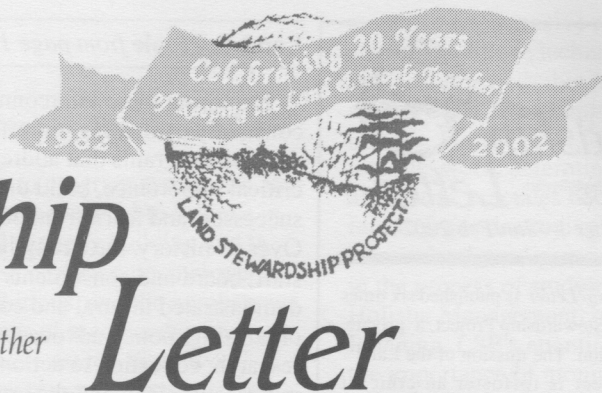


# The Land Stewardship

Keeping the Land and People Together



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JAN/FEB 2002

## LSP: Keeping the Land & People Together

*An open letter to our members from George Boody, LSP's Executive Director:*

This edition of the *Land Stewardship Letter* is a departure from our usual mix of news, features, reviews and commentary. This is the Land Stewardship Project's 20<sup>th</sup> year of work on behalf of stewardship, independent family farms, vital rural communities and healthful food. So, we decided to start this special year by focusing this issue of the *LSL* on the recent work and results of our programs.

During our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, LSP members and the Board created a compelling vision for the future that guides us still. This vision serves as an important guide for our programs. Our vision is that, "One day a stewardship ethic will be the foundation for society, rural communities will be revitalized and culturally diverse. One day the countryside will have more diverse farms and more people on the land. Understanding and cooperation will increase between rural and urban people and policy decisions will be made that reflect and support this vision."

This vision faces many challenges. We live in an increasingly interconnected world with enormous concentration of wealth and power in which economic globalization is implemented at the expense of democracy, environmental protection and social justice. However, as stewards—whether independent family farmers, scientists,

independent food business leaders, public servants, urban citizens, or as members of communities trying to reinvest in themselves—you are struggling to live this vision each in your own ways. We are honored that you join with us in working for clean air and water, care of the wild, soil quality, animal welfare, social justice



and democracy. LSP staff and board are inspired and reinvigorated by your passion and hard work.

And your insights have led the organization into a wider, but a more strongly interconnected, scope of program work that reflects a fuller understanding of our mission.

We also know from our colleagues in ecology that it is often at the edges—where rivers meet oceans or prairies border forests, for example—that the highest productivity and highest vulnerability to pollution exists. In the context of LSP's work, the analogy of edges is the seemingly or historically unrelated interconnection of issues, perspectives, groups with different focuses, and even LSP programs. As we look ahead to the next

decade of work, we ask ourselves what are the connections between

- ◆ water quality and soil quality,
- ◆ biological diversity (on the land and in genes) and the number of people in the landscape,
- ◆ clean streams and farm animals grazing the land in carefully managed ways,
- ◆ human health and animal health,
- ◆ hogs and mortgages
- ◆ food systems and ecosystems,
- ◆ family goals, quality of life and profit,
- ◆ the landscape and the foodshed,
- ◆ how food is produced and by whom,
- ◆ hunger, diabetes and corn yield contests,
- ◆ commodity programs and bobolinks?

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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.

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**Land & People from page 1...**

Exploring these interconnections and constantly evaluating our efforts helps us develop programs that address issues of critical importance, build on previous successes, and learn from our mistakes. Over its history, the strengths of LSP's staff, board and constituents have been demonstrated in rural and community organizing, policy advocacy, on-farm research, education to action programming, journalism and the arts. LSP's policy work is grounded in knowledge of soil, water, plants, animals and community. This means LSP's work to support consumer choice is rooted in work to support the sustainability of independent family farms.

Throughout 2002, we will talk more about the future. We are using this issue of the *LSL* as a foundation for that discussion. This is a report to you on where all of our programs are and where they are headed. A separate program update will not be published this year, but

you may recognize similarities to that document from previous years. This review is presented in four categories of work:

- **Encouraging Stewardship Through Research and Education**
- **Creating a Regional, Sustainable Food System**
- **Creating a New Vision for Agriculture**
- **Making LSP A Stronger Organization**

These efforts would not be possible without your participation as members and financial contributors to LSP. I thank you for your work and generous support and invite you to help shape and carry out LSP's efforts to advance stewardship, social justice and democracy. □

George Boody can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [boody002@gold.tc.umn.edu](mailto:boody002@gold.tc.umn.edu).



LSP staff: Pictured left to right are (back) Bobby King, Ray Kirsch, Paul Sobocinski, Karen Stettler, George Boody, Tara Blumer, Richard Ness, Karen Benson, Louise Arbuckle, Ron Rengel, Dana Jackson, Audrey Arner, (middle) Lori Lea Harms, Amy Bacigalupo (with her daughter Aurora), Cathy Eberhart, Katie Person, (front) Patrick Moore and Mark Schultz. Not pictured: Brian DeVore, Mike McMahon, Michelle Skogrand, Caroline van Schaik and Terry VanDerPol.

**Program info on WWW**

Information on all of the Land Stewardship Project programs described in this newsletter is now available on our Web site: [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org).



# LSP Gets Results

By Dana Jackson

**L**SP is an organization that gets results. Rather than aiming at lofty goals, we're standing back and asking: what kinds of changes do we want to see as a result of our work? We're learning how to design our programs with the outcomes we want in mind.

LSP became very conscious of aiming for results when we developed a document called *Long-Range Plan, 1999-2004: Linking Food, Land and People*. We began with four program results we wanted to achieve in five years (see the sidebar below). Then we outlined strategies to achieve those results. When a staff person thinks of a great project that would be interesting to do, or a member tells us about an activity we really should launch, we look at the four program results and ask if the project would help achieve one of those results. Often it does.

The plan isn't a map that we rigidly follow, but it functions as a guide for setting priorities. It is ambitious, and the results are admittedly beyond the reach of one organization in five years. But no one on the LSP staff or Board of Directors would have endured the long process of developing a plan and coming to a consensus on its contents if we had been talking about easily achievable,

short-term outcomes. The plan is mission-oriented.

In addition to program results, we also outlined results we wanted to achieve in organizational capacity building and in finances. These desired outcomes were extremely ambitious, and the numbers we used in the areas of membership and fund-raising were set too high. Even though we may revise the numbers, we will stay focused on results that strengthen our organization and improve our finances so we can achieve the program results we seek.

Measuring outcomes is the hard part. Foundations generally expect applicants for grants to describe how the proposed work will be evaluated. In recent years they have begun to ask more specifically how we will measure outcomes, and we have begun to think about how to include line items in our grant requests to pay for good measurement.

The staff at LSP understands the distinction between outputs—what we accomplish and produce—and the outcomes—the changes that come about in terms of attitude, behavior or systems. But we are still learning how to measure these changes.

Nonprofit organizations like Land Stewardship Project initiated the sustainable agriculture movement to establish more sustainable farming practices in the countryside. Through workshops and field days, they helped farmers learn

management intensive rotational grazing, alternative tillage techniques, and other low cost practices that lessened environmental damage and improved farmer income. For the most part, we plunged into this work, determined to promote alternative practices because conventional farming was destroying soil, water, farmers and rural communities. However, in the process of studying and teaching Holistic Management, or Whole Farm Planning, LSP's attention was drawn to the importance of monitoring. We published a three-ringed binder called the *Monitoring Tool Box* to help farmers and agency staff working with farmers learn how to do biological, financial and social monitoring and evaluate their progress toward sustainability. Now we are also very conscious about monitoring progress towards the sustainability of Land Stewardship Project as an organization, as well as progress towards achieving the societal outcomes we listed in our plan.

Combining what we know about monitoring and whole farm planning with results-based program design is LSP's big challenge in this third decade of work. We are determined to effect changes in attitudes, behavior and systems that will produce an American system of agriculture that benefits the environment, family-sized farmers, rural communities and consumers of food. □

*Dana Jackson is LSP's Associate Director. She can be reached at 651-653-0618 or danaj@tc.umn.edu.*

## Program results to be achieved in 5 years

### *Sustainable Food Systems, Consumer Choices*

We will have begun to implement a sustainable food system in the Upper Midwest Region that provides new market opportunities for diversified, family-sized farmers and offers consumers wide choices to purchase healthful food produced locally with environmentally-sound and socially-just practices.

