find MWFA-Approved foods in 39 grocery stores across Minnesota. See page 13 for a complete listing of MWFA retail partners.

You can also buy directly from many MWFA-Approved farms (over 60 this year!). For a complete listing go to: www.thefoodalliance/midwest.

Midwest Food Alliance is an opportunity for consumers to put their food dollars to work. You want to make a difference? You want to support local farms, environmentally and socially responsible foods, and your community? It's easy. Ask for, look for, and purchase MWFA-approved foods.

But there's more. Not only can you put your food dollars to work, you can put yourself to work. For example:

→ Volunteer for a MWFA demo.

This fall, through Nov. 9, MWFA will be supporting our farmers with demonstrations and store events at locations throughout the state. These demos are opportunities for you to put your enthusiasm and knowledge to work—to talk with folks one-on-one about the benefits of buying local, sustainably-produced foods and to give local farms a very real sustainability boost.

You can find a complete listing of demos and options for signing up on LSP's Web site, www.landstewardshipproject.org (see the "Volunteers needed" story on this page). Alternately, you can contact MWFA's marketing coordinator, Jean Andreasen, (see sidebar on page 13) and volunteer your time.

→ **Recruit retailers and farmers.** Is there a grocer near you that you'd like to see carrying MWFA foods? Ask them.

Send their name along to Jean Andreasen and we'll work to get them in the program. Is there a farm (maybe yours) that would be a good fit for MWFA? Now's the time to get certified and begin participating (see "Are you a potential MWFA farmer?").

→ **Tell friends and neighbors.** LSP members are ambassadors for our common work. Let folks know what MWFA products are all about and where to find them. Everyone eats and most folks want to support good stewardship and local farms, they're just unsure of how to do it. With MWFA, it's easy.

→ **Cook and share.** Put some MWFA foods in your shopping cart. Create a delicious meal. Share it with others and tell them this story. □

Ray Kirsch is the Midwest Food Alliance Farm Coordinator and is based in LSP's Twin Cities office. He can be contacted at 651-653-0618 or rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org.



New MWFA address

The Midwest Food Alliance has a new mailing address: Blair Arcade West, Suite Y, 400 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102. Its fax number is 651-228-1184.

To contact MWFA Project Director Jim Ennis, call 651-265-3684 or e-mail ennis@foodchoices.org. □

Volunteers needed

The Midwest Food Alliance is looking for volunteers to help with in-store demonstrations of local, sustainably-produced foods. In past years, volunteers have been very effective at reaching out to consumers who are seeking information about local foods, good stewardship, and the MWFA seal of approval. MWFA will provide training for volunteers. Volunteers are needed now through November in the Twin Cities, St. Cloud and Rochester. If you're interested, call MWFA at 651-265-3682. You can also sign up electronically at www.landstewardshipproject.org (go to the "Volunteer..." link under "Take Action." □

Are you a potential MWFA farmer?

The Midwest Food Alliance uses a third-party certification system and a seal of approval to connect farms with consumers. If you are interested in expanding consumer support for your farm, apply to have your operation certified by the MWFA. Contact Ray Kirsch by calling 651-653-0618 or e-mailing rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org. □

MWFA & Minn. Grown

The 2002 edition of the *Minnesota Grown Directory* features 11 farms that carry the Midwest Food Alliance seal of approval. This directory, which is produced by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Grown program, lists hundreds of farms that offer produce, dairy products, meats, plants and Christmas trees. Get a copy of the directory and look for the featured MWFA farms.

For a free copy of the directory, call 651-296-5029 or 1-800-657-3700. It can be downloaded from www.minnesotagrown.com. □



MWFA Director Jim Ennis chats with consumers during a Kowalski's in-store demonstration in September. (LSP photo)

Midwest Food Alliance Retailers

✓ Coborn's

Albertville
5698 LaCentre Ave. NE
Albertville, Minn.
(opening in Nov.)

