

Support LSP in Your Workplace

The Land Stewardship Project is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which is a coalition of environmental organizations in Minnesota that offers 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 to give through the Minnesota Environmental Fund, ask the person in charge of workplace giving to include it. For details, contact LSP's Amelia Shoptaugh at amelias@landstewardshipproject.org or 612-722-6377.



Member Voices

When We Lose Farmers & Farms, We Lose Community

Land Stewardship Project member Chad Crowley farms with his wife, Melissa, near Nodine in southeastern Minnesota. They are in the process of taking over the operation of longtime dairy farmers Art and Jean Thicke. During an LSP farm crisis forum last winter in Preston, Minn., Crowley spoke about the impact the loss of independent family farms is having on his community:

"I used to be a volunteer firefighter with the Nodine Fire Department, and I've seen a lot of stuff in the small communities. One of the things I've seen is how there aren't volunteers anymore. Because there are fewer farms, there are fewer people living on the land. People have to get a job in town. They can't respond from town to a fire department call-out.

"We're losing community involvement as the farmers are moving off the land. On our ridge alone, at one time we had eight dairy farms. We're the last one. There's only one other farm on our ridge. It's a beef farm. That's it.



Chad Crowley: "It could go a long way if people reached out." (LSP Photo)

"When you have fewer farmers, who do I turn to? I can't go to my neighbor who works in town, and say, 'Oh my gosh, today I had this problem with a cow or I'm having this other farm problem.' Yes, he's sympathetic and will say, 'Oh I'm sorry to hear that.' But he doesn't understand it. So, I think it's making it harder and harder, mentally, for dairy

farmers and farmers in general, when you don't have people to be able to go to and find out that you aren't the only person in that situation, that other people are facing hard times.

"When you're dealing with farmers, myself included, sometimes we don't express ourselves very well when it comes to hardships. Or we don't go and look for where there's resources, or where we could turn.

"Maybe as a community we need to come together and realize that farmers are hurting, that maybe they're not going to come to you. But if you can see it, come to them. Reach out to them. Just ask them, 'How are you doing?' I'm not just talking financially. We all know now it's not the greatest. But just, 'How do you feel? How's your day going?' It could go a long way if people reached out." □

There are several excellent resources for farmers who are facing emotional, economic, or weather-related problems. See the sidebar below for more information.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. The Lifeline is committed to improving crisis services and advancing suicide prevention by empowering individuals, advancing professional best practices, and building awareness. Call **1-800-273-8255**.

LSP Farm Crisis Resources

Feeling stressed or know someone who is? Check out LSP's list of hotlines, websites, and other resources at www.landstewardshipproject.org/farmcrisis.

See pages 10-11 for more on LSP's farm crisis work and details on new resources that have been made available to Minnesota farmers facing possible foreclosure and other issues.