

The Land Stewardship

Keeping the Land and People Together



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Letter

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Same Storm—Different Outcomes

When a rainstorm hit Sand Creek one evening in 1998, it left in its wake dramatic clues as to how different farming systems have very different impacts on the land.

By Brian DeVore

During a few wet hours on Friday, June 26, 1998, more than four inches of intense rain fell on the Sand Creek watershed, an area south of Minnesota's Twin Cities dominated by crop and livestock farms. It was a very egalitarian storm—it covered

almost the entire 163,000 acre (255 square miles) watershed. That means everyone got the moisture, usually a welcome input early in the growing season. But it also means the damage caused by such a high-impact storm should have been spread evenly across the landscape as well.

So why did each acre of a farm near the town of New Prague lose enough soil to fill a small dump truck, while just a few miles up the road near Jordan a particular farm's per-acre soil loss was measured in terms of a five-gallon bucket?

The answer to that gets at the heart of some wider questions about how various farming systems can have drastically

different impacts on the same land under similar conditions. But it also brings up another issue: Do farmers manage their soil to protect it against the wear and tear of day-to-day erosion, or to mitigate the damage caused by major, sometimes rare, storm events?

The two studies

We know about the two results that came out of that one storm because it just happens that two different farm field runoff research projects were in full swing on June 26. Near New Prague, University of Minnesota soil scientists Neil Hansen and John Moncrief had split a five-acre corn field into two parts. On one half, the farmer tilled the soil using moldboard



Robert Austin, a New Prague, Minn., contractor, recently set up two piles of soil to demonstrate the different rates of erosion from two farm fields during a storm in the Sand Creek watershed. The field planted to a mix of crops and pasture lost enough to fill a five-gallon bucket, while a corn field that was moldboard plowed eroded about a dump truck's worth of soil. (LSP photo)

Same Storm, see page 14...

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Commentary !?!?!?

Farm policy's 3 fatal flaws threaten U.S. competitiveness

By Dan Specht

The Land Stewardship Letter is published six 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.

All inquiries pertaining to the content of the Land Stewardship Letter should be addressed to the editor, Brian DeVore, 2200 4th St., White Bear Lake, MN 55110; phone: 651-653-0618; fax: 651-653-0589; e-mail: bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org.

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STAFF

Southeastern Minnesota Office

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

Twin Cities Area Office

2200 4th St., White Bear Lake, MN 55110; phone: 651-653-0618; fax: 0589; e-mail: lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org
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Policy Program: 3203 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407; phone: 612-722-6377; fax: 6474; e-mail: marks@landstewardshipproject.org
 Mara Krinke, Mike McMahan, Mark Schultz, Paul Sobocinski

Western Minnesota Office

103 W. Nichols, Montevideo, MN 56265; phone: 320-269-2105; fax: 2190; e-mail: lspwest@landstewardshipproject.org
 Audrey Arner, Amy Bacigalupo, Patrick Moore, Richarda Ruffle, Michele Skogrand, Terry VanDerPol

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There's a lot of bad news in agriculture these days, but I'm actually very optimistic about my ability to produce food using low-cost, sustainable methods that are good for the environment. I'm optimistic because of all the other innovative farmers I see making a go of it across the country. I sit on a USDA committee that reviews grant proposals for on-farm research, and the creativity that exists in farm country is inspiring. Cutting-edge work being done by sustainable farmers includes management intensive rotational grazing, cover cropping, diverse rotations, biological pest control, deep-bedded livestock systems, and on and on.

But I'm not so optimistic about how widespread such practices can become. That's because farm policy has three fatal flaws when it comes to dealing with agriculture that is environmentally and economically sound.

First, if you are like me and were making hay, grass and small grains a big part of your rotation during the 1980s, you're not eligible for federal transition payments on those acres. Because of my diversity, I receive payments on a tiny fraction of the 500 acres I own. Doubling Agriculture Market Transition Act payments has only doubled this inequity, and Loan Deficiency Payments for program crops like corn and soybeans add insult to injury.

The second fatal flaw is that the program allows cash prices for crops to fall below the cost of production. We now have the worst of two worlds: we have no limits on production coupled with what amounts to direct payments through Loan Deficiency Payments that increase production even more. This gives a competitive edge to specialized industrial livestock producers who buy feed for less

than what it costs me to produce it.

The third fatal flaw is the program's lack of effective targeting to family farm income, or even any effective payment limitation. The current "sky's the limit" program exacerbates the first two problems, providing a public subsidy for land concentration, reduced diversity and continued environmental problems.

We need policy that is based on good science, as well as growing consumer demands for healthy, environmentally sound products. That's why I'm excited about the Conservation Security Act, which was recently introduced in the U.S. Senate by Tom Harkin (see page 3). This

legislation would reward farmers for the resource and environmental benefits they actually produce. For example, one sustainable farming practice, rotational grazing has already proven it can deliver major environmental benefits (see page 14). Drainage

water flowing from row crop fields has nitrate levels that are 30 to 50 times higher when compared with fields planted to perennials like grass, according to University of Minnesota soil scientist Gyles Randall.

It's argued that American agriculture can't afford to adopt sustainable farming practices because it will come at the cost of our "competitive edge." That argument has it backwards. For example, researchers at the USDA's Dairy Forage Research Center have found that meat and milk from cattle eating only grass had five times more conjugated linoleic acid than food derived from confined, grain-fed animals. Studies have shown that this acid, called CLA for short, can help fight various forms of cancer.

Such research could create a huge demand for grass-based livestock. But if we are not in a position to provide consumers with such products, I guarantee you Argentina, Australia and New Zealand will dominate the market. Just as

• • •
It's argued that American agriculture can't afford to adopt sustainable farming practices because it will come at the cost of our "competitive edge." That argument has it backwards.
 • • •

Fatal Flaws, see page 3...

Worldwide demand for GMO-free crops is sending food buyers to other countries, the U.S. is at risk of losing customers for grass-based livestock because of federal policies that push us towards row crop monocultures and large-scale confinement livestock.

The Conservation Security Act can give America a competitive, sustainable edge. Rather than retiring land from production, this program emphasizes the environmental benefits that working farmland can provide. Instead of paying for production at any cost, it would reward farmers for producing clean air and water, storing carbon, restoring habitat, and providing other public goods.

That's what I told members of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on March 1 when I testified before them in Washington, D.C. Lawmakers need to get that same message from other farmers, as well as environmentalists and plain old taxpayers. It's time we all contacted our Congressional representatives and let them know proposals like the Conservation Security Act can make American farming the kind of competitor that provides an optimistic future for the land and its people. □

McGregor, Iowa, farmer Dan Specht is a member of the Land Stewardship Project's Federal Farm Policy Committee. For the full text of the testimony he gave before the Senate Agriculture Committee, log onto www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on Newsroom and then Press Releases).



Letters

Confrontation of a different kind

Keep up the good work. I copy many of your articles to pass the information around about various farms and related issues. I also send postcards to friends to send in on some of the issues. I'm not good at "confrontation" of the destroyers, but can write, and do.

— Nancy Jackson,
Hoyt Lakes, Minn.

Sustainable ag bill gains support in Congress

A landmark sustainable agriculture measure made another appearance in the U.S. Congress on May 22. The Conservation Security Act was reintroduced into the Senate by Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Gordon Smith (R-OR), and in the House by John Thune (R-SD) and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH).

At this writing, Minnesota sponsors in the House were Betty McCollum (D), James Oberstar (D) and Jim Ramstad (R). In the Senate, Minnesota sponsors were Mark Dayton (D) and Paul Wellstone (D).

The Act marks an important shift in agricultural policy. It emphasizes the environmental benefits that sustainable management of farmland can provide, rather than focusing on land retirement and payments for production of a handful of commodity crops. It rewards farmers for producing societal benefits such as clean air and water, improved soils, carbon storage and restoration of wildlife habitat.

The measure was introduced into the House and Senate last fall. The reintroduction of the bill with new House sponsors and even more co-sponsors from

both the Republican and Democratic parties shows that such an approach to farm policy has growing support in Congress, says Mark Schultz, Policy Program Director for the Land Stewardship Project.

Along with the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, several members of LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee helped develop the concepts behind the proposed legislation. LSP is a member of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, which represents Midwestern farm, rural and environmental groups on agriculture policy.

Schultz says people who want to see policy that doesn't discriminate against sustainable, family farm-based agriculture should contact their representatives and tell them to support the Conservation Security Act (the bill is listed in the Senate as S932, and in the House as H1949).

For more information on the details of the bill, contact LSP's Policy Program office at 612-722-6377, or check out www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on Newsroom and then Press Releases; there is a summary of the bill dated Oct. 19, 2000.) In addition, the November issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter* summarizes the Act on pages 4 and 5.

Fine-tuning only

The Dec. 1, 2000 cover story in the *Land Stewardship Letter* says that public plant breeding's research in the 20th Century has developed all domesticated crops, mostly from weedy, wild relatives. That is not true. I've been a professional public plant breeder, now retired. These crops were developed in *prehistoric times*. In the last 100 or so years, we have only improved them.

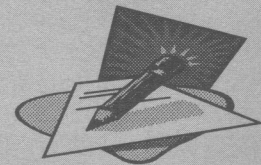
— Darrell Wells
Professor Emeritus, South
Dakota State University-
Brookings

Pounding the pavement

Enclosed is a small amount of money, which you are good at multiplying.

In reference to the November 2000 *Land Stewardship Letter* ("Why Did the Hog Farmer Cross the Road?"), I think some North Carolina residents (and hog farmers) need to cross the road—before the next rainy season.

— Gordon King
Merrill, Wis.



What's on your mind?

Got an opinion? Comments? Criticisms? We like to print letters, commentaries, essays and poems on issues covered in this newsletter. Contact: Brian DeVore, *Land Stewardship Letter*, 2200 4th St., White Bear Lake, MN 55110; phone: 651-653-0618; fax: 651-653-0589; e-mail: bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org.

Donella (Dana) Meadows: 1942-2001

By Dana Jackson

As spring bursts upon us in Minnesota, seemingly just a few minutes after the ice finally left, and I relish every new bud and blossom in my yard, every returning instrument in the orchestra of birds and frogs, I remember Dana Meadows, who died on Feb. 20. A year ago this May, Dana was experiencing her first spring at a farm in the Vermont community of Hartland Four Corners, where she and her colleagues had located the Sustainability Institute and a co-housing, organic farm community called Cobb Hill. She had moved there the previous fall, after 27 years at Foundation Farm in New Hampshire. She wrote that her doubts about the move faded as nature awoke and she got her hands in the soil again.