### *Empowered Citizens, Rural Reinvestment*

We will have organized and educated citizens to protect their communities, livelihoods and land in the face of the concentration of wealth and power in the crop and livestock industries and implemented rural reinvestment projects to build sustainable communities.

### *Agricultural Stewards of the Wild*

We will have produced expectations in society that owners and managers of farmland should be stewards of the wild, in addition to being stewards of soil and water, and protect habitats for natural biodiversity on agricultural land.

### *Policy Rewarding Multiple Benefits Agriculture*

We will have influenced policymakers to develop a new approach to agricultural policy that leaves price-setting to the market, but provides incentives and rewards to farmers who produce multiple environmental and social benefits for society, in addition to commodities, on their land.



# Encouraging Stewardship Through Research & Education



## Real research, real farmers

By Caroline van Schaik

Imagine a farm systems project without its farmers—it would mostly consist of ivory tower ruminations lacking in real-world grounding. Anecdotes and stereotypes developed by universities and nonprofits like LSP would remain unchallenged, and nothing would really change.

The Sustainable Farming Systems Project, which ended in June 2001, was, instead, a dynamic exclamation point marking four years of real world research and hard work by two watershed teams.

This interdisciplinary effort researched farm sustainability as reflected by farm economics, environmental impact, and the quality of home and community life. It was farm-centered, team-driven, and a very real working partnership of farmers, scientists, extension educators, and nonprofit, private sector and government representatives. Organizational partners with LSP were the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the Minnesota Project, and the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. All work was funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources.

One of the best things we were able to accomplish was to substantiate some of the anecdotal strengths and pitfalls of certain sustainable farm practices. Team members, especially the researchers and farmers, did this by studying water quality and the economic aspects of grazing, buried tile drainage inlets, being organically certified, row-cropping, and various livestock systems.

For instance, University of Minnesota scientist Christopher Iremonger used on-the-ground data and modeling to predict nitrogen loss consequences of changing a grazed pasture to a corn-soybean rotation. As another example of this practical research, economic consultant Gigi DiGiacomo conducted whole farm and enterprise analyses to understand the role of organic milk premiums.

We learned other things, too. This

## Desired outcomes

Through our *Encouraging Stewardship Through Research and Education* programs, LSP is working for the following outcomes:

→ **Attitudinal Changes**—Farmers recognize the connection between income, environment and their lives; Society expects landowners to be good stewards.

→ **Behavioral Changes**—Greater number of farmers practice sustainable farming.

→ **Systems Changes**—Social systems and institutions support stewardship farmers through, e.g., appropriate agricultural research, available credit, and training and encouragement for beginning or transitioning farmers. Farm policy and the marketplace reward sustainable farmers.

## What LSP has accomplished in the past year

→ Substantiated the environmental and economic benefits of certain sustainable farming practices, as well as the pitfalls of such practices.

→ Sold more than 700 *Monitoring Tool Boxes* in North America and around the world.

→ Using teams, field days, publications and workshops, we've introduced thousands of people, including farmers, government officials and decision makers, to sustainable farming concepts.

→ Completed *The Farm as Natural Habitat*, a groundbreaking book on sustainable agriculture.

→ Used the print, broadcast and Internet media to reach out to millions of consumers and farmers locally, nationally and even internationally.

→ Launched the careers of more than 50 farmers, many of whom are established on their own operations.

project provided a more proven connection between stewardship farming, income and farmer lives, although not all of it was good or cheery in each of the

research years.

We reached 4,000-plus people via 70-some fields days and other events. Such a turnout at these hands-on gatherings is great. But people need data to be convinced as well. And we now have research results as tangible evidence that can be used to persuade lawmakers, university scientists, agricultural lenders, consumers, and storekeepers to pay more attention to sustainable farmers, their products, and their methods of land management. We don't conclude that grazing, for example, is the only answer for all landscapes. But we are able to suggest, with real data, where it works, and works better than conventional farming from an environmental and economic point of view.

During the past six months of the project, teams conducted their final events—a monitoring training for Farm Beginning participants, on-farm birding, a presentation on watershed hydrology, a riparian land management training, a presentation to 4-H Club members, a University of Minnesota talk, and a creek-side training on water monitoring.

The teams per se have not met since last summer, but relationships and good work didn't grind to a halt on June 30. Some Chippewa team members moved their interest in local marketing into active participation with the Pride of the Prairie work in western Minnesota (see page 12). Sand Creek team members have successfully garnered funds for a field day this summer that will focus on wetland restoration.

And as a final note, three babies were born to team members during the course of the project, so a lot of goodness was reaped. □

Caroline van Schaik works in LSP's Twin Cities office. She can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [caroline@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:caroline@landstewardshipproject.org).





# Grazing's promise

By Caroline van Schaik

Fair skies and an interest in the maligned issue of grazing livestock along waterways brought 250 people to field events sponsored by our "Grazing and Monitoring Riparian Corridors in Minnesota and Wisconsin" project, which formally ended in June 2001. The project turned out to be an energized effort across the Mighty Mississippi: it defied the conventional wisdom that dictates livestock and water always make a bad mix, and that grazing enthusiasts won't cross the river in order to share and learn from their neighbors.

Two of the four on-farm field schools took place this past year. Enthusiastic for more, one of the two hosts is actively seeking funds (with LSP help) to bring people to her farm again. Bonnie Haugen is an LSP member, along with her husband and farming partner, Vance. They inherited a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service easement along a creek that runs through a corner of their dairy farm. In planning "A Case for Grazing Streamside" field day at the Haugen's Spring Side Farm, we all learned

about management options and their impacts on bank stability, water turbidity and flow, erosion, vegetative cover, aesthetics and economics.

As is LSP's *modus operandi*, "we" were a wonderfully mixed lot representing organizations not always at the table together. It was an important part of the project that agencies, for the most part, worked well together. All in all, some education is happening among the ranks and the climate for sustainable agriculture is improving for the effort.

Other things got done under the auspices of this project, including the gathering of an annotated bibliography on riparian grazing resources, the printing and distribution of the Pasture Vegetation chapter for the *Monitoring Tool Box*, extensive outreach via print media, the Web, radio, and public television, and several presentations and trainings by team members.

While grass-based livestock systems are not the answer for everyone everywhere, they do provide an alternative—to government subsidized farming, to environmental degradation, even to excessive regulations. Participants' high level of interest suggests that this management alternative strikes a chord. Judging by the evaluations, people

stayed late.

Still, given the current agricultural climate, we are stymied by the farmers who are not pushing to convert to grazing, with or without a creek on the property.

Charlie Opitz, a well-known large-scale Wisconsin grazer, summed it up in his characteristically no-nonsense manner when he told a radio interviewer before one of our field days that, "Graziers aren't nuts and there aren't too many of them going broke. That speaks for itself."

It certainly does. □

## Sustainable livestock systems

By Terry VanDerPol

The Sustainable Livestock Systems Project is a cooperative effort between the Land Stewardship Project's western Minnesota office and the West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC). The project has five components.

- ◆ On farm research of corn and alfalfa grazing
- ◆ Wintering beef and dairy cattle outside
- ◆ Financial monitoring
- ◆ Whole Farm Planning
- ◆ Managing manure packs to protect water quality

Included in the project is the Roger Imdieke farm. Imdieke raises dairy heifers and is making the transition from a feedlot production system to a grass-based operation during the research phase of the project. Much of the footage for the Whole Farm Planning video that we are producing was shot at the Imdieke farm as he works through these changes.

The project included a field day at the Joe Molitor farm near St. Cloud, Minn., in February 2001. In addition to interested farmers from throughout central and western Minnesota, the field day was attended by a number of LSP members from the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. They were treated to a firsthand look at the struggles and triumphs livestock farmers face in being good earth and animal stewards during a Minnesota winter. LSP's involvement in this project, supported by a grant from the Legislative

## Encouraging Stewardship Through Research & Education

that agencies will budge if you ask them nicely, sometimes...