Clearwater

630 Clearwater Ctr.
Clearwater, Minn.
320-558-2251

Delano

1400 Babcock Blvd. E.
Delano, Minn.
763-972-8380

Elk River

19425 Evans
Street NW
Elk River, Minn.
763-441-1400

Foley

161 Glen St.
Foley, Minn.
320-968-7205

Glencoe

3105 E. 10th St.
Glencoe, Minn.
320-864-6132

Huron

2150 Dakota Ave. S.
Huron, S. Dak.
605-352-6036

Little Falls

1101 2nd Avenue NE
Little Falls, Minn.
320-632-2367

Long Prairie

305 S. Lake Street
Long Prairie, Minn.
320-732-6202

Mitchell

1800 N. Main St.
Mitchell, S. Dak.
605-996-5593

Mora

710 Frankie Lane
Mora, Minn.
320-679-4003

Morris

1126 Atlantic Ave.
Morris, Minn.
320-589-3829

Park Rapids

209 West First St.
Park Rapids, Minn.
218-732-0182

Princeton

605 Rum River Dr. S.
Princeton, Minn.
763-389-1350

Sauk Centre

14 12th Street
Sauk Centre, Minn.
320-352-5990

Sauk Rapids

110 1st Street S.
Sauk Rapids, Minn.
320-252-2141

St. Cloud

327 5th Avenue S.
St. Cloud, Minn.
320-251-0484

2118 8th Street N.
St. Cloud, Minn.
320-252-6220

Sartell

707 1st Avenue N.
Sartell, Minn.
320-253-3400

✓ Cash Wise Foods

Austin

1300 18th
Ave. NW
Austin, Minn.
507-437-4626

Bismarck

1144 Bismarck
Expressway
Bismarck, N. Dak.
701-223-8771

Fargo

1401 S. 33rd St.
Fargo, N. Dak
701-237-4120

Hutchinson

1020 Hwy. 15 S.
Hutchinson, Minn.
320-587-7655

Moorhead

3300 Hwy 10 E.
Moorhead, Minn.
218-236-4910

New Ulm

1220 Westridge Rd.
New Ulm, Minn.
507-354-2717

Owatonna

495 West N. St.
Owatonna, Minn.
507-451-7220

Waite Park

113 S. Waite Avenue
Waite Park, Minn.
320-259-1308

Willmar

1300 SE 3rd St.
Willmar, Minn.
320-235-2485

✓ Kowalski's Markets

Minneapolis

2440 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis, Minn.
612-377-3448

5327 Lyndale
Avenue S.
Minneapolis, Minn.
612-822-2935

5615 Chicago
Avenue S.
Minneapolis, Minn.
612-824-2430

4414 Humboldt
Avenue N.
Minneapolis, Minn.
612-522-3364

St. Paul
1261 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, Minn.
651-698-3366

White Bear Lake
4391 S. Lake Ave.
White Bear Lake, Minn.
651-429-5913

Woodbury
8505 Valley
Creek Road
Woodbury, Minn.
651-578-8800

✓ Mississippi Market Co-op

St. Paul
622 Selby Avenue
St. Paul, Minn.
651-310-9499

1810 Randolph Ave.
St. Paul, Minn.
651-690-0507

✓ Hy-Vee

Rochester
Barlow's Plaza Hy-Vee
1315 6th Street NW
Rochester, Minn.
507-228-8233

✓ River Market Community Co-op

Stillwater
221 N. Main Street
Stillwater, Minn.
651-439-0366



New MWFA Marketing Coordinator

Jean Andreasen joined the Midwest Food Alliance as its Marketing Coordinator in August after wearing a multitude of different hats for St. Paul's Mississippi Market Co-op for more than 17 years. She was Mississippi Market's Member Services and Outreach Director for the past seven of those years. Andreasen has a bachelor's degree in fine arts with a minor in business from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn.

As the MWFA's marketing coordinator, Andreasen will be working with MWFA stakeholders to develop strategies for promoting products that have received the program's sustainable seal of approval.

Jean can be reached by calling 651-265-3682 or e-mailing jean@thefoodalliance.org.



Jean Andreasen shows off a new promotional poster being displayed by participating retailers. It was developed with the help of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Grown program. (LSP photo)

gained the past 12 months has made it less likely it will be a fatal fall.

The desire to farm

Both John, 37, and Heidi, 35, grew up in the Twin Cities and have college degrees unrelated to agriculture; John's is in wildlife management and Heidi studied communications.

John says he loved working in the community college's garden, but "there was always something inside me that wanted to work for myself." Heidi, who has spent her working life in the



Wise and Miller check on a hay cutting. "...there was always something inside me that wanted to work for myself," says Wise of his dreams to farm. (LSP photo)

corporate world, wants to know what it's like to start a business and produce tangible products.

So why farming as a business venture? Part of it is in their blood. Both have relatives who farm and they have spent a fair amount of time on those operations.

John says he is attracted to farming for many of the same reasons he liked caring for the Japanese garden: it's a combination of outdoor physical work and artistic flair. He likes the feeling that, like gardening, a well-tended farm can be a reflection of the person who cares for it.

John and Heidi make a good team to tackle the challenge of farming. John concedes he is a "life happens and I react" kind of person who is motivated by a "I'll show you" kind of attitude. Heidi likes to plan ahead, sometimes far into the future, and thrives on being around people who provide positive reinforcement. She likes to quote business guru and syndicated columnist Harvey Mackay, who says things like, "If you always let someone's negative thoughts influence you, you'll never

accomplish anything."

"If we do have children, we want this to be an enterprise that our kids would love to take over and not have them see it as some drudgery business," says Heidi.