"All it took was the month of May... to claim a small patch of this land and plant something, to make me feel fully at home at last on this new farm. I was amazed to discover that orioles sing in Hartland as well as in Plainfield...I didn't really think Foundation Farm was the only place on the planet where orioles sing, but I did think of the orioles there...as kind of special and uniquely important to my happiness.

"Hartland is full of grand old lilac bushes...The place is purple all over (and white, because there are many old white lilacs too)...The Hunt house has only one old purple lilac, but now I've planted a whole row of them, nine varieties to line Mace Hill Road. Some day they'll screen the garden from the traffic and add to the beauty of the road."

Every month for the last seven years, a \$25 check has brought me Dana's three- or four-page letter and copies of her weekly, syndicated column called "The Global Citizen." The letter always described what she was seeing in nature, but was also full of news about her housemates, the farm's chickens, ducks and sheep, harvesting and preserving vegetables, and baking bread, as well as reports on her writing, teaching, and conferences she attended. Dana's letters radiated a spirit that came to me as a clear, true, flute song of affirmation for life on earth.

Dana and I met about 20 years ago, but through the letters, I knew her better than she knew me. I wrote to her with empathy when she was sad about leaving

Foundation Farm, where she had lived for 27 years. In 1992, I too left a garden and a place that completely engaged my heart, mind and muscles for 18 years. In her case, Dana moved to a larger farm to join an intentional community of 20-some people constructing modest homes based upon principles of sustainability.

Actually, the whole planet was Dana's community. As a systems modeler, she had a complete picture of the interaction of human systems and the Earth's natural systems and she worked with people all over the world who became her friends.

Meadows received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Minnesota's Carleton College in 1963, and earned a doctorate in biophysics from Harvard in 1968.

While a research fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) she was a protégé of Jay Forrester, the inventor of system dynamics, as well as the principle of magnetic data storage for computers. She and her MIT colleagues were astounded at the media interpretation of *The Limits to Growth*, the book they co-authored.

Headlines such as "COMPUTER PREDICTS WORLD COLLAPSE" distorted its message, which, as Dana wrote in a 1991 article, "intended to issue a warning, but also a vision. It was not a gloomy prediction. 'We saw,' she wrote, 'with the help of the computer, not one future, but many, all possible, some terrible, some terrific.'" The book described the growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, and resource depletion, and offered a choice between allowing growth to continue unchanged, or altering the trends to establish ecological and economic sustainability.

Dana gave a presentation at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 1992—when I was a student there—about the second book the group co-authored, *Beyond the Limits*. I was astounded to hear Harvard professors distort and deny its important message: exponential growth is still the pattern of the human system. No corrective processes are stopping the trends, but they could be stopped by environmental breakdown—or by human ingenuity, restraint and love. We should choose the latter.

Scientists and leaders all over the world (*Limits to Growth* was translated into 26 languages) did understand the message, however, and Dana served on many international boards and scientific

committees. Although she lectured all over the globe, the students at Dartmouth College, where she taught for 29 years, were her favorite audience. In the last letter she wrote, dated Jan. 27, she was just finishing a term teaching environmental ethics and exuberantly expressed love for her students.

"The kids, the kids. College students are so lively and curious, so cautiously idealistic, so ready to be ignited by the flame of truth.

"This week we discussed Leopold's land ethic and *Ishmael*, a book that always turns them on. By the end of the class, they were ready to foment a revolution on behalf of the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community."

Dana Meadows died after being diagnosed with meningitis contracted from an untreated ear infection. Memorial services were held in four major cities on Earth Day, April 21, and innumerable tributes appeared in both mainstream publications and the newsletters of small organizations. After all the beautiful words have been said and written about Dana, her brilliant accomplishments and human virtues extolled, there remains the loss. Those she challenged, inspired, taught and loved must live without her.

Dana's search for human-scale solutions to the big problems of planetary survival will continue at the Sustainability Institute and Cobb Hill Farm in Vermont. The farmers will continue milking Jersey cows, making cheese and producing vegetables for CSA shareholders. The members of the co-housing community will finish construction on the ecologically designed homes and move in.

And I will continue to plant a garden each year. As my daughter told me when I was lamenting the sunny, productive garden left behind in Kansas, "It isn't the garden that's a constant in your life, Mom; it's gardening." As I covered the small lettuce seeds with my hands the other day, I heard a clear, true, beautiful flute playing. □

Dana Jackson is LSP's Associate Director.





Hog farmers sue USDA over dumping of checkoff vote

Ag Secretary says she was unaware of reports supporting referendum

Hog farmers are filing a federal lawsuit against the USDA to end the mandatory pork checkoff.

"As long as the government is going to force us to pay their failed and undemocratic checkoff, hog farmers will fight to end the Bush pork tax and maintain our democratic vote," says Jim Joens, a Wilmont, Minn., hog farmer and member of the Land Stewardship Project.

Members of the Campaign for Family Farms and LSP announced the lawsuit on May 14. LSP is a founding member of the Campaign for Family Farms, which led a successful petition drive to force a referendum vote of the mandatory pork checkoff. Besides LSP, member-groups of the Campaign for Family Farms are Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Missouri Rural Crisis Center and Illinois Stewardship Alliance.

Last fall, hog farmers voted to end the checkoff by a 53 percent to 47 percent margin. In January, then-U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced that in accordance with the referendum, collection of the tax would be terminated. However, one of Veneman's first actions after being appointed by President Bush was to disregard the vote and continue collection of the tax on each hog sold by America's farmers.

The lawsuit will ask the court to force

the USDA to terminate the checkoff. The lawsuit also requests that an injunction be put in place to prohibit the collection of the \$54 million a year tax.

Veneman admits ignorance

Ironically, the announcement of the lawsuit came the same day that U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman admitted she was unaware of two key government reports when she ordered the continuation of the pork tax program. At a USDA-sponsored press conference given in Iowa, Veneman said she overturned the vote because she felt the results would not have stood up under legal scrutiny.

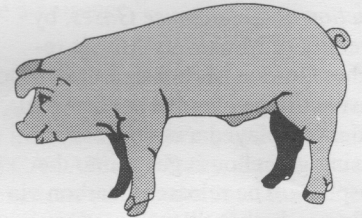
However, reports issued by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) and the USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) concluded that the checkoff referendum was conducted properly. In September 2000, the GAO investigation found that Glickman acted within his statutory authority when he held a referendum to terminate the pork tax. On January 10, 2001, the OIG issued a report on its investigation into the National Pork Producers Council's (NPPC) claims of voting irregularities in the referendum. The OIG report dismissed the NPPC's specific claims of voting irregularities.

Wrote the report's authors: "After our

review of the information and interviews with [government] staff, we concluded that there were controls in place governing the conduct of the referendum...we found no evidence that the controls did not work as intended. Thus we have no basis for further inquiry."

When asked about the reports on May 14, Veneman said she was unaware of their conclusions.

"We're appalled that Secretary Veneman threw out a democratic vote of American hog farmers and is now claiming that she did not see these two key reports," says LSP Policy Program Director Mark Schultz. "Veneman claims that her decision was based on legal concerns and insurmountable flaws surrounding the vote, yet these issues were thoroughly addressed and dispelled by two highly respected nonpartisan government agencies. This is an insult not only to farmers, but anyone concerned about democracy." □



Want to learn more?

For the latest news on the pork checkoff campaign, log onto www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on *Newsroom* and then *Press Releases*). For information on how to help in the campaign to get the Bush Administration to recognize the validity of the checkoff vote, call LSP's Policy Program at 612-722-6377.

Farmers convey their anger to Veneman, NPPC

Hog farmers upset by a back room deal between the USDA and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) took their concerns to the nation's capital this spring. That deal was designed to overturn the majority vote of hog farmers to terminate the mandatory pork checkoff.

On March 25, more than 300 hog farmers and community leaders rallied at the Alexandria, Va., home of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. The next day, some 150 people protested at the Washington, D.C., offices of the NPPC. The NPPC and its state affiliates have received more than 90 percent of the more than half a billion dollars in checkoff funds

collected from farmers since 1986 (the tax became mandatory that year).

"Hog farmers protested at the NPPC office because it's obvious that NPPC has forgotten whose money they are taking. Independent hog farmers nationwide voted to end the mandatory pork checkoff, but the NPPC doesn't respect independent producers and it doesn't respect democracy," says Linda Noble, a Land Stewardship Project member who produces hogs near Kenyon, Minn. She participated in the protests along with several other LSP members and staff. Other member-organizations of the Campaign for Family Farms were also represented at the rallies.



Global warming: Ag is part of the problem *and* solution

Global warming could have severe negative effects on agriculture through climate change and extreme weather events. However, farming itself has the potential to be one of the keys to reducing the production of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. In fact, according to a new report by the Land Stewardship Project and Minnesotans for an Energy-Efficient Economy, efforts that reduce the production of such gases could give agriculture opportunities to profit both economically and agronomically.

Minnesota Agriculture and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases, by University of Minnesota-Morris researcher Gordon McIntosh, outlines how intensive tillage over the past several decades has played a major role in releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The release of carbon via plowing and other tillage practices is of particular concern. However, the report also shows how conservation tillage methods that leave the soil relatively undisturbed can "store" a significant

amount of carbon, reducing the release of carbon dioxide. Conservation tillage can also help fight global warming because it reduces machinery use and fuel use, thus cutting emissions produced by internal combustion engines.

Environmentalists are excited about the possibility that farmers could be paid to sequester carbon on their land through reduced tillage practices. Besides helping reduce the release of greenhouse gases, conservation tillage can produce multiple side benefits such as reduced erosion, increased soil quality and cleaner air. Other methods of sequestering carbon on the land, such as establishing wetlands and creating buffer strips, can also produce wildlife habitat and increase water quality.

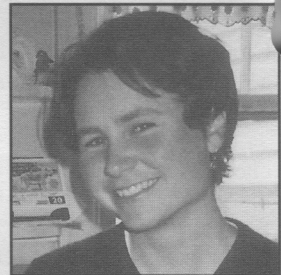
Currently, some Iowa farmers are being paid by the Greenhouse Emissions Management Company an estimated \$3 to \$15 per acre annually to sequester carbon by reducing tillage, according to the report. McIntosh estimates that Minnesota farmland has the potential to sequester 0.16 metric tons of carbon per acre annually. Based on that, over the next 20 or 30 years the average Minnesota farm (318 acres) could earn an extra \$1,000 or more each year for storing carbon.

The report concludes that proposed agricultural policy changes such as the Conservation Security Act (see page 2), could help provide financial incentives for pursuing farming practices that reduce global warming.