So we were able to do some careful clearing along a portion of the creek six weeks prior to the field day—it let participants see regrowth that grazing, too, can generate, and let us talk a lot

learned a lot and they intend to use it.

The work as a whole fit well within LSP's larger goals as it quietly and persistently chipped away at attitudes, knowledge and behavior—particularly of the farming and agency communities. At

every opportunity, the team stressed the importance of monitoring as well as livestock and water as a viable management combination. It also stressed bottom lines—dollar-wise as well as impacts on the environment and family life. We saw elected officials in the crowds, and some skeptics, but they



Veteran grazier Charlie Opitz makes an animated point at a field day on the Duane Hager farm near Kellogg, in southeast Minnesota.

Livestock see page 6...

...Livestock from page 5

Commission on Minnesota Resources, ended in July. Research by the staff of WCROC has continued through an Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Information on the Sustainable Livestock Systems Project will be forthcoming in the form of fact sheets and a video.

### Hog farmer outreach

Are hogs still “mortgage burners” on Minnesota farms? Or, has the “pork production industry” so effectively closed the market to small- and mid-sized producers that hogs can no longer add value to crops and improve cash flow for enterprising family farmers? An increasing number of us are convinced it’s not too late, and there’s ample opportunity “outside the box.”

Through the efforts of the LSP Policy Program and other organizations working on the pork checkoff referendum, we have the names and addresses of thousands of hog farmers who have expressed doubts about the conventional production and marketing system. And through our work with local food systems and beginning farmers, we are connected with additional farmers for whom hog production can play an important role.

A primary message of this program is that production and marketing systems must be integrated. And, an excellent place to start that integration is with the consumer desire for tasty pork that’s raised with high regard for the farm’s natural environment and the hog’s nature.

Through cooperation with folks like Niman Ranch meat company, Organic Valley food cooperative, the Alternative Swine Task Force and LSP farmer-members who are pioneers in this work, we are carrying the message of the opportunities for environmental stewardship and economic gain hogs can provide. An initial meeting was held in western Minnesota on March 15. This effort will be repeated throughout the state, and the messages will be integrated into the other works of the LSP Policy Program. □

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## Agroecology: reconnecting food & ecosystems

By Dana Jackson

What is the relationship between the grocery list and the endangered species list? This question has been quietly explored by LSP’s Agroecology Program for several years. In April, Island Press will publish the program’s first public output, a book called *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems to Ecosystems* (see sidebar below), and LSP’s Agroecology Program will noisily promote discussion about this question in the context of ideas in the book.

The Agroecology Program seeks to achieve three outcomes: 1) a collaboration between advocates of sustainable agriculture and advocates of natural habitat preservation to enhance the long-term ability of the land to produce food and support a variety of life; 2) the transformation of rural landscapes into a mixture of agricultural and natural ecosystems that preserve much of the local biodiversity and provide ecosystem services essential to sustainable agriculture; and 3) the restoration of an economically viable foothold for diversified,

family-sized farms in American agriculture that provide multiple environmental and social benefits to society.

Inspiration for the book came several years ago when the Monitoring Project revealed that some farmers were improving grassland bird habitat and water quality in creeks running through their farms because of the farming practices they used. At the same time, Laura Jackson, a biology professor at the University of Northern Iowa doing prairie restoration and nutrient management research with Iowa farmers, could see that the success or failure of habitat protection was inextricably linked to farmland management. Laura Jackson and I decided to do a book, a collection of readings to make the point that agricultural lands should be natural habitats, not ecological sacrifice zones. The book would promote the restoration of a relationship between farming and the natural world that could enhance the sustainability of both.

The book was completed in July 2001 and sent to Island Press. In addition to chapters by Laura and I, the book contains essays by 15 other contributors, including Brian DeVore and George Boody of the LSP staff, Cheryl Miller from LSP’s board of directors, former board member Beth Waterhouse, Tex Hawkins from the original Monitoring

Agroecology see page 7...

### From the Spring 2002 Island Press catalog:

*The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*  
Edited by Dana L. Jackson & Laura L. Jackson  
Foreword by Nina Leopold Bradley

*The Farm as Natural Habitat* is a vital new contribution to the debate about agriculture and its impacts on the land. Arising from the conviction that the agricultural landscape as a whole could be restored to a healthy diversity, the book challenges the notion that the dominant agricultural landscape—bereft of its original vegetation and wildlife and despoiled by chemical runoff—is inevitable if we are to feed ourselves. Contributors bring together insights and practices from the fields of conservation biology, sustainable agriculture and environmental restoration to link agriculture and biodiversity, farming and nature, in celebrating a unique alternative to conventional agriculture.

Rejecting the idea that “ecological sacrifice zones” are a necessary part of feeding a hungry world, the book offers compelling examples of an alternative agriculture that can produce not only healthful food, but fully functioning ecosystems and abundant populations of native species.

*The Farm as Natural Habitat* is both hopeful and visionary, grounded in real examples, and guided by a commitment to healthy land and thriving communities. It is the first book to offer a viable approach to addressing the challenges of protecting and restoring biodiversity on private agricultural land and is essential reading for anyone concerned with issues of land or biodiversity conservation, farming and agriculture, ecological restoration, or the health of rural communities and landscapes.



Team, and members Nick Jordan and Judy Soule. Four chapters by Brian DeVore introduce readers to a number of farmers (most are LSP members) who are stewards of the wild as well as stewards of the soil.

## Wild Farm Alliance

This past year the Agroecology Program made progress in achieving collaboration between sustainable agriculture advocates and wilderness advocates by working with the Wild Farm Alliance, an organization founded in 2000. Its mission is "to create a future in which ecologically sustainable, economically viable farms and ranches are integrated into landscapes that accommodate the full range of native species and natural processes." The steering committee held a meeting in western Wisconsin in October, and LSP arranged a tour of Midwestern sustainable farms and prairie restoration projects.

In January the Wild Farm Alliance sponsored a session preceding the start of the annual Ecological Farming Conference in California, and Dana Jackson was one of the speakers. The overall theme of the conference, "Farming with Ecological Integrity: Challenges and Opportunities," reflected the growing interest in farming with the wild and reconnecting food systems with ecosystems.

In this coming year, LSP's Agroecology Program will sponsor discussion groups and organize public programs around the ideas discussed in *The Farm as Natural Habitat*, as well as findings from LSP's Multiple Benefits of Agriculture study that was recently released. □



LSP's Agroecology Program is working to reintegrate farms (and farmers) into the natural landscape.

# Communications & media work

By Cathy Eberhart

LSP promotes the work of sustainable agriculture throughout Minnesota and the world through our bimonthly newsletter, on our Web site, and in numerous press releases, commentaries and magazine articles.

LSP also contributes to the promotion of sustainable agriculture by participating in numerous conferences and seminars, through serving on planning committees, providing speakers, organizing farmer panels, and setting up our display at various events.

Over the years, LSP has adopted a number of communication tools to influence the public debate on issues of stewardship and to activate members and other citizens for change. These tools have been an important component of our success—enabling us to win significant victories against powerful adversaries.

LSP gets significant media coverage for our issues and events through submitting press releases to local and regional newspapers. In 2001 alone, LSP sent out over 70 press releases. In all, LSP's media work resulted in stories about our work being viewed, read or listened to by more than four million news consumers in 2001. LSP's message is getting to people through the mainstream media, as well as via agricultural and environmental news outlets. We also assist our members in writing letters to the editor through direct feedback and a fact sheet on "Writing a Letter to Your Newspaper."

All of our press releases and action alerts can be found on our Web site, along with links to on-line newspaper, magazine and radio stories.

E-mail has also become an important tool for getting our members to take action on urgent policy issues or attend an organizing meetings. Through our e-mail action alerts, we now have the ability to contact over 500 LSP members within a few minutes. This quick turnaround has proven essential to responding to legislative issues that can change at a moment's notice. And of course, even with all of these high-tech forms of communication, we still make use of the tried and true tools of mail and telephone to contact members and friends when action is

needed on an issue.

Finally, LSP ensures the voices of sustainable farmers and their concerned neighbors are heard by policy makers by preparing our members to speak before legislative hearings, congressional listening sessions, county commissioners, etc.—both locally and in Washington. This past year, many LSP members have given powerful, heartfelt testimony about issues such as the 2002 Farm Bill, corporate concentration, factory farms, state sustainable agriculture programs, and more. □

Cathy Eberhart is LSP's Membership Coordinator. She can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [cathy@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:cathy@landstewardshipproject.org).