Not all the clippings the Wisers squirrel away are full of bad news. Fuel was added to John's desire to farm a few years ago when he read a commentary in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* about a low-cost livestock production system called management intensive rotational grazing.

"That's when I first thought, maybe, just maybe, I could farm."

But he knew he needed some practical information on farming techniques, as well as some real-world experience to back it up.

Heidi, who is the Director of Communications for American Express's Financial Department, began searching the Internet for information on programs for people who wanted to learn how to farm. Her search didn't land her on the Web site of an agriculture college. Rather it dug up "Farm Beginnings," a program based in Minnesota that is a combination of classroom instruction and real-world, on-the-

farm educational tours. Better yet, the program focused on low-cost, alternative farming methods, rather than the high capital, industrialized systems which are the stuff of all those depressing media news stories these days. They signed up for the program, and began attending twice-monthly workshops in southeast Minnesota last fall. John and Heidi graduated from the program this summer.

The education

Farm Beginnings, which is administered by the Land Stewardship Project, was started by a group of southeast Minnesota farmers in the late 1990s who were reading the same news stories as the Wisers. They were also seeing firsthand the impacts of an aging farm population: empty Main Street store fronts, fewer churches, the growth of consolidated mega-farms that were having negative impacts on the environment, and a general decline in rural quality of life. They called themselves the "Wabasha County Give A Damns," a name that illustrated their blunt unwillingness to

give up on family farming as a keystone of rural society. This is the sixth year for Farm Beginnings in southeast Minnesota, and the third year it's been offered through LSP's western Minnesota office in Montevideo.

Participants take part in a series of workshops that cover such topics as goal setting, decisionmaking, establishing a business plan, financial management, biological monitoring, and innovative marketing. These workshops are a combination of lectures, participatory brainstorming and take-home assignments. They are geared toward helping participants determine whether farming is for them, and if so, what alternatives exist for them to realistically take it on. It's less of a step-by-step technical training course and more of a program that teaches people how to make decisions that can be applied across a broad spectrum of farming systems. The graduates of the Farm Beginnings program say some of the best sessions are the ones involving established farmers. These farmers are living proof that there are ways to make a go of it without investing in expensive systems that take a toll on the land, a family's quality of life, and even the community at large.

"Just being around other people who have done these sorts of things successfully has given us a little jump start," says Wendy Lange, who recently finished the course in western Minnesota.

Indeed, Heidi Wise concedes she and John are good at dreaming, but need to ground themselves in reality. Through the workshops, they were exposed to people who weren't making farming sound like a jaunt down Easy Street. But these established farmers were also proof that it was not a dead end occupation.

The techniques

After the workshops are completed in late winter, Farm Beginnings participants are invited to visit established farms in the region through a series of educational tours. John and Heidi, for example, visited a handful of farms in southeast Minnesota, all of which focus on raising livestock using grass-based methods and sell their products directly to consumers or through natural foods niche markets.

These tours helped galvanize the Wisers' belief that grass farming was a viable entryway onto the land, although John concedes he was hoping seeing so many different operations would provide him a template for the perfect pasture.

“But every farm had a different recipe,” he shrugs.

Still, seeing that there was a way to farm which allowed for economic and managerial flexibility convinced the Wises that there were opportunities, just not the kind agribusiness touts.

“Every time a big story is splashed across the Minneapolis paper about how bad it is in farming I have to point out to Heidi that look, it’s a corn-soybean operation, look, it’s high capital livestock operations that are hurting,” says John.

Heidi says because they don’t have a lot of formal background in agriculture, they are able to view alternative methods with open minds.

“If it works why not do it? We don’t have in the back of our heads, ‘This won’t work because dad or grandpa didn’t do it that way.’”

And that’s the cornerstone of the Farm Beginnings program: not getting lashed to one agricultural anchor, but rather learning how to make decisions that are flexible and yet focused. It’s a philosophy that seems to be working. Of the more than 76 families who have graduated from the Farm Beginnings program, more than 60 percent are involved in farming. Their enterprises range from grass-based livestock production to commercial produce farming to Community Supported Agriculture operations.

Farm Beginnings attempts to take that excitement of hearing from an established farmer in the classroom one step further. This is not a matchmaker program, where a beginning farmer is set up with a retiree. But from the start Farm Beginnings has focused on creating a mentorship relationship between new and established farmers. It’s felt that by having a connection with a farmer, or several farmers, a beginner can not only see what it’s really like to make a living on the land, but can also develop a network of sorts—a support system that can be a source of advice, equipment sharing and even good leads on land availability.

“It’s nice to have someone to turn to who has some gray hairs,” says cattle producer Eric Carlson, who graduated from the program in 2001.