A copy of *Minnesota Agriculture and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases* can be downloaded from LSP's Web site (www.landstewardshipproject.org) by clicking on *Programs*, and then *New Vision for Agriculture* and finally *Documenting the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture*. This report was done as part of LSP's Multiple Benefits of Agriculture initiative, which is researching ways that sustainable farming practices can produce environmental, economic and social benefits for society. For more information on this initiative, contact Mara Krinke in LSP's Policy Program office by calling 612-722-6377, or e-mailing mkrinke@landstewardshipproject.org. □

LSP interns

Richarda Ruffle is serving a summer internship with the Land Stewardship Project's western Minnesota office in Montevideo. She has a bachelor's degree in English and Women's Studies from Colgate University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Environmental Studies at the University of Montana. Ruffle has worked for the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and on an organic farm in Norway. She has also served as an instructor at an outdoor school and science camp.



Richarda Ruffle

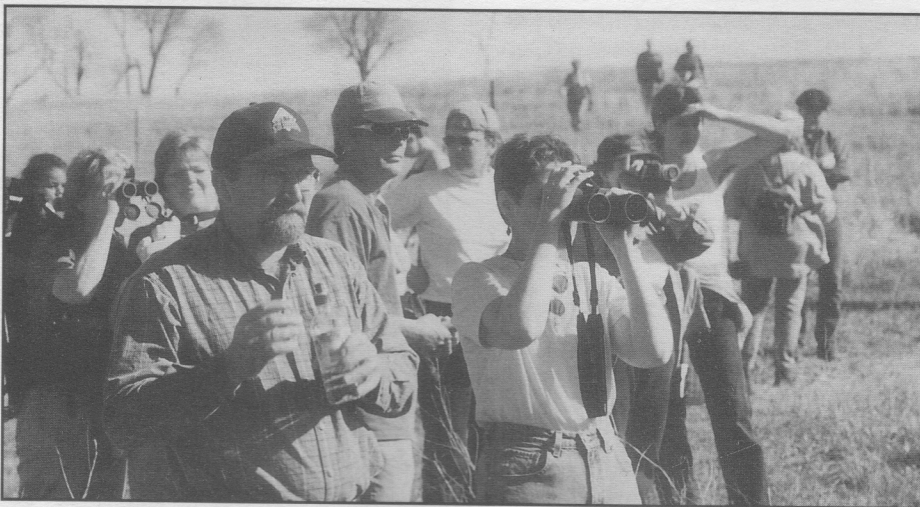
During her internship, Ruffle will focus on promoting regional food systems in the Montevideo area. She will also work with the Farm Beginnings program.

Sarah Wisness served an internship with LSP's Policy Program this spring. She worked on the pork checkoff referendum

campaign and the survey of LSP members on legislative issues. In May, Wisness received a degree in environmental studies from Macalester College. □



Sarah Wisness



Morris, Minn., farmers Craig and Joanie Murphy (foreground) check out a meadowlark during an April 26 field day on Moonstone Farm in western Minnesota. More than 45 people joined Paul Konrad from Minnesota Audubon for an evening of birding. Audrey Arner and Richard Handeen, who own and operate Moonstone, have integrated bird habitat into their grazing system. The event was sponsored by LSP's Farm Beginnings Program, the Chippewa River Whole Farm Planning and Monitoring Team and Minnesota Audubon. (LSP photo)

MPCA's failure on factory farms focus of meeting with commissioner

Farmers and other rural residents gathered at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) headquarters in St. Paul on April 24 to protest the agency's record of failure in regulating large feedlots.

The group of about 30 people met with MPCA Commissioner Karen Studders and other top MPCA officials. During that meeting, the citizens outlined the MPCA's failures. In addition, members of Citizens Concerned for Waseca County served Studders with their intent to appeal the MPCA Citizens' Board's recent decision not to order an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the controversial 1,600-cow Alliance Dairy. If approved, this dairy would be among the 15 largest in the state.

The event was organized by people from around Minnesota who have been negatively affected by MPCA's failures and have been fighting to force the MPCA to meaningfully regulate large factory-style farms and their multi-million gallon manure lagoons. Many of the leaders in some of the state's most high profile feedlot fights were present to speak to how MPCA has failed them and their communities.

Jan Poldervaard, a beef farmer from Fillmore County, attended the rally. She and 24 other members of Fillmore County Citizens Concerned for Health challenged the MPCA's decision not to order an EIS on a proposed large dairy and 7.3 million gallon manure lagoon in their neighborhood. The court ruled that the MPCA's decision not to order an EIS was "arbitrary and capricious" and ordered that an EIS must be performed before permitting can continue.

"The MPCA's record of failure on

Who attended the LSP event & how MPCA failed them:

• **Citizens Concerned for Waseca County**—The MPCA failed to order an EIS on Alliance Dairy—a proposed 1,600-cow dairy with a 25 million-gallon capacity manure lagoon system on the site of a drained wetland.

• **Fillmore County Citizens Concerned for Health**—The MPCA failed to order an EIS on the proposed Reiland Dairy and its 7.3 million gallon manure lagoon. Citizens took the MPCA to court and the judge ordered an EIS.

• **Pope County Mothers Concerned for Health**—The MPCA failed to order an EIS on Hancock Pro Pork's proposal for a large hog confinement system. Citizens took the MPCA to court and got an EIS ordered in 1998. That EIS is yet to be completed.

• **Neighbors to Metro Dairy in Wright County**—The MPCA failed to order an EIS on Metro Dairy, telling nearby neighbors everything was "fine." In March, the "state of the art" dairy's lagoon ran over, spilling over 100,000 gallons of liquid manure into the local watershed.

regulating large feedlots is clear," she said. "We are here to support the citizens from Waseca County and to let the MPCA know we are not going to stop until the MPCA stops acting arbitrarily and capriciously, and starts protecting our water and air from the pollution of large feedlots."

Land Stewardship Project member John Gaterud is one of the 45 citizens challenging the MPCA Citizens' Board's decision not to order an EIS on the proposed Alliance Dairy. He told Studders that the decision not to order an extensive environmental study of the proposed dairy proves that the MPCA serves the needs of factory farms at the expense of the general public.

"The Board's position is not only grounded in bad science, policy and practice; it's also insulting, demeaning and wrong," Gaterud said.

Studders admitted her agency has some shortcomings when it comes to controlling pollution, but blamed the problems on budget cuts.

"We have a lot of pollution going into our surface water. ...But we don't have the resources" needed to deal with such problems adequately, she said.

The citizens at the meeting countered that more funding would not help until the MPCA approached environmental protection with a different attitude.

A recent survey showed that MPCA employees feel the agency has made concessions to business, responding to "executive, legislative and lobbyist pressures," according to an April 22 Minneapolis *Star Tribune* article on problems plaguing the agency.

"We saw tremendous resources put toward making sure Reiland Dairy didn't get an EIS, that Alliance Dairy didn't get an EIS," LSP organizer Bobby King told Studders. "We saw MPCA staff working for the proposer...they were treated like they were customers. We were treated like a nuisance."

Legal fund

A legal defense fund has been set up for the citizens fighting to overturn the MPCA's Alliance Dairy decision in court. Donations can be sent to: Citizens Concerned for Waseca County, PO Box 228, Waseca, MN 56903; phone: 507-835-3833. □

An interchangeable factory farm?

The backers of the Alliance Dairy plan are apparently keeping their options open—as long as those options involve factory farm production.

It was revealed on May 10 that Peter and Paul Zimmerman are proposing building two confinement hog barns on the same site they've been wanting to build their mega-dairy. The barns would house 2,400 sows when finished. In a letter to the Waseca County Planning and Zoning Office, the county's Feedlot Pollution Control Officer said, "This facility is being proposed as an alternative to the proposed Alliance Dairy proposal."

Waseca county residents are requesting that an Environmental Assessment Worksheet be done on the proposed hog operation.



John Gaterud (fourth from left) presented citizen concerns to MPCA officials at the April 24 meeting.

Festival connects farmers & consumers

More than 400 people attended the 2001 Community Food and Farm Festival on April 8 at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. The event gave consumers an opportunity to meet 39 farmers who are direct marketing sustainably produced food.

The Food and Farm Festival started out as a way for consumers to learn more about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA farming is still a major part of this event. However, this year's Festival showcased various other models for getting sustainably raised food straight to consumers. Systems that feature on-farm pick-up, local deliveries and cooperative marketing were represented at this year's Festival.

This event was sponsored by the Minnesota Food Association, in partnership with the CSA Guild and



A potential customer (left to right) asks Nett Hart and Tamarack about their operation, Webster Farm Organics, during the 2001 Community Food and Farm Festival. (LSP photo)

the Land Stewardship Project.

For a copy of LSP's directory of farms that sell food direct to consumers, call 651-

653-0618, or log onto

www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on *Food & Farm Connection*). □

Ad campaign urges farmers to take second look at GMOs

In response to farmer concerns over genetically engineered crops, the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture launched a major educational initiative this spring.

In a print and radio advertising campaign targeting Minnesota and other key Midwestern states, the Campaign urged farmers to look at the declining export markets for crops containing genetically modified organisms (GMO) before making final planting decisions this spring. The Land Stewardship Project is a founding member of the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign.

The Campaign ads encourage farmers to consider the impact genetically engineered crops will have on export markets and to call 1-800-639-FARM to get more information. The ads target corn and soybean farmers in Minnesota as well as Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and South Dakota. This is a grassroots effort that is intended to provide balanced information on genetic engineering from a farmer perspective, says LSP member Jim Riddle, who participated in creating the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign. Riddle said providing farmers with a non-industry perspective is critical at this time.

"Family farmers are seeing overseas markets shrink partly because of

genetically engineered seed," he says. "Prices are already low and these market declines can only do more harm."

The ads highlight recent negative market developments brought on by genetically engineered crops. For example, the USDA lowered its forecast of corn exports for the marketing year by 90 million bushels. Private analysts say this cut is largely due to the contamination of the crop by the genetically modified corn StarLink, according to the Feb. 25 *Des Moines Register*.

In addition, Brazil has won its first contract to supply Spain with 150,000 tons of non-GMO corn. The corn was sold at a 15-cent premium. In 1999, the U.S. lost \$200 million in sales of corn to Spain and Portugal alone.

Besides LSP, groups involved in the media campaign are Dakota Rural Action, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and Missouri Rural Crisis Center. □

The print advertisement can be seen in recent issues of Agri News, The Farmer and The Land. To view an electronic version, log onto www.landstewardshipproject.org (click Newsroom, and then Press Releases).

Policy survey: protect the land, farmers

Land Stewardship Project members strongly support strict regulation of factory farms, maintaining market access for family farms and holding manufacturers of genetically engineered products accountable. Those were the findings of a recent mail survey on Minnesota legislative issues conducted by LSP's Policy Program. The survey was sent to Minnesota LSP members, and more than 480 returned the survey—a 35 percent response rate.