## Farm Beginnings

By Amy Bacigalupo & Karen Stettler

LSP's Farm Beginnings Program, with leadership from established sustainable farmers, is designed to nurture a new generation of farmers who will protect the environment and contribute dynamically to community, social and economic life. This highly-rated program is currently in its fifth year in southeast Minnesota and its second year in the western part of the state. Through the program, beginning farmers take part in educational workshops, apprenticeships, networking, business analysis and planning. Participants also become eligible for no interest livestock loans.

Over its history Farm Beginnings has graduated 91 people, over 60 percent of whom are currently involved in farming. So far, three dairy loans, two beef cattle loans, and one sheep loan have helped beginning farmers with the next phase of their farming enterprise. These loans are made possible through the generous support of Heifer Project International.

The following stories provide a small sampling of the successes nurtured by Farm Beginnings.

### Integrating family goals into the farm business

When he enrolled in the Farm Beginnings program, Bryan Kallhoff hoped to quit his job and start managing his cattle business full-time. He wanted to implement management intensive rotational grazing practices on the family

Farm Beginnings see page 8...

farm. He knew Farm Beginnings could connect him with established graziers.

His wife Laurie was uncertain about his decision to quit his job and start farming full time. She was even less enthusiastic about going with Bryan to the Farm Beginnings sessions. But by the end of the first session, she was hooked. "I learned stuff I never thought I would learn," Laurie admitted.

The couple credits Farm Beginnings with helping them to set goals that balance both family and farm needs. A part of the quality of life that they defined for themselves was to be able to take vacations. Indeed, this year they were able to travel to Hawaii.

### Balancing what makes sense economically & what makes sense environmentally

Farm Beginnings graduate Eric Carlson had been feeding other people's cattle on contract for over four years. Analysis of the machinery and feed costs led Eric to see that he was barely breaking even. He had also grown to dislike spring because he knew he would have to get the tractor out and somehow deal with the manure that built up over the winter. Eric was also aware of the environmental damage a melting manure pile may have on adjacent wetlands.

Through connections he made during Farm Beginnings sessions, and with support from Heifer Project International, he has started to graze cattle on his farm. He's glad not to have to depend on the tractor so heavily this winter. He now looks forward to spring when the cattle will have their first taste of green grass.

This is a win-win situation for Eric and for the environment.

### Established farmers share knowledge through mentorships

Justin Leonhardt and Gayle Hanson, participants in the Farm Beginnings Class of 2000, attended the class with plans to expand their beef and hog operation. Upon completion of the course, Justin and Gayle applied for a livestock loan through a grant from Heifer Project International.

Together with their adviser, southeast Minnesota beef and hog farmer Dennis Rabe, Justin and Gayle were accepted into the livestock loan program. They now have 15 beef cattle. As a mentor/adviser, Dennis has been an integral part of Justin's learning process. Dennis and Justin have developed and reviewed a cash flow, identified equipment needs and discussed how to make the Leonhardt's enterprises successful. □

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*Karen Stettler coordinates the southeast Minnesota Farm Beginnings Program and can be reached at 507-523-3366 or stettler@landstewardshipproject.org.*

## Eroding farmer-lender barriers

By Caroline van Schaik

*"Are credit cards really a means of financing sustainable farm enterprises?"*

*"How have banks' minimum agriculture lending thresholds changed in the past five years?"*

*"Where do agriculture educators get information about sustainable farmers?"*

A two-state steering committee coordinated by LSP has some hunches as to the answers to those and many other questions pertaining to financial barriers for farmers. Hunches speak volumes. But imagine what we could learn if we asked farmers, lenders, and agricultural educators some pointed questions about what they think and

know? We have begun to do just that through the development of three targeted surveys that will be conducted this spring.

Family-sized farms make significant contributions to the economic and social fabric of rural communities, and bankers are a vital part of those same small towns. But farmers complain of lender biases against their alternative endeavors and lenders want better business plans.

The climate is changing. Some rural communities are beginning to make a place on Main Street for the products of innovative farming methods, like cheeses, wood products, grass-fed lamb, and home-processed poultry. The resulting exchanges introduce environmental and social capital as well as real dollars into a local economy. So it behooves us to get to the bottom of why the relationships between bankers and family farmers aren't always fruitful.

We'll use our surveys and a series of round table discussions to find out. In the short term, we seek a better understanding of what questions bankers and farmers each need to ask and be prepared to answer. The project steering committee of farmers, agriculture educators and lenders, researchers, and rural community advocates wants to help bankers view alternative farming as an opportunity and to help farmers address the expressed needs of their would-be lenders. □

## Take action

You can encourage stewardship.

→ Attend a sustainable farming workshop or field day.

→ Begin monitoring on your land. Order the *Monitoring Tool Box* by calling our Twin Cities office at 651-653-0618, or downloading the order form from [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org).

→ Join the Farm Beginnings class. If you are interested in launching your own farming enterprise, or making a transition in your current operation, call LSP's southeast or western Minnesota office to learn how you can participate in an upcoming class.

→ Mentor a beginning farmer.

→ Contact the southeast or western Minnesota offices if you know of land, buildings or equipment that might be available for rent or sale to a beginning farmer.



A recent Farm Beginnings class.





# Creating a Regional, Sustainable Food System



## Linking farmers & consumers

By Cathy Eberhart

The Land Stewardship Project offers a number of resources and events to bring sustainable farmers together with consumers who would like to support their careful ways of farming.

### Resources

◆ The Stewardship Food Network (updated in the November/December 2001 *Land Stewardship Letter*) lists over 90 direct-marketing farmers and the food coops, restaurants, and food processors that carry their products.

◆ The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Directory is updated each spring and lists CSA farms that serve the Twin Cities area.

◆ The Western Minnesota Farmer to Consumer directory lists rural producers from west central Minnesota who implement sustainable farming practices.

◆ A "local foods dinner" guide is available to help you plan your own local foods dinner, potluck, cookout or brunch.

◆ The Food and Farm Connection section of LSP's Web site features these resources, recipe ideas, and links to other on-line resources about sustainable sources of food. Printed copies of the Stewardship Food Network, the CSA Directory or Local Foods Dinner Guide can be obtained by calling the Metro office at 651-653-0618. For the Western Minnesota directory call the Montevideo office at 320-269-2105.

### Events

◆ In the Twin Cities, LSP cosponsors the Community Food and Farm Festival each Spring with the Minnesota Food Association and the CSA Guild. In western Minnesota, LSP helps with the University of Minnesota-Morris Food Expo.

◆ In 2001, four LSP Local Foods meals brought together over 400 members and friends to celebrate the wonderful food that comes from our region. On

## Desired outcomes

Through our *Creating a Regional, Sustainable Food System* programs, LSP is working for the following outcomes:

→ **Attitudinal Changes**—People recognize that their own health is connected to the health of the soil and the health of their community and that they can impact these things through their food choices. Consumers (individuals, retail and institutions) place greater value on local, sustainably raised food. More farmers consider themselves to be in the "food business" instead of the "commodity business."

→ **Behavioral Changes**—More consumers purchase local, sustainably-raised food either directly from farmers or through retailers and restaurants. More farmers market local sustainably-raised food.

→ **Systems Changes**—The infrastructure is in place to move regionally-produced food from farmers to consumers (e.g., processing, marketing, transportation, etc.). Appropriate training and support is available for farmers.

## What LSP has accomplished in the past year

→ Linked farmers with consumers who are looking for stewardship-based food via directories, banquets and meetings. More than 2,500 consumers received paper copies of LSP food directories in 2001, and hundreds more downloaded the directories from our Web site.

→ Expanded the MWFA foods labeling/certification system to include 34 producers and 13 grocery stores.

→ Conducted surveys in western Minnesota to learn what locally produced foods were available, and what consumers wanted to purchase.

→ Began a dialogue with the University of Minnesota-Morris to promote local foods in its cafeteria.