The mentor

John and Heidi met their mentor in June 2000, before they even started the Farm Beginnings course. They were on a scouting mission for some farmland near the southeast Minnesota community of

Spring Valley, and were full of questions about farming possibilities in the area. The Realtor they were working with knew that Dan Miller not only farms near Spring Valley, but also is a farm business management instructor at Riverland Community College. Perhaps Miller would know more about farming opportunities in the area, thought the Realtor. Introductions were made, and John remembers a couple of things: First, the neat as a pin appearance of the picturesque Miller farm (rolling hills, winding stream, trees and lots of green grass and hay), and second, the surprising attitude of someone who works with farmers every day.

“Dan was really positive and said you can get into farming today and be successful,” recalls Wise.

Much of Miller’s positive attitude is based in the potential he sees in low-cost sustainable methods of farming. In 1994, he and his wife Cara began converting their 236-acre farm to grass and hay. They now raise 56 purebred Angus brood cows using management intensive rotational grazing. Miller says he likes rotational grazing because of its profitability—he’s crunched the numbers and grass farming often trumps corn and soybean production financially—as well as the conservation benefits it provides in a hilly area that can experience severe erosion at times. He and Cara, who have five children, also feel it’s a family-friendly enterprise.

“The other evening I was moving cattle with my two-year old daughter and four year-old son,” says Dan. “They have a 230-acre backyard. It’s a wholesome environment for them.”

In the summer of 2001 the Wises bought a house in Spring Valley and John went to work for the Millers. Heidi now telecommutes for American Express.

Got a list, checking it twice...

On a recent summer evening John and Dan were wrapping up a busy day of farm work: haymaking, fence moving and water line management. They were working side-by-side, and it was clear this is no conventional employer-employee relationship. John isn’t just learning enough skills to get him through the work week. He’s garnering the kind of experience that goes into the foundation of creating a farmer. At the core of John’s relationship with the Miller farm is a Farm Beginnings Mentorship Checklist. This is a document John and Heidi de-

veloped through their class and fine-tuned with the help of Dan. It lists 15 skill areas that John wants to master by the time he leaves the Miller farm. Listed beside each skill are five columns, each with a different heading: **Discussed, Observed, Done Supervised, Done Alone** and **Proficient**. Not surprisingly, the skills listed center around the kind of farming done on the Miller operation: overwintering strategies and practices, calving, pasture seeding and renovation, stocking rates, farm records and accounting, etc.

Based on age, John and Dan do not fit the mentor-mentee stereotype—John is just two years younger than Dan. But on an agricultural time scale, the difference between the two men is significant. Dan has been involved in farming his entire life. He grew up on a dairy operation in the Spring Valley area. He then went on to get a bachelor’s degree in animal science and a master’s degree in agricultural education. Miller has served as an extension educator in both Minnesota and Wisconsin and for the past dozen years he has been a Farm Business Management Instructor. In that capacity, Dan works with farm families to help them with business and enterprise analysis, marketing, tax management, and cash flow analysis. This year, Dan is working with 55 different families.

“There’s a lot of variation—everything from helping a farmer develop a cash flow for a grazing system to personnel

Rotating see page 16...

Farm Beginnings Mentorship Checklist						
Mentor: Dan Miller		Mentee: John Wise				
Line	Skill	Discussed	Observed	Done Supervised	Done Alone	Proficient
1	Overwintering strategies & practices					
2	Calving					
3	Pasture seeding & renovation					
3a	When to renovate					
3b	Good pasture mixes					
3c	Species identification					
3d	Tillage options					
4	Forage analysis					
5	Paddock layout & design					
5a	Size					
5b	Fencing					
5c	Water					
5d	Lanes					
6	Corral design/animal handling facilities					
7	Sacrificial paddocks – summer & winter					
8	Hay – when & how much to cut					
9	Stocking rates					
10	Rotation lengths					
11	Animal nutrition					
11a	Corn & mineral supplements					
11b	Protein, dry matter, etc. intake					
12	Animal health					
12a	Judging condition					
12b	Medication/veterinary services					
13	Animal records					
14	Farm records & accounting					
15	Direct marketing					

management for a large dairy to futures marketing for corn and soybeans.”

Dan and Cara are also comfortable using their farm as a living laboratory of sorts. The Millers do forage trials with University of Minnesota researchers, and since 1996, they have hosted a summer field day on grazing and hay production. The event has grown from a few dozen participants that first year, to more than 140 this past July.

“My initial intent with the field days was to get ideas from other people on what I could do better,” says Dan. “And I have, so it’s selfish to an extent.”

Dan concedes there’s a lot more information available today than there was when he started rotational grazing. Over the years, he has picked up pointers from field days, magazine articles and other farmers he’s met along the way. In a way, despite his extensive background in agriculture, Miller is a relative novice when it comes to this sustainable method of livestock production. That has helped him in his role as a mentor to Wise, since it reminds the established farmer how difficult it can be to try something new.