Some of the specific findings were:

- **Ninety-one percent** support or strongly support performing an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for feedlots greater than 500 animal units if more than 50 residents or landowners petition the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

- **Eighty-nine percent** support or strongly support prohibiting packers from owning hogs or hog operations in Minnesota.

- **Ninety-two percent** support or strongly support holding manufacturers of genetically modified seed liable for any losses they impose on a farm growing non-genetically modified crops.

For more information, or a copy of the complete survey results, call LSP's Policy Program at 612-722-6377. □

Streamside grazing schools June 27-28

Stream-side management, the Conservation Security Act, Minnesota's feedlot regulations, Wisconsin's use-value taxation law, soil quality indicators, and business plan writing are some of the featured subjects of two, day-long grazing field schools to be held in southeast Minnesota and southwest Wisconsin June 27 and 28, respectively.

The Minnesota event will be hosted by dairy graziers Vance and Bonnie Haugen at their farm near Canton. Wisconsin beef producers Don and Kim Dudenbostel will host the June 28 school on their farm near Steuben. Each day will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. To reserve space and lunch, please pre-register by calling, toll-free, 800-385-3103, by June 15. A \$10 fee to cover materials and the meal will be collected on-site.

Attendance is open to anyone interested in learning about current grazing issues with a special emphasis on management decisions related to creeks and streams. Organizers ask that people who have recently visited countries infected with foot-and-mouth disease take that into consideration when deciding whether to attend this event.

Break out sessions will take participants stream-side and on pasture to view and discuss grazing where it happens, according to Caroline van Schaik, a Land Stewardship Project organizer who is helping coordinate the schools.

"We'll take a look at some of the particulars of grazing, especially grazing around water. This is designed for anyone who wants to balance livestock production with environmental stewardship."

The Minnesota event will include discussions on the potential of the Conservation Security Act to benefit



Participants in this year's Farm Beginnings program for southeast Minnesota stood for a class photo during a March 29 field day at the Eric and Lisa Klein farm near Plainview. Farm Beginnings participants are spending the summer attending "mentorship field days" at farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin that are utilizing sustainable production methods. For information on the field days, or to apply for the 2001-2002 Farm Beginnings program in southeast Minnesota (deadline: Oct. 8), contact Karen Stettler at 507-523-3366. For information on the western Minnesota Farm Beginnings program, call the Land Stewardship Project's Montevideo office at 320-269-2105. (LSP photo)

graziers, grazing-related aspects of the new feedlot regulations and soil quality indicators in grazing paddocks.

At the Wisconsin event, presenters will address the new use-value tax laws, business plans, nutrient movement and the marketing potential of being grass-based and certified organic.

Both events are being co-sponsored by an interstate collaborative of farmers, the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, Minnesota and Wisconsin Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin, Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin, and the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service.

For more information, contact Caroline van Schaik in LSP's Twin Cities office at 651-653-0618 or caroline@mtn.org. □

Sustainable swine research at Morris

The new Sustainable Swine Scientist began work this spring at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, Minn. Rebecca Morrison is conducting research on deep-bedded straw hog production systems at the experiment station. Morrison has done extensive research on alternative swine production systems in her native Australia.

Morrison can be contacted by calling 320-589-1711, or e-mailing [morrirs@mrs.umn.edu](mailto:morrisrs@mrs.umn.edu). □

'Entrepreneurial Ag' workshops rescheduled

The special "Entrepreneurial Agriculture" Sirolli workshops (see page 12) scheduled for April were postponed by spring floodwaters in western Minnesota. But new dates have been set for the workshops, which are being co-sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project. They will all be held at the Kilowatt Community Center, 600 Kilowatt Drive, in Granite Falls, Minn.

The new dates are:

→ **June 27**— Session I—From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: Marketing Your Livestock Products for all They're Worth.

→ **July 5** — Session II—From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: Harnessing Social Capital of

Communities to Support Entrepreneurs, featuring Yvonne Fizer & Ernesto Sirolli.

→ **July 6** — Session III—From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: The Trinity of Management & its Application to your Farming & Business Operation.

Each workshop will feature food produced using sustainable methods on local farms. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Terry VanDerPol in LSP's western Minnesota office at 320-269-2105 or tlvdp@landstewardshipproject.org.

Food & Farm → → → → Connection



Stewardship Food Network

The *Stewardship Food Network* is a list of Land Stewardship Project members who produce meat, dairy products, eggs, vegetables, fruit, flowers, grain and other products in a sustainable manner. The Network also lists LSP member-businesses selling or processing food produced by other LSP members.

Some of the production methods used by the Network farmers include certified organic, antibiotic and hormone-free, free of genetically modified organisms, pasture-based, integrated pest management to reduce pesticide use, deep-bedded straw livestock housing and conservation tillage.

The listing provides contact information for the farmers so consumers can call or e-mail them personally to learn more about production methods, availability of products and prices. For a complete listing, contact our Twin Cities office at 651-653-0618 or go to our Web Site (www.landstewardshipproject.org) and click on *Food & Farm Connection*.

LSP will periodically update and make corrections to our Food Network listing.

If you are an LSP member who would like to be listed, please contact us at our Twin Cities office. Here are the latest corrections/additions:

Central MN

- ☐ **Long Pond Elk Farm**
Myron Angstman
Princeton, Minn.
Phone: 800-478-5315
E-mail: angstman@unicom-alaska.com
→ Products: **Elk**
✗ Also services: **Twin Cities**

Southeast MN

- ☐ **Rebekah's Fine Food**
Paula & Mikel Wheeler
330 W. Broadway
Plainview, MN 55964
Phone: 507-534-4065
→ Products: **Coffee shop, restaurant & catering featuring locally produced food**

Southwest WI

- ☐ **Rush River Produce**
John, Terry, Joseph & Lucas Cuddy
W4098 200th Ave.
Maiden Rock, WI 54750
Phone: 715-594-3648
E-mail: cuddy@redwing.net
→ Products: **Blueberries, currants, raspberries, blackberries, lingonberries & gooseberries; pick-your-own**

Food retailers wanted

Do you know of a restaurant or retail grocery that features food produced locally by sustainable family farmers? Let us know and we'll contact them about joining the Land Stewardship Project and getting listed in the Stewardship Food Network. To nominate a business, call Cathy Eberhart at 651-653-0618, or e-mail her at cathy@landstewardshipproject.org.

Midwest Food Alliance: Planting the seed of sales

By Ray Kirsch

The spring bustle is here. Nobody's in—answering machines are earning their keep. And among the seeds being planted, somewhere way in the back, is the seed of sales. How can we tell folks about the great things we're doing on our farm this year? About this healthy local food?

About the connections between foods, farms and communities? Wouldn't it be great if our farm could take out an ad in the newspaper? Maybe get a spot on radio or TV? Maybe have some sales at the local co-op or grocery with demos during the year? Talk to shoppers about how their food dollars make a difference?

If you're planting this seed, you're not alone. You can join with other farmers, retailers, and consumers who believe that

healthy, sustainable communities begin with the healthy, sustainable foods from your farm. You can join the Midwest Food Alliance (MWFA). And that little sales seed will be nourished and bloom and carry the story of your farm to all of your customers.

The Midwest Food Alliance is entering

MWFA, see page 11...

its second year of promoting local farms and local foods; of helping consumers identify and choose good, local stewardship. The Alliance uses a sustainable "seal of approval" to identify outstanding farms and foods. And then we use this seal to tell your story. We take out the ads; we get the media coverage; we conduct demos at local stores; we put up point-of-sale materials; we engage consumers; we help you—through collaboration—tap the marketing expertise and energy of Midwest Food Alliance members.

The Midwest Food Alliance is growing, and this year we will certify and celebrate sustainable farms of all shapes and sizes. We will certify market gardens and CSAs. We will also expand the foods we certify and endorse to include sweet corn, tomatoes, cabbages, root crops, fall squash, potatoes, cucumbers, blueberries, beef, pork, poultry and dairy products.



We will be expanding the number of farms in the program. We will also be expanding with more retail partners and more participating stores.

The work of the Land Stewardship Project revolves around the chain of wealth that runs from sunshine to food to community. And more specifically the excellent stewardship necessary to sustain this chain. The Midwest Food Alliance is an opportunity to make this stewardship a

part of everyone's life. It can make it easier for shoppers to understand how their food purchases influence not just personal health, but the community in general. We all want to understand the story, to hear it, to taste it, to support it. The Midwest Food Alliance is an opportunity to do so. □

Midwest Food Alliance Farm Coordinator Ray Kirsch is based in LSP's Twin Cities office. If you're a farmer who wants to learn how to get your products certified by the MWFA, contact Kirsch by calling 651-653-0618, or e-mailing rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org. Information on MWFA is also available at www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on Food & Farm Connection). In addition, MWFA's partner in the Pacific Northwest, The Food Alliance, has information at www.thefoodalliance.org/midwest.html.

Report: Lack of food in farm country starves local economies

It's the ultimate irony of our modern agricultural system: the most heavily cultivated regions in this country actually produce very little food for local consumption. This factory model of farming—import the inputs; export the outputs—means not only is food not circulated locally, but neither is money. Input suppliers, food processors and grocery store chains owned by national companies pocket the profits.

A new report from the nonprofit Community Design Center documents the extreme economic gap such a system is creating in one seven-county area of southeast Minnesota (an area long known for its high production of crops and livestock). Using statistics gleaned from state and federal agencies, *Finding Food in Farm Country: The economics of food and farming in Southeast Minnesota*, documents that:

- The 8,436 farms in southeast Minnesota sold \$866 million worth of farm products in 1997.
- However, the region's farmers spent \$947 million raising this food. This is \$80 million more than they earned by selling their products.
- Southeast Minnesota farm families spend about \$400 million annually purchasing inputs and credit from distant suppliers.
- The 303,256 residents of southeast Minnesota spend \$506 million annually buying food, almost all from producers outside the state.
- This means as much as \$800 million each year (about 10 percent of all household income) flows out of the region because of this agricultural system.

The study comes up with some conclusions that run counter to the conventional wisdom that increased productivity of commodities will save rural communities. Based on research that shows locally circulated dollars produce much more economic

development, the authors write that, "...the region's farmers could reduce their losses by growing fewer commodities for the agribusiness economy, and consumers could reduce their losses by purchasing more food directly from producers. The flows of money created—internal to the region—would likely be smaller than from those now found in the mainstream farm and food economy. Still, each dollar would do more to create wealth for the region's residents."