Sept. 8, the Lewiston office organized a local foods potluck picnic. In the Twin Cities, a Local Foods Banquet was held on Sept. 29 in St. Paul. The Montevideo office sponsored a Local Foods Chili Cook-off on Oct. 13, and a Sustainable Harvest Banquet in Morris on Nov. 15.

◆ Because every meal or snack is an opportunity, we try to serve at least some food grown by local family farmers at all of LSP's events, whether they be field days, policy planning meetings, board meetings or workshops. □

## Midwest Food Alliance

By Ray Kirsch

The Midwest Food Alliance (MWFA) is a seal of approval (eco-label) program designed to promote and grow a sustainable, regional food system. MWFA is a joint project of Land Stewardship Project and Cooperative Development Services. This program is met to serve as a bridge, a meeting place, for farmers and consumers to come together and support—through food—healthy, sustainable communities, urban and rural. We want to recognize and

reward the great stewardship of our local farms. We want to raise consumer awareness and support of these farms and the foods they produce. And we want to reinforce the idea that



participating in a farm/food/consumer alliance is necessary to ensure the health and sustainability of our communities.

No small charge. Nonetheless, we are making progress and 2001 was a successful year in many ways. Most of our successes (and challenges) occurred in three program areas: building a seal of approval program, building public

MWFA see page 10...

awareness and educating consumers, and creating a program than can become sustainable itself.

### Seal of approval

The MWFA seal carries a message of sustainability—of foods and farms that are environmentally friendly and socially responsible. As a messenger, it must be credible and consistent. This requires a system to evaluate and certify farms for sustainability that is fair, has a broad base of stakeholders, and can engage a variety of farms. In 2001, we've been successful on many fronts.

We've expanded the number of MWFA-approved products (from four to 14) and MWFA-approved farms (from 15 to 34). With each new product, we've engaged farmers as stakeholders in what it means to produce these foods sustainably. We recruited our first

evaluate wildlife habitat on farms, pesticide use, soil conservation, human resources and community relationships.

Central to the success we've so far enjoyed as a certification program has been the work of our farm evaluators. Overall, their work has been outstanding—dealing with a program that is just beginning, that's in flux, and is looking to improve. Their comments and suggestions this past year have formed the basis of many of our evaluation improvements.

## Creating a Regional, Sustainable Food System

And as a group they've opened our eyes—MWFA's eyes—to the pivotal role that evaluators play.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we've identified a number of areas that need to be addressed to strengthen our seal of approval/certification program. We need to strengthen and broaden our evaluation criteria. We need to add new products. We need to improve chain-of-custody measures so that MWFA-approved foods are always noted as such. We need to improve our program and database management. We hope to eventually have many farms in our program, and that's a lot of certification information to track. We need to improve our farm evaluation capabilities

—including more evaluators and more evaluator training.

### Public awareness & consumer education

The other half of our alliance, of our stewardship value proposition, is that consumers understand a bit about sustainability, that they recognize the MWFA seal of approval, and that they support MWFA foods and farms with their food dollars. In 2001 we've worked to bring about these results in a number of ways, such as opening MWFA doors with local grocers, providing point-of-sale materials, arranging advertising,

organizing store events and conducting demonstrations.

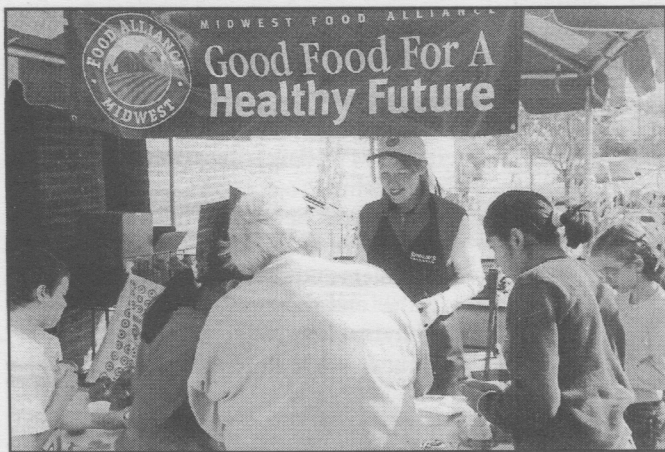
In 2001, five retail chains with a total of 13 grocery stores participated in the MWFA program. This included stores in the Twin Cities metro area, the St. Cloud area, and one store in Rochester, Minn. All of the grocers received a MWFA buyer's guide, which is a listing of MWFA-approved farms and the products they have for sale. This guide, along with the MWFA promotion materials, created enthusiasm among many grocers. Thirteen varieties of MWFA-approved produce were available to shoppers, and MWFA-approved beef, pork, cheese and butter were sold for the first time at two retail stores. This said, there were many challenges—

most notably, already established grower-distributor-retailer relationships.

Newspaper inserts, advertisements, and stories were fairly effective at getting MWFA farms, foods and retailers noticed. At in-store demonstrations, shoppers reported seeing MWFA advertisements. Point-of-sale materials (brochures, shelf-talkers, recipes, stickers) were somewhat effective when properly used. The main challenge is getting retailers to post these materials consistently and keep them with MWFA-approved products as they move within the store.

The most effective strategy for relating the MWFA seal and message was conducting demonstrations and store events. MWFA conducted three store events and 41 demonstrations that involved over 45 LSP members and other volunteers. Retailers, volunteers and consumers were all enthusiastic about this approach. Rarely do retailers see such fervent, knowledgeable demo personnel in their stores. Included in the demonstrations were (for the first time) MWFA-approved radishes, cucumbers and potatoes. It's not often that you see such basic foods—direct from the farm and minimally processed—being promoted at your local grocery store.

MWFA will continue this very successful one-on-one education strategy; however, the challenge is making it a manageable, sustainable part of our work. LSP members have led the charge; unfortunately, we don't have members in every town throughout the Upper Midwest (not yet anyway). We're looking for ways to partner with other organizations so that we can sustain and extend



MWFA food demonstrations at participating grocery stores have proven to be a very effective way of relaying the story of stewardship farming to consumers.

blueberry grower, our first dairy cooperative, and our first vegetable producers.

In addition, we've been able to strengthen and broaden our farm evaluations through local and national collaborations. Locally, MWFA has strengthened relationships with agricultural partners such as the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Nationally, we've committed to continuing our partnership with The Food Alliance in Portland, Ore. This partnership affords us more resources and skills to design and manage our certification program. For example, we're developing better ways to

MWFA see page 11...



our in-store demonstration capabilities.

Finally, although many MWFA farms were able to participate in our retail promotions, many were not. There are barriers at work here—e.g. labeling, bar codes, uniform weights, a bias against frozen meat products and price. Additionally, many farms prefer (and do very well with) direct marketing. For these farms—at least to date—MWFA has been more of a “rising tides” program, with our advertising and public awareness work “raising all boats” by educating the public about sustainable food production in general. We intend to do more “direct lifting” in 2002. We hope to have a more effective retail-direct marketing mix for our promotions in 2002 and beyond.

### Sustainable & responsive

It's apparent that we've come a long way, and yet there remain many challenges to making MWFA a successful, sustainable program. And these are what might be called infrastructure challenges—challenges that require us to develop and implement a program that has sustainable systems of evaluation, governance and finance built-in. In all of these areas, we're making progress.

This past year, MWFA has taken many steps to include and value the input of MWFA participants. If we're a farmer-consumer alliance, then we'd best have farmer-consumer based outcomes. Thus, we've surveyed and evaluated a lot. We hired a MWFA program evaluator—a person whose job it is to oversee and coordinate MWFA evaluations. We held focus groups with customers and farmers. We surveyed our customers. We surveyed retailers. We're surveying our farmers—about the certification process and the challenges of the past growing season and the value they see from our public awareness/consumer education efforts. We're asking what we can do better, what we can add, what we can drop. We had our first MWFA annual meeting this past February.

As our program grows in 2002 and as we continue our partnership with The Food Alliance, we will have a need for stronger, broader regional governance. This spring we will form and convene the first MWFA advisory council—a regional, stakeholder body that will provide advice and recommendations to the MWFA steering committee and MWFA staff. At the same time, we'd like to strengthen our work with The Food

Alliance to garner national and regional support for our program—e.g. support from regional branches of national environmental organizations.