Getting the hang of it

Spending even a short amount of time with John on the Miller operation and it’s difficult to tell he didn’t grow up on the land. He’s comfortable with the farm and Dan is amazed at how quickly John learned to handle the many challenges that pop up in a typical work day.

John likes hard physical work, the kind that requires one to be down on the ground using your hands and feet. He says this year he spent a few too many days in the tractor seat making hay for his liking. And like any on-the-job learning experience, there are days when it just looks like you’ve chosen the wrong line of work. Such frustration came on a day when he and Cara were vaccinating calves. John was giving a shot when the needle broke off in the neck muscle of a calf. “I was ready to go home and quit,” John recalls. But Cara talked John through the situation.

After a little over 12 months of on-the-job experience, John has just about finished marking up his Farm Beginnings Mentorship list, and it’s no mere piece of paper. Dan and Cara both say he has mastered the skills it takes to run such an operation. Perhaps the ultimate test came this summer, when Dan, Cara and their children were at a grazing conference in Iowa and it was up to John to take care of

Want to participate?

The 2002-2003 session of Farm Beginnings will begin in late October and early November. Space is limited, but at press time there were still openings for both southeast and western Minnesota.

To apply for the southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings program, call Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366, or e-mail her at stettler@landstewardshipproject.org.

For the western Minnesota program, contact Amy Bacigalupo in LSP’s Montevideo office by calling 320-269-2105 or e-mailing amyb@landstewardshipproject.org.

More information on Farm Beginnings, including profiles of graduates, is also available at www.landstewardshipproject.org (look under “Programs”).

Mentors needed

Farm Beginnings is also looking for established farmers to serve as mentors to beginning farmers. Call Karen or Amy for more information.

The future of Farm Beginnings

Farm Beginnings is recognized nationally (see page 8) for providing practical, real-world education and training on innovative farm management systems. But, like all of LSP’s programs, its future hinges on our ability to fund it. Would you like to help contribute financially to the future of Farm Beginnings? To help, contact Karen or Amy, or call LSP’s Twin Cities office at 651-653-0618.

the farm. According to the Millers, he did fine, even mastering the sometimes tricky art of heat detection in brood cows.

“I was going to call him from the conference,” recalls Dan. “But I didn’t even worry.”

Farming compliments don’t come much higher than that.

There’s no doubt John Wise has mastered some critical skills that will serve him well if he is raising purebred beef cattle using rotational grazing and hay production. But does that Mentorship Checklist threaten to become a paper form of handcuffs, limiting the kind of farming the Wises can do?

Both John and Dan say no. For one thing, a lot of those skills are transferable to any kind of livestock operation that relies on low inputs. John and Heidi would eventually like to raise cattle, but also want to have other livestock, including hogs, on their farm. They also are investigating the possibility of having a bed and breakfast business for tourists. John and Dan have also spent some time in front of the computer, running numbers through software that helps determine what kind of cash flows it takes to keep a farming operation viable. That kind of enterprise analysis experience is invaluable, no matter what kind of farming operation one undertakes.

Finally, John and Heidi are being guided by a written set of goals they developed while taking the Farm Beginnings class. It wasn’t something John in particular looked forward to, but the Wises finally sat down and wrote up their

long term plans and aspirations, taking the better part of the day to do it. For the couple, who had been married for less than a year at that point, it helped crystallize what they wanted to do at an important point in their lives.

Miller says his experience has shown that one of the keys to farming success is having a carefully plotted out set of written goals. That prevents practices and tools—big, expensive implements, for example—from driving a farm family’s goals, instead of the goals determining what tools a farm enterprise will utilize.

Heading out

As dark closes in John and Dan ride the four-wheeler out through the fields, checking on the grazing cattle and some recently mowed hay, it’s obvious they enjoy working together. It’s also clear that John and Heidi will be moving on soon. The two men talk about the possibility of some farms coming up for sale in the area. John talks about what they are looking for in a farm—buildings for livestock, and a scenic roll to the land—while Dan discusses the pros and cons of certain locations.

Later, when John climbs back into the tractor to take a hay mower back to the house, Dan jokes about adding to the Mentorship Checklist to extend the beginning farmer’s stay on the farm.

“If I was selfish I would rather he stay working with me, but I know his long-term goals are to move on. John and Heidi will succeed, no question about it.” □



Antibiotics legislation

The March/April and May/June issues of the *Land Stewardship Letter* focused on how drug-resistant bacteria are developing as a result of overuse of nontherapeutic dosages of antibiotics in the livestock industry. Now citizens have an opportunity to have an impact on how those drugs are used. Two bills have been introduced in the U.S. Congress—one in the Senate (S. 2508) and one in the House (H.R. 3804)—that would phase out the nontherapeutic use of specific, medically important antibiotics. These bills would also end the use of Cipro-like drugs in poultry. Such proposals have already been endorsed by health care heavyweights like the American Medical Association.