What can be done? The report identifies several opportunities for circulating food, and thus the money associated with it, locally. It cites examples of efforts on the part of a restaurant, an organic foods cooperative and a small town grocery to support locally produced food in southeast Minnesota. It also describes a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation in northeast Iowa that is supplying rural consumers with fresh food. The CSA has teamed up with other farmers in the area to expand its line of food offerings, as well as to begin supplying local institutions such as nursing homes. Perhaps the best news found in *Finding Food in Farm Country* comes in the form of the "Resources" section in the back. It lists dozens of southeast Minnesota farms, meat lockers and other businesses that make money by focusing on local production and consumption of food.

Will such initiatives save rural communities? No, concludes the report. But they can go a long way toward building wealth from within using local resources. In rich farming regions, such wealth is based on local food—and locally circulated food dollars.

For a free copy of the report, contact Dellane Webster at the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance by calling 651-215-0239 or 800-657-3843. She can also be e-mailed at dellane.webster@moea.state.mn.us.

It takes a village to raise a business

By Karen Stettler

We all like to hear stories of the “maverick entrepreneur”—the lone innovator who takes a good idea and through sweat, creativity and a little luck hammers it into a successful business. The trouble is, such a romantic view of enterprise development is usually far from reality. To survive in the long term, small- and medium-sized businesses need to shuck the lone wolf image and draw on the resources of many.

That was made clear to me and six other people this winter when we participated in an “Enterprise Facilitation” workshop in Rochester, Minn. Led by Ernesto Sirolli and Yvonne Fizer of the Sirolli Institute, this week-long training was one of exploration, challenge and hope as we wrestled with ways to help entrepreneurs get their businesses started. Land Stewardship Project organizer (and small town coffee shop owner) Patrick Moore also participated in the training. We both came away feeling inspired and motivated.

As the coordinator of the southeastern Minnesota Farm Beginnings Program, the application of a strategy that promotes and supports enterprise development seems obvious to me. After all, Farm Beginnings participants are basically entrepreneurs wishing to get a small business started. Farmers are known for their independent nature and willingness to go it alone. But I came away from the Sirolli training convinced that such a business strategy is not sustainable in the long term.

As a development worker in Africa, Sirolli collected many stories that graphically illustrate the many faults of top-down “local” development. He knows all too well the pitfalls of outside “development workers” coming in and “solving problems” without listening to the host country residents.

But what exactly is “Enterprise Facilitation?” It is a management coaching system that supports entrepreneurs in the community, confidentially and free of charge. Enterprise Facilitation helps people with small to mid-sized

businesses get started at any stage of their development. The other unique component of this strategy is the support and commitment of a large and broad-based board that represents many aspects of the community. This is an approach that helps entrepreneurs identify tasks and resources while making full use of community opportunities. Sirolli has seen revitalized communities as a result of an enterprise facilitator’s presence.

At the core of Sirolli’s enterprise development model is the “Trinity of Management”—Product, Marketing and Financial Management. According to Sirolli, in order to effectively achieve these, someone must be passionate and skillful. But he shatters the idea that sole proprietors can and should run their business alone. In fact, in all his 15 years of experience working with over 30,000 entrepreneurs in 250 communities around the world, Sirolli has never found anyone who is absolutely passionate about all three areas. An entrepreneur needs to identify which of the “Trinity” he or she is most skillful in and passionate about, and find others to fill the holes.

This is where the enterprise facilitator comes in. Such a person can help link an entrepreneur skillful and passionate in one area with others in the community who have complementary skills and passions. For example, an Australian tuna fisherman approached Sirolli, saying that the cannery had shut down and there were only a few fishermen left, struggling to make a living. This fisherman brought the remaining commercial anglers together and they formed a cooperative. Sirolli asked them what they “loved” doing. They all answered fishing—they were passionate about the product and they felt confident they could consistently provide beautiful tuna to consumers. The problem was they had nowhere to market their product since the cannery closed. In addition, they were not good at managing their finances. Sirolli helped the fishing cooperative find an outstanding marketer. One of the fisherman’s wives agreed to keep the books. The marketer, looking for small tuna markets, began conversations with Japanese customers who were desperately interested in fresh fish for sushi. A Japanese sushi chef was recruited

to come to Australia to teach local chefs how to prepare sushi and create more local demand. The cooperative began making a good profit, much more than the fishermen had ever made when the cannery was in business.

This story emphasizes that each of the three areas of the “Trinity” need to be performed by someone who is passionate and skilled. It makes sense—if the tuna fishermen are passionate about fishing, talking to potential customers and balancing the books will happen *after* everything else is done, if at all (or when guilt finally gets the better of them). Such tasks will be hastily and poorly done by people who don’t like doing them.

The core of Sirolli’s philosophy of entrepreneur development—that the keys for success are found within networks of local people working together—is at the heart of LSP’s work on farms and within rural communities. Steely-eyed loners gritting it out on the land are good fodder for Hollywood movies, but we’d rather weave tales more based in reality—and that have happy endings to boot. □

Karen Stettler coordinates the southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings program. She can be contacted by calling 507-523-3366, or e-mailing stettler@landstewardshipproject.org. LSP is co-sponsoring Sirolli Agricultural Entrepreneurship workshops June 27, July 5 and July 6 in Granite Falls, Minn. For more information, see page 9.

Opportunities

Resources

Woods cooperative

Are you a woodland owner wanting to learn about and implement the best practices for long-term sustainability of your land? Would continued income from your woodland through value-added processing as a part of a cooperative fit your future financial picture? Are you in need of wood products from well-managed, third-party certified woodland?

The sustainable woods cooperative movement is growing in the Minnesota and Wisconsin region. For more information, contact the Hiawatha Sustainable Woods Cooperative at 608-272-3223 or hswc@voyager.net. □

Legislative Update

Minnesota's sustainable/organic programs threatened by state leaders

LSP works to restore funding & prevent factory farm subsidy

The Land Stewardship Project's work in the 2001 Minnesota Legislature mirrored its overall strategy when it comes to statewide policy priorities: oppose public subsidies for corporate agriculture and factory operations, and support research and education for a sustainable, family-farm based approach to food and fiber production.

As of this writing, it was unclear how those priorities fared during the 2001 legislative session. The House and Senate ended their official sessions May 21 without passing a two-year state budget. That means no bills covering funding of agriculture and environmental programs or higher education in Minnesota had been sent to Governor Jesse Ventura as of May 30. An agreement on budget targets was reached by the Legislature and Ventura on May 25. No spending in these areas is final until the conclusion of a special legislative session—scheduled for later this spring.

LSP priorities included:

- **Restoration of funding cuts being proposed for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture sustainable and organic farming programs.** Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson proposed siphoning \$370,000 out of these popular programs. Such cuts would reduce by half the money available for demonstration grants and education programs as well as eliminate the first-in-the-nation organic certification cost-share program. Restoration of funding would come through the Environmental and Agriculture Budget.

During the session, the Senate passed legislation that would have restored full funding to sustainable and organic agriculture programs. Support for the programs was also built up in the legislature as members of LSP and other allied environmental and sustainable agriculture groups made telephone calls, testified before committees and in general made it known how important sustainable and organic agriculture initiatives were to the state's future, says Mark Schultz,

LSP's Policy Program Director. However, in the end the funding for these programs looked very precarious.

"We were able to show there was support for such initiatives both within the agricultural community as well as throughout the state," says Schultz. "But the key issue remaining is funding them, which is the Legislature's job."

- **Not providing taxpayer money to factory farms so they can pay for court-ordered Environmental Impact Statements.** The Minnesota House provided \$300,000 to pay for Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) that the courts order very large-scale feedlots to

For the latest information on how family farmer-based sustainable/organic agriculture fared in the 2001 Minnesota Legislature, check www.landstewardshipproject.org. LSP's Policy Program can be contacted at 612-722-6377.

conduct. In part due to LSP's efforts, the Senate has allocated a smaller amount of funding, with restrictions on its use. An EIS is only required when a proposed facility creates the potential for significant environmental harm.

"Public funding of EIS's for large-scale feedlots amounts to a subsidy for factory farms," says Paul Sobocinski, an organizer for LSP's Policy Program. "LSP opposes using taxpayers' money to pay for factory farm Environmental Impact Statements, especially considering that any other business or industry pays for these studies from their own pocket. Appropriate environmental protection is a cost of doing business."

- **Providing funding for the Alternative Swine Systems Program at the University of Minnesota.** A total of \$250,000 over two years is needed to support this program, which would help conduct research on sustainable hog production techniques such as deep-bedded straw systems. Demand for

antibiotic-free and organic pork has increased significantly just within the past year. However, natural pork companies are finding there's a dearth of information available for farmers seeking to raise hogs using alternative methods.

- **Providing continued funding for a rural sociologist position that focuses on agricultural issues.** This position, which was created in 1998, is based at the University of Minnesota-Morris and has already generated cutting-edge research related to, among other things, how modern hog production affects farm families. To continue, this position would require \$200,000 to \$250,000 over two years.

The Alternative Swine Systems Program and the Rural Sociologist position would both be funded by the "Agriculture and Extension Specials" segment of the Higher Education budget. However, the overall \$7.4 million request for "Specials" was reduced to \$2.4 million by the Senate. It fared even worse in the House, which provided *no* funding.

A message is sent

No matter what the final outcome, certain lawmakers and Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson have already worked hard to make sure sustainable family farming receives little support in the Legislature, says Sobocinski.

"Unfortunately, Governor Ventura seems to be following Hugoson's lead as far as funding needs for agriculture," says Sobocinski. "If sustainable agriculture funding is slashed and public dollars go to pay factory farm costs, this session will go down as one of the most shortsighted in recent history."

The Wabasso farmer says that the Legislature's unwillingness to fund innovative programs within higher education also sends a negative message about lawmakers' long-term view of rural Minnesota's future.

"Lawmakers were so focused on giving money back in the near term that they lost sight of the fact that they are shortchanging our children long into the future." □

plowing, a traditional tillage method that flips the soil over, exposing the bare dirt to the elements. The other half of the field was chisel plowed, a technique that disturbs the soil less and leaves more residue on top. For the five-year study, the scientists then set up remote monitoring stations that could measure what (and how much) left the field during runoff events—rains heavy enough to send water, and whatever is along for the ride, racing off a field.

Near Jordan, another team of University of Minnesota soil scientists—Christopher Iremonger, Prasanna Gowda, David Mulla, and Deborah Allan—had set up a similar type of remote monitoring station at the bottom of a 25-acre field that was being farmed using a mix of small grains, alfalfa hay and pasture.

These two research projects were not connected officially. The study near New Prague was funded by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council. The Jordan site was an initiative of the Sustainable Farming Systems Project, which involves Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Minnesota Project, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota.

But it was no coincidence both were located in Sand Creek: the watershed is the biggest contributor of sediment to the Minnesota River. Sand Creek comprises a large part of an area called the Lower Minnesota River Basin. That basin comprises 12 percent of the entire Minnesota River watershed, but contributes 26 percent of total suspended solids.