As we enter 2002, MWFA continues to receive generous funding from a number of foundations. Beginning this year, we'll begin moving to a mix of grant and fee-based funding. To do so we need to continue establishing the value of our seal and associated education/marketing efforts and work with our farmers and retailers to develop a schedule of fees that meets their needs. Challenging, but doable. □

*Ray Kirsch is the Midwest Food Alliance Farm Coordinator. He can be reached at 651-653-0618 or rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org.*

## Java River dishes out some food for thought

*By Patrick J. Moore*

For more than four years now, an extension of the stewardship ethic LSP promotes on the land has been operating in the heart of the western Minnesota town of Montevideo. Java River Café is like many coffee house-restaurants one may see in moderate sized rural towns. It offers a selection of good coffee, a sandwich and a social place for residents to gather.

However, Java River isn't just a place of business. It is also an attempt to show how healthy, prosperous, diversified farms interact with a healthy, prosperous Main Street, that in turn supports and depends on these stewardship-minded farmers. The idea was “simple” enough: in 1998 my wife Mary and I bought an old building for cheap, fixing it up with sweat equity and private capital. We began working to bring LSP's network of farmers and consumers together in the space and demonstrate what we mean by sustainability through good food, coffee and conversation. Even though it's a private business, Java River is an outgrowth of LSP. I still work as an organizer for this organization even while I'm behind the counter pouring mochas and cutting bread. It's just that the community members I interact with are sitting at restaurant tables, rather than in a farmhouse or church basement.

Everyday we strive to make Java River a physical embodiment of what LSP stands for—a place where people can go

to see the dream of healthy communities, prosperous diversified farms and land use reform in action. In a sense, this business represents what more than 10 years of organizing around water and agricultural issues can produce in a community: residents who are aware that their daily choices do have impacts beyond the supper table or lunch counter.

And this awareness starts with what we serve our customers every day. During the past year Java River has expanded its offerings of locally produced food. We are focused on offering meats and vegetables produced by LSP member-farmers. Our coffee is produced in an environmentally and socially just fashion by farmers in Central America. Much of the food is Midwest Food Alliance approved and we provide plenty of brochures and other educational materials to help people learn more about where their food comes from and by whom it is produced. We also try to teach them about the environmental, economic and social costs of consuming food that comes from the industrialized, non-local system of agriculture.

The Java River Courtyard, which features a fieldstone waterfall and an outdoor stage, has become a major drop-off point for farmers who are connecting to consumers with sustainably-raised pork, beef, bison, chickens and organic vegetables. During the past year, Java River expanded in size and customer base, and we continued our efforts to get more community members involved in a Main Street revitalization effort. Last fall we sponsored the second annual Western Minnesota Chili Cookoff next to the cafe. More than 200 people participated in this fun event. Efforts like this help showcase locally produced food while bringing people into downtown Montevideo on a weekend day—an important tool for community building.

In the near future, Java River hopes to reach even more people through cyberspace. We are on the verge of launching a new Web site ([www.javarivercafe.com](http://www.javarivercafe.com)), which will feature our mission statement, vision statement and photos showcasing the farms that produce our sustainably-raised foods. This is just one more way to connect stewardship on the land with stewardship on Main Street. □

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# Pride of the Prairie blooms in western Minn.

By Audrey Arner

Owen Heiberg would like to see west-central Minnesota earn the same reputation for its cuisine as some of the most celebrated areas of the culinary world. Heiberg, who is on the board of directors of the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, keynoted the Pride of the Prairie Food Forum and Banquet in November, which attracted 130 farmers, grocers, processors, public servants, institutional buyers, restaurateurs and educators.

"This region's soil is every bit as fertile, and its farmers every bit as talented, as those in famous regions of France and Italy," said Heiberg, a former small town newspaper editor.

The 20-person coordinating committee that LSP's western Minnesota office convenes monthly to develop a community food system could not agree more heartily. In the past year "Pride of the Prairie" committee members in western Minnesota conducted a consumer preference survey of over 100 community members. Respondents said locally produced food is fresher, tastier and safer. They're also willing to pay more for it, but they won't necessarily go out of their way to buy it. Convenience is of utmost importance.

Collaborating with the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership and Prairie Renaissance has been a satisfying fit for LSP staff that have long experience with the food-producing farmers of the region.

Since April 2001, we have identified over 100 farmers in the region who do some kind of direct marketing and have surveyed over 90 percent of them. The inquiry revealed a broad array of products, their present and potential sales volume, and qualities related to production practices. A core group of farmers is committed to developing the infrastructure it will take to effectively move food from farms to western Minnesota consumers. These producers of buffalo, beef, pork, chickens, eggs, fruits and vegetables are strategizing monthly and increasingly see themselves as being in the "food business" rather than the "commodity business." There are plenty of reasons these farmers prefer to produce

## Creating a Regional, Sustainable Food System

vegetables, grains and meats for local tables, rather than growing corn and soybeans for brimming shipping containers.

"Growers have an opportunity to more fully participate in the profits produced by the food they raise when it is marketed locally," Greg Cuomo, director of the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris, told Food Forum attendees.

To help farmers identify local specialty processors, a directory of food processing businesses is being compiled.

A "Seasonal Food Guide" has also been developed to identify the food produced in the Upper Minnesota River Valley. This and other educational materials underway are designed to open the dialogue with consumers to place greater value on local, sustainably-raised foods.

## Local foods go to college

The University of Minnesota at Morris is a highly ranked liberal arts university on the prairie. Longtime LSPer Sandy Olson-Loy is UMM's vice-chancellor of student affairs and a Pride of the Prairie committee member. She wants locally grown foods on the college menu. "We have so many students who come here for a rural experience and leave without one," Olson-Loy says. She believes introducing local foods is one way to bring that experience home.

Meeting the dietary demands of a university requires an adequate food supply and collaboration among producers. These farmers are determined to meet this challenge.

On behalf of the food-producer group, LSP is engaging in dialogue with Sodexo, the university's food service provider.

"The benefits for (buying locally) are that it is close and can provide us with a fresher product," says Donna Bauck, general manager for the campus food service. "I would much prefer to buy products as close as I can."

By this time next year, Morris college students may well be enjoying menu items produced by farms in the nearby countryside. This is a model that can provide inspiration for other regional institutions as well as at-home dinner tables. The upcoming year will see Web site development for the Pride of the Prairie to strengthen the region-wide food web. Nutritionist Lynn Mader is currently conducting a poll of restaurants and institutions in the region to determine their local food purchasing preferences. The polling results will provide critical market research for the farmers. The ripple effects are satisfying as a growing number of group homes, restaurants and at-home food preparers discover the joys of knowing farmers and eating the fine foods of our region. □

LSP organizer Audrey Arner farms in the Montevideo area. She can be reached at 320-269-2105 or [aarner@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:aarner@landstewardshipproject.org).



The Pride of the Prairie Food Forum and Banquet helped introduce western Minnesotans to the variety of locally produced food that's available.





# Creating a New Vision for Agriculture



## Fighting for policy that's good for the land, farmers & communities

By Mark Schultz

### Federal policy

On the Federal policy front, we have been very busy this fall and through the winter. Notable successes in which the Land Stewardship Project played an instrumental role include winning a fully funded Conservation Security Program in the U.S. Senate's Farm Bill, and, again in the Senate, helping pass a ban on corporate packer ownership of livestock—not once, but twice. We have also been a central player in advancing Senator Paul Wellstone's amendment that would prevent Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds from being used to build new or assist in the expansion of large-scale confined animal feeding operations.

At a January LSP Farm Bill meeting held in New Ulm, Minn., 117 LSP members and supporters focused on such policy objectives. We also pushed for strong payment limitations on Federal farm programs, and enlisted Wellstone's help to get Federal funding for sustainable livestock research and demonstration at the University of Minnesota-Morris. The Farm Bill effort will continue into the spring, as a joint House/Senate conference committee hashes out the final bill to send to President Bush—so stay tuned. More than 30 LSP members have been making lots of telephone calls to hog farmers, mostly in other states, to help win on the packer ban and EQIP. This has been a high-priority, high intensity effort.

These Federal policy wins are a testament to a lot of work on the part of farmers and other citizens concerned about the sustainability of rural economies and the environment. People provided input to their members of Congress via telephone calls and e-mails. In addition, LSP members testified at Congressional hearings in Washington, D.C., and Minnesota during the spring and summer of 2001.