Contact your Senators and Representatives today and tell them to co-sponsor these bills. You can get their numbers from the capitol switchboard operator at 202-224-3121. For more information on the proposed legislation, call 612-870-3418 or log onto www.keepantibioticsworking.com. □

Greenbook available

The 2002 edition of the *Greenbook* is now available. This popular book, published annually by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, describes various on-farm demonstration research projects being conducted throughout Minnesota. These demonstrations are funded through the Sustainable Agriculture Program's grant program. This year's publication describes research related to alternative crops, cropping systems and soil fertility, fruit and vegetable production, and livestock production. The 2002 *Greenbook* also includes essays by Land Stewardship Project members Jim VanDerPol, Richard Levins and Lucia Watson. VanDerPol is a farmer, Levins an agricultural economist and Watson a chef and restaurant owner.

For a free copy of the 2002 *Greenbook*, or to get information on applying for demonstration grant funds, call the Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program at 651-296-7673 or log onto www.mda.state.mn.us/esap. □

Fair & clean elections

Given that family farmers' average income is only \$15,500, it's not a big surprise that most of them aren't large campaign contributors. In contrast, corporate agricultural interests are big-money donors

that seem to be getting their money's worth.

Consider that during the 1999-2000 election cycle, interests with ties to agribusiness made tens of thousands of dollars in contributions to both Republican and Democratic-Farmer-Labor party units within Minnesota. During those same years, the Limited Partnerships and Limited Liability bill, which creates a loophole in the corporate farm law, was passed by the legislature. It allows the "limited liability company" model to enter farming, whereby 49 percent of a family farm operation can be sold to outside interests.

The original family no longer needs to live on the farm and the degree of their control is questionable. In addition, limited liability companies avoid financial responsibility for hazards, such as pollution from liquid manure spills and leaks from huge manure lagoons.

Is it just a coincidence that agribusiness interests are getting what they want from the Legislature?

We think the answer is no. This is why the Land Stewardship Project has joined 60 other organizations to support the Fair And Clean Elections (FACE) campaign. In order to build political power at the capitol, we need to make people more important

than money in elections. The Fair And Clean Elections proposal would do this by providing candidates who could demonstrate grassroots support with nearly full public funds to run for office. Then the only strings attached to their campaign dollars would be back to us, the public, the people they are supposed to be representing. The FACE proposal is based upon systems already in place in Maine and Arizona.

For more information about FACE, log onto www.lwvnmn.org/face or call 651-641-4050. □

Crimes against the land

The RapSheet on Animal Factories is a new Sierra Club report that outlines the convictions, fines, pollution violations and regulatory records of the nation's slaughterhouses and factory livestock operations. The report finds that companies like Cargill, Smithfield, ConAgra, Premium Standard Farms, Seaboard, DeCoster and Tyson have a shameful record of breaking the law. The criminal counts listed in *RapSheet* include animal cruelty, bribery, destroying records, fraud, distributing contaminated meat and pollution. The Sierra Club also has available a database that documents problems at more than 630 industrial meat factories in 44 states.

To view the database, log onto www.sierraclub.org/factoryfarms/rapsheets. For information on getting a paper copy of the report, contact the Sierra Club at 415-977-5500. □

Support LSP in your workplace

The Land Stewardship Project is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which is a coalition of 18 environmental organizations in Minnesota that offer workplace giving as an option in making our communities better places to live. Together member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Fund work to

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

You can support LSP in your workplace by giving through the Minnesota Environmental Fund. Options include giving a designated amount through payroll deduction, or a single gift. You may also choose to give to the entire coalition or specify the organization of your choice within the coalition, such as the Land Stewardship Project. If your employer does not provide this opportunity, ask the person in charge of workplace giving to include it. For more information, contact LSP's Twin Cities office or e-mail lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org.

A P R O U D M E M B E R O F



MINNESOTA
Environmental Fund

LSP announces the publication
of a groundbreaking new book:

The Farm as Natural Habitat

The *Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*, a new book by the Land Stewardship Project, has been published by Island Press. Contributors to this groundbreaking collection of writings promote the idea that restoration of a relationship between farming and the natural world enhances the sustainability of both.

Dana Jackson, LSP's Associate Director, co-edited the book with her daughter, Laura Jackson, who is a University of Northern Iowa biology professor and LSP member. In addition, chapters were written by LSP Executive Director George Boody, *Land Stewardship Letter* editor Brian DeVore, LSP Board Member Cheryl Miller, and LSP members Tex Hawkins, Nick Jordan, Judith Soule and Beth Waterhouse, as well as several other contributors. Nina Leopold Bradley, a board member of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, wrote the foreword.