“Sand Creek is a dirty little watershed,” says Iremonger.

Even though the watershed is mostly rural, it is also being inundated by urban sprawl. In fact, Scott County, the home of both farms studied, is the fastest growing county in Minnesota, according to the latest U.S. Census. Increasingly, land use decisions in the region are taking on a complicated flavor as farmers and non-farm residents vie for the same resources.

Sudden impact

Both studies show that when it comes to major erosion damage, it's not so much the amount of rain, as the rate at which it falls. If that rain had fallen over a period of, say, 24 hours, the impact wouldn't have been so great. But this was an intense storm. And the stage was set for it to do some major damage when a one-

inch rain fell on June 24. This saturated the ground and made it difficult for subsequent precipitation to soak into the ground—particularly precipitation that came hard and fast. On June 26, the rain started at 7:30 p.m. and was over by 10 p.m. At its peak, the rain was falling at a rate of four inches per hour—an intensity it maintained for 25 minutes.

“That's intense. We've seen larger storms, but that was intense,” says Hansen, adding that he knew as soon as he went to the monitoring station to collect samples some major erosion had occurred. “Some of the corn plants at the bottom of that field were buried.”

Such sights were common throughout the watershed after the storm, say area residents. And the numbers Hansen and

Model builders

Field runoff studies like those conducted in the Sand Creek area provide an important real world basis for the dominant form of runoff research: modeling. This consists of, for example, doing rainfall simulations on “Universal Soil Loss Equation” plots that are 10 feet wide by 70 feet long. Calculations are then used to extrapolate those results for a 25-acre crop field, a whole farm, or even an entire watershed.

These models have provided some important research, and it's easier to develop a laboratory-based “scenario” than to study an entire field under real conditions. For one thing, because runoff events are so unpredictable, a monitoring device may sit for months without providing good data. In addition, it's a lot to ask farmers to allow a monitoring system to be installed for multiple years on their land, or to change their tillage practices in the name of science (the corn field that Neil Hansen and John Moncrief studied normally would not be moldboard plowed; the farmer agreed to do it for the purposes of the study).

But nothing beats real life results from a field being exposed to the vagaries of weather. For one thing, the results don't have to be manipulated to mean anything in the real world. And once those results are in, they can be used to calibrate or validate the figures produced by simulation-based studies.

“Then we can use those models more reliably throughout the watershed because we know they are validated by real numbers,” says Hansen.

Moncrief collected on that one plot reinforced what people were seeing: a lot of soil was lost in a short amount of time. In fact, each acre of the study field that was moldboard plowed lost 8.5 tons of soil during that two and a half hour storm. Another two tons was lost when it rained the next day, making for a total per-acre soil loss of well over 10 tons on that one field (that's more than double the national average soil erosion rate for *one year*). The part of the plot that was chisel plowed lost about half that amount.

Up the road...

Looking at those results could lead one to conclude rightly that chisel plowing saves more soil than moldboarding. Cutting erosion rates in half by tweaking a tillage system is a great stride forward in soil protection. But that stride gets reduced to a baby step when one drives 10 minutes up the road and looks at what that same storm did on the Jeff and Pam Riesgraf farm near Jordan.

When soil scientist Christopher Iremonger collected sediment samples at a monitoring station located on the Riesgraf farm, he found that one of their fields had lost only 53 pounds of soil per acre on June 26.

That low erosion rate is particularly impressive when one considers how steep the Riesgraf field is: it has a 12 percent slope in some spots and as much as 30 percent in others. In fact, the hillside is so steep that it is farmed using contours—a system where long, curving linear fields are tilled across the face of the hillside. Each contour is about 80 feet wide.

It's worth noting that the Riesgraf farm has a similar soil type as the farm Hansen and Moncrief studied down the road. So how did the steeper field manage to hang on to so much more soil?

“It's a function of vegetation,” says Iremonger. “That vegetation cover holds the soil.”

In 1998, the Riesgraf's had oats with an underseeding of alfalfa planted on two of the contours. Established alfalfa was growing in the other two. At the bottom of the field were paddocks for rotationally grazing the Riesgraf's 50-cow dairy herd. In other words, by June 26 the field was covered with thick vegetation from top to bottom.

The field that Hansen and Moncrief were monitoring, in contrast, was growing corn. At the time of the storm, the plants would have been perhaps a foot

Same Storm, see page 15...

gh. However, their canopy was not fully developed (that doesn't usually occur in that part of Minnesota until around July 1 or after), leaving plenty of open space where rain drops could hit bare ground. In the chisel plowed plot, dead plant material left on top helped considerably—as Hansen's statistics show. But as the research from the Riesgraf farm indicates, there's no substitute for growing, green vegetation when it comes to soil protection. That's why, even though the corn field was actually not on as steep a slope—about 6 percent to 8 percent—as the small grains/hay/grass field, it lost many times more soil.

It's the big things that count

Besides supporting the argument for good vegetative ground cover, what does this storm tell us about soil erosion? For one thing, it reinforces a belief that soil scientists and farmers have long held: big storms cause the bulk of sediment loss.

"Runoff for this single event was greater than cumulative runoff from the three previous study years," Hansen says of the June 26 storm.

Iremonger found the same thing on the Riesgraf farm. That one event loosened more soil on that field than was measured in his entire three-year study combined.

That's not surprising. Various studies have shown that major storm events cause the majority of our farm field erosion. In a landmark paper published in the March-April 1997 issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, soil scientists W.E. Larson, M.J. Lindstrom and T.E. Schumacher pointed out that in fact such storm events are the major cause of soil erosion. The authors of the paper went on to argue that land management systems must be adjusted to deal with such erosion events. That doesn't mean that a significant amount of soil isn't lost on a routine basis. But big storm events can accelerate things considerably, particularly if they come at just the wrong time—when crops are short and provide very little ground cover, for example.

According to climatology odds makers, the kind of rain that hit Sand Creek on June 26, 1998, has a chance of happening about every 25 years or so. But it's misleading to think the timing of these storms can be predicted with any great precision—Sand Creek isn't safe from a major erosion-causing storm until June 26, 2023. These storms can come at



Pam and Jeff Riesgraf, along with four of their five children—(left to right) Matt, Derek, Rachel and Kelby (not pictured: Brad)—stand next to a recently established wetland on their farm. "There are neighbors who say we're not getting the maximum out of each acre," says Jeff. "But there's more to it than the bottom line." (LSP photo)

just about any time, making it particularly difficult to manage for them.

"Are we going to implement farm management practices to prepare for these catastrophic events or do we go for the average?" Hansen asks. "We could implement farm practices that prepare us for these catastrophic events, but is it worth the management challenges?"

It depends on whom you ask. The typical crop farmer may say no, and for good reason. In fact, in many parts of the Midwest the soil is deep enough that even significant erosion does not have a huge impact on yields.

The Metropolitan Council, which funded Hansen's work, may have a different take on the issue. People who manage municipal water supplies want to know how to keep that soil, and any agrichemical that may be along for the ride, out of drinking water supplies. In addition, streams, rivers and lakes used for recreational purposes suffer greatly from major erosion events. That may mean investing in terraces, grassy waterways, sediment ponds and other physical structures to check erosion before it reaches waterways.

But is keeping silt out of our waterways enough? Preventing soil from moving off a farm, and keeping it on the field are two different things. The Riesgraf farm, for example, is about three miles from both Sand Creek and the

Minnesota River. A flat area at the bottom of the study field catches sediment before it leaves the farm.

"The water people would be happy, but from a land production point of view it's not really a good solution," says Iremonger. "You're treating the symptom, not the cause."

The rich, lightweight organic matter present in soil is the first to erode. So far, farmers have been able to use phosphorous and nitrogen fertilizers to cover up for that lost fertility. But that extra fertilizer too often finds its way into our ecosystem, where it causes pollution problems (Hansen and Moncrief found that about 70 percent of the total phosphorous that ran off the moldboarded corn field in 1998 came during the June 26 event). And it's only a matter of time before even chemical inputs can't cover for the lost organic matter.

Moldboard plowing is still popular in farm country because it removes a lot of question marks about soil management, particularly in difficult weather years. This spring, for example, fields in the Upper Midwest were saturated with snowmelt and spring rains that just wouldn't stop. This posed a challenge for cropping systems that rely on heavy residue and small amounts of tillage.

Same Storm, see page 16...

However, the fields that were moldboard plowed the previous fall dried out and warmed up faster.

But what if a system of agriculture could be established that helps build soil between major events, and gives maximum protection when gully washers do come? Using the three years of runoff monitoring figures as a base, Iremonger set up a computer model showing what could happen to the Riesgraf plot during the next two decades under different production systems. Such modeling takes into account, among other things, soil type, drainage, weather, wind speed and crop management techniques. In this case, the modeling found that if the hillside was planted to corn, erosion rates would climb dramatically, particularly during large rainstorm events. Under the grass system, sediment loss was next to nothing. This leads Iremonger to believe that there is a way to make a farm so resilient on a daily basis that it can take major storm events in stride.

"If you have a management system that's robust enough to have almost no sediment loss during normal events, and is pretty resistant to these big events that come every 10 years or so, in the intervening time you have been creating soil on your farm."

A little of this, a little of that

So is the main message to take away from the June 26 storm that the entire Sand Creek watershed should be planted to grass and small grains? No, row crops such as corn and soybeans play an important role in the farm economy. Also, not every farmer has the desire, resources or market access to profitably produce livestock on grass.

"Even with financial assistance, a farmer will not adopt a technology if he or she is unfamiliar with it," concluded researchers with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in a 1999 report.

The best approach may be a variety of systems, according to a modeling study conducted by University of Minnesota scientists on the entire Sand Creek watershed. Right now, 63 percent of the watershed is planted to row crops—about a quarter of that is under some sort of conservation tillage system, and 38 percent is under conventional tillage such as moldboard plowing. What the researchers—Brent Dalzell, Dave Mulla and Prasanna Gowda—found was that if 100 percent of the watershed's agricul-

tural land was put under conservation tillage, the average monthly sediment load decreased by 32.9 percent. In another scenario, the scientists converted 32 percent of the watershed from conventional to conservation tillage and 13 percent from crops with conventional tillage to rotationally grazed pastures. The last scenario reduced sediment loss by 33.4 percent. In other words, a mix of systems provided more bang for the buck as far as runoff control is concerned—it's not an all or none situation. Such a mix allows for different land forms, economic factors and the willingness and ability of farmers to adopt various techniques.