### Desired outcomes

Through our policy and organizing programs for *Creating a New Vision for Agriculture*, LSP is working for the following outcomes:

→ **Attitudinal Changes**— Increased public awareness of environmental, social and economic abuses by major corporations in the food and agricultural system, which in turn creates a political climate for change.

→ **Behavioral Changes**— More citizens are organized and participate in decisions that affect their communities, livelihoods and the land.

→ **Systems Changes**— Federal, state, and local policies provide incentives and rewards to farmers who produce multiple economic, environmental and social benefits for society on their land; and protect against abuses caused by corporate consolidation and control.

### What LSP has accomplished in the past year

→ Played an instrumental role in development and passage of landmark U.S. Senate Farm Bill proposals that would reward farmers for environmental benefits, return competition to the meat industry and limit tax subsidies to factory farms.

→ Documented the multiple benefits agriculture can provide economically, environmentally and socially, and made that issue a part of state and Federal policy debates.

→ Mobilized hog farmers across the country to vote to end the mandatory pork checkoff tax.

→ Helped southeast Minnesota citizens stop the construction of a factory farm in an ecologically sensitive area.

→ Helped rural Minnesotans develop local rules to restrict placement of factory farms.

→ Helped strengthen statewide rules related to factory farms.

We won through sharp thinking, strong organizing and by building alliances with progressive leaders like Senators Paul Wellstone and Mark Dayton, as well as Tom Harkin, the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. These lawmakers hung onto the Conservation Security Program as a top priority.

### State policy

In terms of state policy, we are participating in the Healthy Waters initiative of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP). The Healthy Waters initiative is a 21-point bonding proposal totaling about \$80 million. LSP supports each of the components, and has taken leadership on the request for bonding for a new deep-bedded straw swine farrowing facility at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris. LSP has also been active at the Minnesota Legislature in defending the powers of local units of government in regards to siting and permitting decisions related to factory farms, and also protection of the state's environmental review process.

I also served on the Citizen Advisory Committee of the Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS) of Animal Agriculture in Minnesota. Although a lot of time and effort was spent on this precedent-setting study, overall the GEIS fell far short of what was possible and what was its supposed mission, due primarily to the directives coming from Environmental Quality Board chair and Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson. However, there is information in the GEIS technical working papers that will be (and already has been) useful to citizens. And some of the recommendations—76 in all—are fairly good, including a consensus recommendation to continue the ban on hog operations storing more than one million gallons of liquid manure in open-air lagoons. It was clearly a priority of the industrial ag contingent to remove this ban, which is currently in force in the state. □

Mark Schultz is LSP's Policy Program Director. He can be reached at 612-722-6377 or [marks@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:marks@landstewardshipproject.org).

## Documenting ag's multiple benefits

By George Boody

It is economically and environmentally beneficial to shift agriculture toward more diverse systems on actively farmed land; and if financial incentives motivate change, citizens are very willing to pay for that diversity.

These are some of the key findings of the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Project study. This analysis, which was conducted in two Minnesota watersheds over a two-year period, concludes that the value of nonmarket goods, such as reduced soil erosion and improved wildlife habitat, merits significant changes in U.S. farm policy. This modeling study also confirms that if present land use trends continue, environmental, social and economic problems will worsen.

American agriculture produces bin-busting yields of a handful of commodities. However, this analysis shows that it can do much more for local communities and society at large. There is a growing recognition among farmers, policy makers, environmentalists and the public that agriculture can produce food and fiber while creating other, nonmarket "goods" such as environmental and social benefits, including rural prosperity.

How does society encourage agriculture to produce multiple goods beyond high yields? With financial incentives. And by calculating the value of certain goods society can better determine what incentives are needed to foster and support a farming system that will bring about these goods.

That's why the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Project was launched. LSP joined up with several other partners in the nonprofit, government and land grant sectors, as well as farmers and other private individuals, to develop and manage this groundbreaking research project. A 15-member working group used modeling to predict the environmental and social benefits that could result from changing agricultural land use practices. These quantitative and qualitative public (nonmarket) benefits include improved water quality, less soil erosion, enhanced soil quality, increased wildlife habitat and social capital formation, as well as toxic chemical and greenhouse gas reductions.

But redirecting payments will mean major changes in policy. Current federal

## Creating a New Vision for Agriculture

agricultural policies subsidize the production of a selected set of commodities. That's why we have been spending a lot of time presenting these results to lawmakers, government officials, farmers and others who have an impact on how our land is managed. So far, we've given presentations to the Soil and Water Conservation District national meeting, Kellogg Foundation Fires of Hope Initiative, a Taproot Seminar, United States Society for Ecological Economics conference, Minnesota Rural Summit, Pew Oceans Commission, members of the U.S. Congress, and an international conference on Sharing Responsibility for Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development.

The steering committee for the next phase of this work includes the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Defenders of Wildlife, Minnesota

departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minnesota office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, scientists from the University of Minnesota, Bemidji State University, Iowa State University, the Wallace Center for Agriculture and Environmental Policy at Winrock International, members of LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee, and individual farmers.

We're excited about continuing this work, particularly in light of that fact that terms like "multiple benefits" or "multiple functional" are being used increasingly when agriculture is discussed on a state, federal or even international level. We believe our research will help relay the message that agriculture does more than just produce bin-busting yields. □

## Pork checkoff becomes an issue of democracy

By Mike McMahon

The year began with an historical victory on the mandatory pork checkoff campaign. Two and one half years after starting our petition drive to hold a vote on the mandatory pork checkoff, LSP and the other member groups of the Campaign for Family Farms were awaiting the results of the national referendum on the mandatory pork checkoff. On January 11, 2001, then-Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced that hog farmers across the country had voted 53 percent to 47 percent to end the mandatory pork checkoff, and he ordered the program terminated.

Winning this vote is a true testament to the power of grassroots organizing over big money and corporate influence in our food and agriculture system. In the late 1990's, the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and its affiliates received between \$40 million and \$50 million a year from the checkoff, which it used to promote a factory farm agenda. The NPPC reportedly spent \$4 million dollars in its effort to win this vote, \$2 million of which was raised from corporate allies.

The NPPC and their state affiliates like the Minnesota Pork Producers Association also had help from powerful allies,

including other major commodity groups, pro-factory farm members of Congress and agribusiness media outlets such as *Feedstuffs* magazine.

The one thing the Campaign for Family Farms had that the NPPC and their state affiliates couldn't match was hundreds of farmers, on their own time and using their own money, working together to win this vote. Hog farmers and other citizens opposed to factory farms cranked out votes by making telephone calls, talking face-to-face with their neighbors and friends, putting up signs on their farms, and helping with mailings about the vote.

Our victory stunned everyone. When we reported the results to Don Wick, a reporter with WCCO radio, the largest agricultural news station in Minnesota, the first thing he said was, "Wow."

Immediately following Secretary Glickman's announcement, the NPPC filed a lawsuit to overturn the results of the vote. In early 2001, newly-appointed Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman cut a deal with the NPPC to throw out the referendum results and continue the mandatory pork checkoff.

The Campaign for Family Farms mobilized immediately. Within a few weeks we had signs up across the country side, full-page advertisements in

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agricultural publications, farmers protesting the Bush Administration decision in Sioux Falls, S. Dak., and Washington, D.C., thousands of phone calls going into USDA, letters of support from members of Congress, and strong media coverage.

The Campaign also brought a lawsuit against USDA for throwing out the vote.

We've brought three claims against USDA: 1) Veneman's decision was contrary to law; 2) her decision was arbitrary and capricious; and 3) the checkoff violated hog farmers' First Amendment rights.