Praise for *The Farm as Natural Habitat*

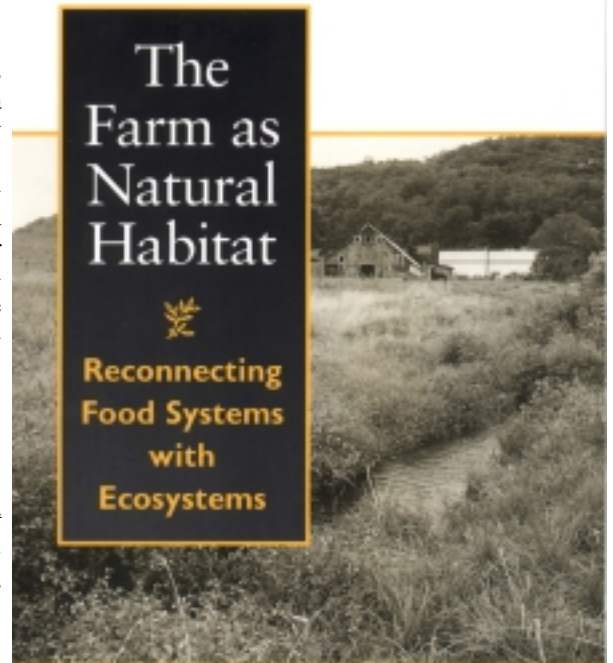
"It's the most necessary book I've read in a long time. I hope it can be the start of a conversation between the farmers and the conservationists..."

"I think it speaks well for the vital link between agriculture and ecology. It shows us how to order the issues of the land economy and the issues of conservation in the same pattern of thought. This is a good book and an inspiring one, dealing with matters of the greatest urgency."

—Wendell Berry, farmer, poet, writer

"[The Farm as Natural Habitat] makes a grim and thorough case against industrial agriculture. Then it breaks new ground: It shows how productive, diversified, small-scale farms can and do nurture wildlife. Sacrificing ecology is not an inevitable part of food production."

— Susan Maas, *Des Moines Sunday Register*



Edited by Dana L. Jackson and Laura L. Jackson

Foreword by
Nina Leopold Bradley

LSP Members Receive 20% Discount!

Island Press is generously offering Land Stewardship Project members a special 20 percent discount on each book ordered. To receive the discount, clip the form below or log onto the Island Press Web site at www.islandpress.org and click on the **Spring 2002 Catalog**. To receive the discount when ordering over the Internet, LSP members need to enter the phrase **2LSP** on the **Promo/Dept.** line of the Island Press order form/final invoice. The discount will not show up when the initial order is placed, but confirmation of the discount will be sent later. You can also order from the publisher by calling toll free **1-800-828-1302**.

Land Stewardship Project Member Order Form—2LSP

Mail this form to: ISLAND PRESS, Dept. 3AU, P.O. Box 7, Covelo, CA 95428



Yes, I would like to order *The Farm as Natural Habitat*
by Jackson/Jackson:

_____ hardcover copies @ \$50.00 each; LSP discount @ \$40.00

_____ paperback copies @ \$25.00 each; LSP discount @ \$20.00

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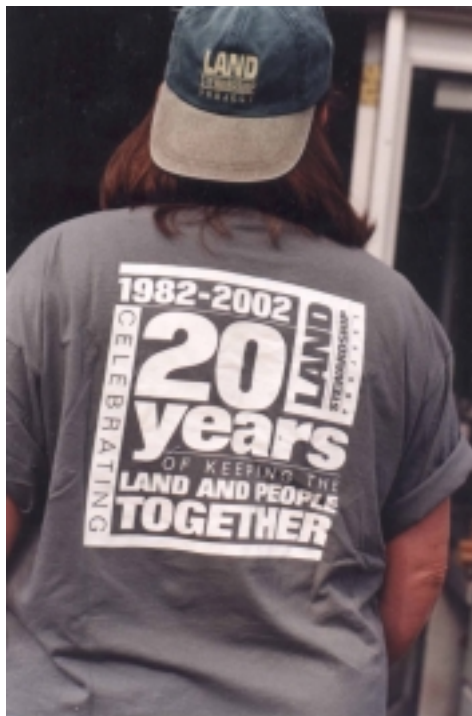
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For more information, call 651-653-0618 or e-mail lspswbl@landstewardshipproject.org

STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ **OCT. 24—Pride of the Prairie Local Foods Meal**, University of Minnesota-Morris; Contact: LSP, 320-269-2105; lspwest@landstewardshipproject.org

→ **OCT. 25—Passion for Rural Life! (Rural Life Gathering '02—Churches' Center for Land & People)**, Sinsinawa, Wis.; Contact: 608-748-4411, ext. 805; cclp@mwci.net