Reinforcement

If they do nothing else, such studies bolster what some farmers may already suspect. The Riesgrafs, for example, have taken the results from the June 26 storm as a cue that the management system they are pursuing is on the right track. In the late 1980s, Jeff and Pam started converting their dairy operation to management intensive rotational grazing. This system, which moves cows through a series of paddocks based on how fast the grass is growing, has been an efficient way to cycle nutrients—in the form of manure—back into the soil. The farmers are also building the soil's organic material via large-scale composting of manure.

The Riesgrafs were also attracted to rotational grazing because it reduces the need for expensive cropping equipment and makes it easier to produce milk without the use of chemicals and drugs. (Since 1994 they've been getting a price premium for their organic milk). Grazing means they need fewer acres for corn, and every year they've been steadily increasing their grazing acres at the expense of row crops. The success they've had with grazing has also given the Riesgrafs the confidence recently to sacrifice 18 acres of crops for a wetland. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is paying the family for the wildlife

habitat and water retention the wetland creates, but still, taking such a step on a working farm is a risk.

"There are neighbors who say we're not getting the maximum out of each acre. But there's more to it than the bottom line," says Jeff. "They brag about getting 200-bushel corn, but they lost two inches of soil getting it."

That stewardship ethic has long prompted the family to look for ways of blending conservation with farming. In 1977, Jeff's parents, Erwin and Hedwig, were named Soil Conservationists of the Year for Scott County. Part of the reason for the Riesgrafs' good reputation as protectors of the soil is their installation of the contours on the land Jeff and Pam farm today. When they were put in during the 1960s, those contours were a vast improvement over the way that field had been farmed in the past: row crops planted straight up and down the hillside.

But the last time the Riesgrafs planted corn on the contoured strips was 1997. In fact, if he were following his old rotation, by now Jeff would have plowed up the three-year-old alfalfa in the contours and planted it to corn. But Jeff has always been looking for an excuse not to drive a tractor on those contours; it was difficult and at times dangerous. And when he saw the runoff results soil scientists had gathered off that field, that closed the deal. Jeff says that for their time, the contouring of row crops was the ultimate in soil conservation. But he sees it as his responsibility to take soil conservation one step further and utilize systems that actually build the soil, making it even more resistant to erosion. The stakes are too high not to, says the farmer.

"You can lose an inch of topsoil in an hour, and it takes hundreds of years to replace that." □

An upcoming issue of the Land Stewardship Letter will examine the state of soil erosion nationally and the challenges of raising crops with minimum tillage.

For more information

• **Sustainable Farming Systems Project.** Contact Helene Murray, Coordinator of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), by calling 800-909-6472 or 612-625-0220. She can be e-mailed at murra021@umn.edu. MISA's Web site is www.misa.umn.edu.

• **Sand Creek Watershed Team.** This is one of the initiatives of the Sustainable Farming Systems Project. It works

with farmers and other landowners in the watershed to look at water quality and economics as a part of sustainable farming practices. Land Stewardship Project staffer Caroline van Schaik coordinates this team. She can be contacted at 651-653-0618 or caroline@mtn.org.

• **Soil runoff research in the Sand Creek watershed is ongoing.** For more information, contact Neil Hansen by calling 320-589-1711, or e-mailing hansennc@mrs.umn.edu.



Trust Us, We're Experts How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles with Your Future

By Sheldon Rampton
& John Stauber

2000; 360 pages

\$24.95 hardcover

Center for Media & Democracy

520 University Ave., Suite 310

Madison, WI 53703

www.prwatch.org

Reviewed by Tim King

Do you believe what the experts tell you when you read newspapers or view their televised comments? You'd be a better informed citizen if you could read or view what they had to say in the stories that the media kills before publication, according to Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, authors of the new book, *Trust Us, We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles with Your Future*. For example, WTVT, a Fox network affiliate in Florida, invested substantial time and money into a 1997 story on genetically engineered bovine growth hormone, otherwise known as rBGH. The story was developed by veteran investigative journalists Jane Akre and Steve Wilson. Among the points their story was set to cover were:

- rBGH was not adequately tested before FDA allowed its use on cows.
- Some Florida dairy herds grew sick shortly after starting rBGH treatment.
- Florida dairy officials refused to back up rBGH manufacturer Monsanto's claim that every truckload of milk from rBGH treated cows was tested for excessive antibiotic use.
- Supermarket chains that had told customers they wouldn't sell milk from rBGH cows did not keep their promise.
- rBGH may be linked to cancer.

None of those points were ever made on WTVT. The television station promoted the four-part series heavily in the week before it was scheduled to run. Then, on the eve of the broadcast, Fox received a threatening letter from

Monsanto. The broadcast company killed the story. Akre and Wilson eventually left the station and sued Fox. They won their suit, but it was a bittersweet victory since the public never saw the report. In the end, Monsanto officials got what they wanted: a quelling of public discourse.

That is just one of the chilling stories from *Trust Us, We're Experts*. Rampton and Stauber have spent the past decade shining a light on the illicit attempts of corporations and their public relations courtiers to manipulate the truth. Their newsletter, *PR Watch*, and their earlier books, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You* and *Mad Cow USA*, have shown how PR flacks have twisted public opinion to favor the causes of their sometimes- nefarious clients.

Their latest book's major accomplishment is to expose the industry's shameful use of third-party endorsement of a product or behavior. Whether it's a shoe company paying millions to an athlete to endorse their product or a tobacco company prostituting doctors by paying them to write newspaper opinion articles favoring smoking, PR firms know this truth: "We count on the experts. They tell us who to vote for, what to eat, how to raise our children. We watch them on TV, listen to them on the radio, read their opinions in magazine and newspaper articles and letters to the editor."

Trust Us, We're Experts shows that we can count on independent third-party experts. That is, we can count on a fair proportion to be bought and paid for. We can count on some of them not to be independent at all. For example, in the Florida case involving rBGH, Monsanto hired the public relations firm Capitoline/MS&L to create a rBGH spokes group called the Dairy Coalition. Dairy Coalition members and rBGH boosters included the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Grocery Manufacturers of America. The Coalition members, informed by their corporate handlers, then went about informing the public regarding the safety and value of Monsanto's new product.

Rampton and Stauber quote Edward Bernays, an early 20th century PR pioneer, on the value of bought and paid for independent experts: "Leaders offer the propagandist a means of reaching vast numbers of individuals, for with so many confusing and conflicting ideas competing for the individual's attention, he is forced to look to others for authority."

Monsanto, and its Brave New World new economy partners, didn't invent the velvet glove and iron fist system of

information control. Rampton and Stauber outline a similar pattern in both the lead and silica mining industries in hair-raising detail. They show how, when the danger of both substances was discovered, the various industries—the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation in the case of lead and Union Carbide in the case of Silica—purchased scientists, journalists and PR firms to promulgate their twisted truth. And anybody who reported another version of truth risked intimidation and professional ruin. Meanwhile, a confused public wondered why the lungs of miners and sandblasters collapsed from silica inhalation, and children were permanently poisoned from lead paint or gasoline poisoning. Industry can misinform, propagandize, lie, and coerce for decades in the face of mounting injury and death tolls, Rampton and Stauber show us. All for a bit more profit.

You can read *Trust Us, We're Experts* to discover the truth and be depressed by it. Or you can be galvanized to action—questioning what "objective" science is trying to feed us. Who's paying the bills for that biologist writing commentaries in the local newspaper? What private deals have land grant agriculture colleges struck with corporations? What companies are sponsoring an "educational" exhibit on agricultural science at the neighborhood museum, zoo or school?

Asking such questions doesn't make you an expert on genetic engineering, chemistry or physics. But it does require those who *claim* to be experts to earn our trust with honesty and full disclosure. □

Tim King is a farmer and journalist who lives near Long Prairie, Minn. This review originally appeared in the Minnesota Food Association Digest. The MFA can be contacted at 651-766-8895.

Opportunities

Resources



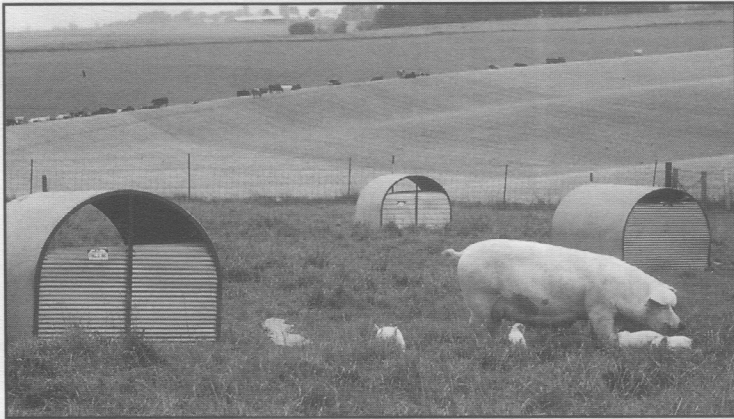
Scientists & industry

The Center for Science in the Public Interest has posted on the Internet a database of over 1,100 professors and scientists who consult for or have other affiliations with chemical, gas, oil, food, drug and other companies. The Web site (<http://integrityinscience.org>) also provides information on nonprofit and professional organizations that receive industry funding.

For further information, or to contribute to the database, contact Ron Collins at ronc@cspinet.org or 202-332-9110. □

Help Keep LSP's Voice Strong!

Support the New McKnight Match

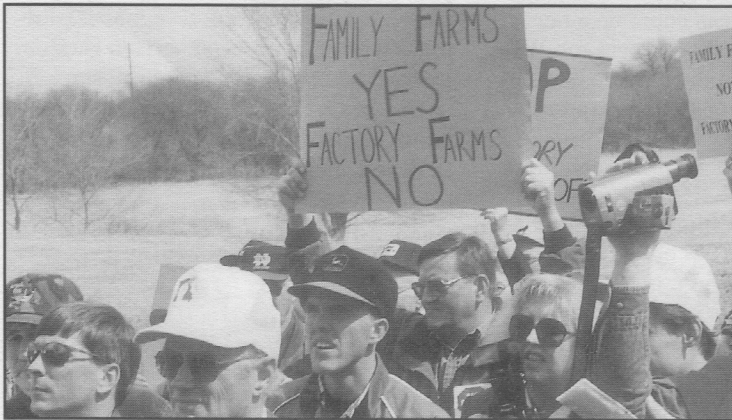


LSP speaks for the land

LSP believes that all people—farmers and non-farmers alike—have a responsibility to care for the land that sustains us. In seminars for beginning farmers, whole farm planning classes, grazing workshops and various other educational programs, LSP encourages an ethic of stewardship for the land and the use of sustainable practices. LSP speaks out against the construction of huge pits for liquid livestock manure when they endanger the land and the water. LSP urges consumers to speak for the land by purchasing food grown by sustainable farmers.

LSP speaks for communities

Local food systems benefit the entire community. Regional marketing is more profitable for the farmer and allows consumers to know how and where their food is grown. LSP is a partner in the Midwest Food Alliance, offering consumers food items marked with a seal of approval that indicates they were raised sustainably and locally. In addition, our *Stewardship Food Network* brings farmers and consumers together, and LSP is working to connect community institutions (hospitals, schools, etc.) to local farmers who could supply food for their kitchens.



LSP speaks for justice

LSP educates and organizes citizens to protect their communities, livelihoods and land in the face of concentrated wealth and power in the livestock industry. Now more than ever, we need to have our voice heard. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Veneman denied farmers their victory in the democratic vote to end the mandatory pork tax that has been used to promote factory hog farming, but LSP is fighting to retrieve that victory. LSP members are also demanding that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency do its job and protect the environment and quality of life for rural people.

How You can support the match!

Last summer's McKnight Match was a wonderful example of the dedication and passion of our members to support LSP's voice for the land, communities and justice. The McKnight Foundation awarded LSP a grant that challenged us to raise \$75,000 in new and increased donations of \$200 or more. Not only did we meet this match, we exceeded it. By the Sept. 1, 2000, deadline, we actually raised over \$88,000 in new and increased major donations. By exceeding the goal, we proved that we have the commitment and support needed for a strong future. **For this reason, McKnight has awarded LSP another matching grant! McKnight will match new and increased gifts of \$200 or more up to \$25,000.** If you have never given at the \$200 level and give \$200 or above, your entire gift will be matched. If you have given \$200 or more and increase your gift, the difference will be matched. *Thank you for your continued support of LSP.*

For more information, call Katie Person at 651-653-0618, or e-mail kperson@landstewardshipproject.org. You can also pledge your gift by logging onto www.landstewardshipproject.org (click on *Join Us* and then *Major Donations & Other Ways of Giving*).



Membership Update



Last chance to recruit members...& win prizes

June 30 is the deadline for entering the Land Stewardship Project's membership recruiting contest. How do you enter? Simply ask a friend, family member or co-worker to join LSP. If we receive their membership before June 30, and you are credited with recruiting them, then you will be eligible to win one of many great

prizes, including gift certificates for sustainably-raised foods, canoe trips, bed and breakfast stays, and more.

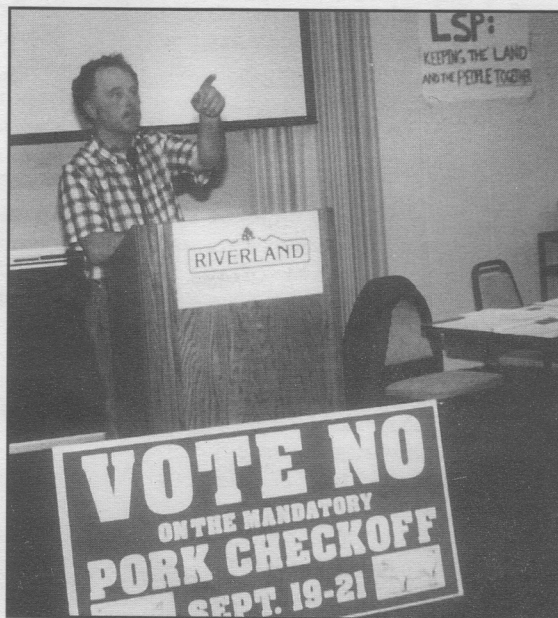
You can download membership recruitment fliers from LSP's Web site. Just go to www.landstewardshipproject.org and click on *Enter our Membership Contest*

under the *Take Action!* section. A complete list of prizes is also available on our Web site.

You can also get fliers by calling Cathy Eberhart at 651-653-0618, or e-mailing cathye@landstewardshipproject.org. □

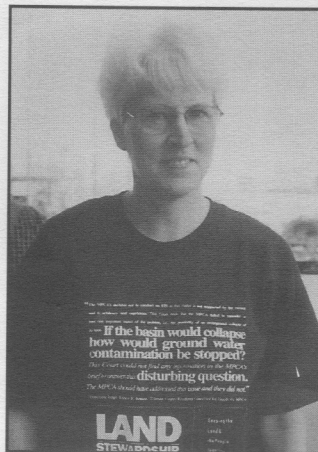
Land Stewardship Project member Tom Frantzen spoke recently at a special LSP meeting for independent hog farmers. The meeting, which was held April 8 in Albert Lea, Minn., featured an update from the Farmers' Legal Action Group on legal work to uphold the vote of hog farmers to end the mandatory pork checkoff tax. Frantzen, a northeast Iowa farmer who raises organic and antibiotic-free pork for specialty markets, spoke about marketing options for staying independent in an increasingly concentrated market. The pitfalls of contract hog production were also discussed at the meeting. This was the first of a series of hog farmer

meetings LSP will be holding around Minnesota in the coming months. For more information, call 612-722-6377. (LSP photo)



Land Stewardship Project member Jan Poldervaard models a new t-shirt "commemorating" a recent District Court decision. That decision forces the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to require an Environmental Impact Statement study before a 7.3 million gallon manure lagoon can be built in an ecologically sensitive area of southeast Minnesota. The t-shirts are being sold to help defray the costs Fillmore County residents incurred when they filed their successful lawsuit against the MPCA.

For information on purchasing a t-shirt, contact Bobby King in LSP's Lewiston office at 507-523-3366. (LSP photo)



2001 Farm Families

Two farm families that belong to the Land Stewardship Project were recently recognized for their contributions to agriculture and their communities. Carmen and Sally Fernholz, who raise crops and livestock near the western Minnesota community of Madison, were named the 2001 Farm Family for Lac Qui Parle County. Jeff and Pam Riesgraf, dairy farmers from Jordan in the Twin Cities area, received the same recognition in Scott County.

The "Farm Family" awards are given out annually by the University of Minnesota's College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences. □

Workplace giving

The Land Stewardship Project is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund (www.mnenvirofund.org). You can support us in your workplace by giving through the Fund and designating that the money go to LSP. If your employer does not provide this opportunity, ask the person in charge of workplace giving in your office to include it. For more information, contact Katie Person by calling 651-653-0618 or e-mailing kperson@landstewardshipproject.org.



STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ **JUNE 23-24** — Workshops on organizing for social & economic justice in rural America, led by LSP's Mark Schultz & others, Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, Cleveland, Ohio; Contact: Mark Schultz, 612-722-6377

→ **JUNE 27** — **Session I** — From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: Marketing Your Livestock Products for all They're Worth, Granite Falls, Minn., (see page 9)

→ **JUNE 27-28** — Streamside Grazing Schools, southeast Minnesota & southwest Wisconsin (see page 9)

→ **JUNE 29** — LSP's Audrey Arner will speak about local food systems at "2001: A Sustainability Odyssey," New Ulm, Minn.; Contact: Laurel Gamm, 507-354-3642

→ **JUNE 30** — Deadline for LSP Membership Recruiting Contest (see page 19)

→ **JULY 5** — **Session II** — From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: Harnessing Social Capital of Communities to Support Entrepreneurs, featuring Yvonne Fizer & Ernesto Sirolli, Granite Falls, Minn. (see page 9)

→ **JULY 6** — **Session III** — From Production Farming to Entrepreneurial Agriculture: The Trinity of Management & its Application to your Farming & Business Operation, Granite Falls, Minn. (see page 9)

→ **Western Minnesota pasture walk**, West Central Research & Outreach Center, Morris, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Contact: Terry VanDerPol, LSP, 320-269-2105; tlvd@landstewardshipproject.org

→ **JULY 16** — **Beef grazing field day**, Homeplace Beef Farm, Clearwater, Minn.; Contact: 320-558-6392

→ **JULY 17-19** — **Tri-State Grazing Conference**, Dubuque, Iowa; Contact: Larry Tranel, 319-583-6496

→ **JULY 19** — **Field day on increasing red clover seed production by increasing pollinators**, Leland Buchholz farm, Grey Eagle, Minn.; Contact: 320-285-5401

→ **JULY 20-21** — **Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Summer Meeting**, Traverse City, Mich.; Contact: Dana Jackson, LSP, 651-653-0618; danaj@maroon.tc.umn.edu

→ **JULY 24** — **Field days on the use of black & other medics for weed control in flax & soybeans, increasing forage production through control of water runoff & nutrient cycling, & mechanical tillage on pasture & hay land to promote aeration & water infiltration & rejuvenate existing forage**, Lincoln County, Minn.; Contact: Joe Rolling, 507-487-5742

→ **JULY 25** — **Organic vegetable production field day**, Riverbend Farm, Delano, Minn.; Contact: 763-972-3295

→ **JULY 28** — **Field day on using rye as a cover crop to control woolly cupgrass**, Leio Seykora farm, Owatonna, Minn.; Contact: 507-451-2906

→ **AUG. 3** — **Western Minnesota pasture walk**, West Central Research & Outreach Center, Morris, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Contact: Terry VanDerPol, LSP, 320-269-2105; tlvd@landstewardshipproject.org

→ **AUG. 11** — **Dairy, beef & chicken grazing field day, Meadowbrook Organic Acres**, Howard Lake, Minn.; Contact: 320-543-3225

→ **AUG. 16-17** — **Organic Field Day**, Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Lamberton, Minn.; Contact: Elizabeth Dyck,

507-752-7372;
http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu/

→ **SEPT. 7** — **Western Minnesota pasture walk**, West Central Research & Outreach Center, Morris, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Contact: Terry VanDerPol, LSP, 320-269-2105;

tlvd@landstewardshipproject.org
→ **SEPT. 8** — **Northeast Minnesota Harvest Fest**, Leif Erikson Park, Duluth; Contact: 218-727-1414;
www.harvestfest.tsx.org

→ **SEPT. 20** — **Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network Conference, featuring Hunter Lovins, author of *Natural Capitalism***, Minneapolis; Contact: 651-296-3417 or 800-657-3843

→ **SEPT. 29** — **LSP's Twin Cities Local Foods Banquet, featuring chef Brad Beal**, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, St. Paul; Contact: Cathy Eberhart, LSP, 651-653-0618

→ **OCT. 8** — **Southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings applications due**; Contact: Karen Stettler, 507-523-3366; stettler@landstewardshipproject.org

→ **OCT. 27** — **2001-2002 Southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings classes begin**; Contact: LSP, 507-523-3366

→ **NOV. 8-10** — **Working Landscapes in the Midwest: Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry & Communities**, Delavan, Wis.; Contact: 612-870-3436; www.iatp.org/enviroag/

Event information

Check the *Newsroom* or *Calendar* at www.landstewardshipproject.org for the latest on upcoming LSP events.



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