→ **OCT. 26—Southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings classes begin**; Contact: Karen Stettler, LSP, 507-523-3366

→ **OCT. 29—LSP discussion evening on *The Farm as Natural Habitat*** (Twin Cities location TBA); Contact: 651-653-0618

→ **OCT. 31—Grazing Workshop**, Brainerd, Minn.; Contact: Mary Reetz, 218-829-3272

→ **OCT. 31-NOV. 2—10th National Small Farm Trade Show & Conference**, Columbia, Mo.; Contact: 800-633-2535

→ **NOV. 1-2—Specialty Foods Marketing Conference**, Algoma, Wis.; Contact: Mary Pat Carlson, 920-487-9750; mcarlson@itol.com

→ **NOV. 2—Western Minnesota Farm Beginnings classes begin**; Contact: Amy Bacigalupo, LSP, 320-269-2105

→ **NOV. 7—LSP discussion evening on *The Farm as Natural Habitat*** (Twin Cities location TBA); Contact: 651-653-0618

→ **NOV. 8-9—National Catholic Rural Life Conference, "Sustainable Communities in an era of Globalization,"** Dearborn, Mich.; Contact: 515-270-2634; www.ncrlc.com

→ **NOV. 8-10—10th Annual Urban-Rural Food Systems Conference**, East Troy, Wis.; Contact: 262-642-3303; www.michaelfieldsagainst.org

→ **NOV. 15-16—Future Farms 2002: A Supermarket of Ideas conference & trade show**, Norman, Okla.; Contact: 918-647-9123; www.kerrcenter.com

→ **NOV. 16—Food & Nutrition Conference featuring Sally Fallon**, author of *Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats*, St. Cloud (Minn.) Civic Center; Contact: Doug, 320-235-5487

→ **NOV. 17—Sally Fallon will speak on "Nourishing Traditions—Butter, Fats and Oils; What's Best for You?"**, 12:30 p.m., Staples/Motley High School Centennial Auditorium, Staples, Minn.; Contact: SFA of Central Minnesota, 320-594-2456; converse@rea-alp.com; www.sustainablefarmingcentralmn.com

→ **NOV. 20—The Farm as Natural Habitat reading event**, 7:30 p.m., Ruminator Books, 1648 Grand Ave., St. Paul, Minn.; Contact: LSP, 651-653-0618

→ **NOV. 21—Pride of the Prairie Banquet, featuring Kamyar Enshayan's keynote, "A Tale of Two Chickens"**, Montevideo, Minn.; Contact: LSP, 320-269-2105; lspwest@landstewardshipproject.org

→ **NOV. 25-26—LSP discussion evenings on *The Farm as Natural Habitat*** (Twin Cities locations TBA); Contact: 651-653-0618

→ **JAN. 23-25—Minnesota Grazing & Organic Conference**, St. Cloud (Minn.) Civic Center; Contact: 507-237-5162; dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com

→ **JAN. 24-25—Midwest Value Added Conference—Bringing Profit Back to the Farm**, Eau Claire, Wis.; Contact: Heather Amundson, 715-834-9672; heather.amundson@wi.usda.gov

→ **Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Meeting**, Ames, Iowa; Contact: 515-232-5661; www.pfi.iastate.edu

→ **JAN. 26-27—Winter Meeting of the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group**, Nebraska City, Neb.; Contact: Dana Jackson, LSP, 651-653-0618; danaj@maroon.tc.umn.edu

→ **FEB. 6-8—Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference**, St. Cloud (Minn.) Civic Center; Contact: Marilyn Johnson, 763-434-0400

→ **Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society Conference**, Aberdeen, S. Dak.; Contact: 701-883-4304; www.npsas.org

→ **FEB. 10-11—Great Lakes Grazing Conference**, Battle Creek, Mich.; Contact: 517-788-4292, ext. 1319; bivens@msue.msu.edu

→ **FEB. 13—Midwest Food Alliance Annual Meeting** (location TBA); Contact: Jim Ennis, 651-265-3684; ennis@foodchoices.org

→ **FEB. 16-18—Wisconsin Grazing Conference**, Stevens Point, Wis.; Contact: Grassworks, 715-261-6009 or www.uwrf.edu/grazing/

→ **FEB. 22—Sustainable Farming Association of Minn. 12th Annual Conference** (northeast Minn. location TBA); Contact: Joel Rosen, 218-389-3306

→ **FEB. 27-MARCH 1—Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference**, LaCrosse, Wis.; Contact: Faye Jones, 715-722-3153; www.mosesorganic.org

Event information

Check the *Newsroom* (click on *Press Releases*) or *Calendar* at www.landstewardshipproject.org for the latest on upcoming field days, conferences, meetings and other events.



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July/Aug/Sept 2002 LSL