Our first claim that Ag Secretary Veneman's decision is contrary to law is based on the fact that the rules of the referendum, which were published in the *Federal Register* and therefore have the effect of law, state that if the majority of producers voted to end the checkoff, the program would be terminated. The judge ruled against us on this issue in

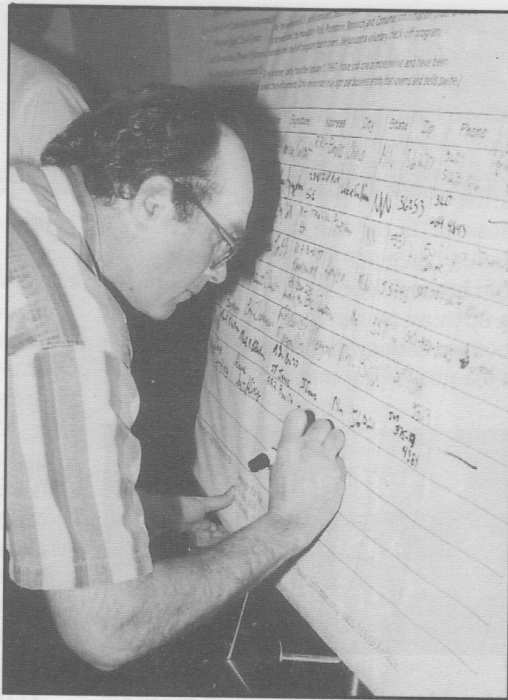
December, saying that the Secretary of Agriculture had the authority to reinstate the checkoff and throw out the votes of hog farmers.

The arbitrary and capricious lawsuit was dropped because of the heavy burden of proof required of plaintiffs to win any arbitrary and capricious claim, and because pursuing the case would have required us to give the names of all of the hog farmers who signed the checkoff petition to the NPPC's lawyers.

Our third claim is that the mandatory pork checkoff violates hog farmers' First Amendment right of free speech. Our case states that the mandatory pork checkoff is a type of "forced speech." The checkoff forces producers to pay for promotion and advertising they may or may not agree with.

Court cases always take a long time. We hope to have a ruling on our First Amendment claim by this fall. While our case moves ahead, we continue to engage hog farmers that first became involved with LSP through the checkoff on important issues such as factory farms, corporate control of the industry and sustainable livestock practices.

In early January we sent a survey on a variety of agriculture issues to every hog farmer in Minnesota we worked with on the checkoff issue. We have received



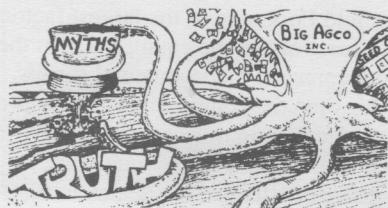
**LSP member Dave Serfling was one of the first hog farmers to sign a petition calling for a vote on the future of the pork checkoff tax. That petition led to a "no" vote on the tax, but so far the National Pork Producers Council and USDA have ignored the results of the farmer referendum.**

about 200 surveys to date and we are busy compiling the information from them. We also signed up 28 new LSP members from our checkoff list since the beginning of the year.

Although the mandatory pork checkoff has not been terminated yet, we have accomplished most of what we set out to do through this campaign: built our power through membership recruitment, leadership development, and media exposure; weakened a major adversary, the NPPC; and built a "fight-back" mentality among farmers.

Our success on moving a ban on meatpackers owning livestock through the U.S. Senate (see page 13) is directly related to the progress we've made toward each of our checkoff goals. □

*Mike McMahon is a Policy Program organizer. He can be reached at 612-722-6377 or [mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:mcmahon@landstewardshipproject.org).*



## Genetic engineering

By Cathy Eberhart

Few issues in agriculture have garnered such lavish praise or harsh criticism as the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As row crops containing GMOs become widespread on U.S. farmland and land grant universities rush to add large biotechnology programs to their agricultural research departments, LSP has asked the hard questions about how such new technologies impact the land and the farmer. While not a formal program,

...GMOs see page 16

### Part of a team

Members of the Land Stewardship Project join forces with each other to create a powerful force for change. Beyond our own membership network, LSP is also an active participant in a number of national and regional partnerships that extend our capacity for change even further.

Within Minnesota, LSP is an active member of the **Sustainers' Coalition**, which supports the work of the **Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA)** at the University of Minnesota and ensures that the voice of the sustainable farm community is heard at the College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences. We are also members of the **Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP)**, a coalition of environmental groups. Through MEP, we work on state policy initiatives and have benefitted from joint database projects and an e-mail advocacy network called the Minnesota Environmental Action Network.

Nationally, LSP is a key partner in the **Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment**, which fights for the rights of family livestock farmers through such efforts as the Pork Checkoff campaign and Federal legislation to ban packer ownership of livestock. We further extend our influence on national farm policy through our active participation in the **Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (MSAWG)**, the **Sustainable Agriculture Coalition** and the **National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture**.

LSP's work on GMOs has been guided by goals that drive all of our work—the advancement of policies that encourage stewardship farming and benefit independent farmers.

A series of articles in the *Land Stewardship Letter* and a fact sheet on GMOs have provided much needed information on genetic engineering and its impact on the environment, farm profitability and university research agendas.

LSP is also a founding member of the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture. Through this collaboration, a print and radio advertising campaign was launched in 2001 urging farmers to look at declining export markets for crops containing GMOs before making planting decisions. The advertisements provided balanced information on genetic engineering from a farmer perspective. Also as part of the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign, LSP farmers met with Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch in November 2000 to express concerns over GMOs, particularly making sure manufacturers of products containing GMOs are held liable for contamination of non-GMO crops. □

## Organizing against factory farms

By Bobby King

Flawed local, state and national policy allows the construction of large-scale factory farms in areas where they jeopardize the environment and quality of life of neighbors. The goal of every campaign that involves opposition to a particular factory farm is to not only stop that facility, but to also change the policy that allows it. Most immediately that is usually policy at the county and township level, but LSP members involved in these intense local campaigns also bring their passion and energy for sustainable rural communities to LSP state and Federal policy work when it is needed.

### Fillmore County: Stopping a factory farm, changing policy

It was just over a year ago that a Fillmore County District Court Judge ruled in favor of community members

who had demanded that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) order an in-depth environmental review of a proposed factory style dairy and its 7.5 million gallon manure lagoon. The MPCA ignored concerns about the sensitive karst geology in southeast Minnesota. In the karst area surface pollution can enter the groundwater within hours. The possibility of a sink-hole opening up beneath the manure lagoon and draining the entire contents into the groundwater was a concern of

## Creating a New Vision for Agriculture

local residents and scientists. In the next year, this environmental review strategy would be used in four other cases.

Although the effort to stop the factory livestock facility was what grabbed headlines, the citizens' group also worked to develop township policies that would prevent more of these large-scale facilities from moving in. On Aug. 1, 2001, the township imposed a moratorium on the construction of large factory farms while zoning rules are being developed.

In addition, LSP members in Fillmore County filed a petition for environmental review on a proposed factory hog farm. This will be the test case of the previous legal victory and will indicate whether or not it has changed MPCA policy on large feedlots in the karst area.

### Waseca County: Working to change county policy

LSP members in Waseca County stopped the construction of a 1,500 cow factory style dairy farm and a 25 million gallon lagoon system. When the MPCA failed to order an environmental review of the proposed factory farm, these citizens challenged that decision in court. Faced with that court challenge, the proposers dropped the project.

Next, a 2,400 sow factory hog farm was proposed at the site. The proposed factory is a contract operation with Wakefield Pork, one of the largest factory farm operations in the country. Again the group demanded environmental review, and this time the county refused (it was a county decision in this case since the project was under 1,000 animal units). The group challenged the decision in

court. A District Court Judge ruled against the group and upheld the decision. After carefully reviewing the decision with their attorneys, the citizens decided the ruling was wrong and they have appealed.

Two other factory farms were proposed in the county and LSP members raised concerns and demanded environmental review. Again, despite obvious threats to the environment, the demands were rebuffed by officials. The group is currently challenging the decisions in court.

Meanwhile, the citizens' group understands that the heart of the problem is a lax county feedlot ordinance that creates a fast track permitting process, allowing the proposers of factory farms to bypass the public permitting process. LSP is helping these citizens organize to change this county policy.

### Winona County: Strengthening the feedlot ordinance

In March 2001, the Winona County feedlot ordinance was weakened so that feedlots can be substantially larger before they require a county permit. This allowed a factory farm to move into Winona County without any public process or county permit being required. The factory farm is a contract operation with Holden Farms, one of the largest hog producers in the country. We want the ordinance restored before more move in. The campaign is building momentum and forcing the county to deal with the issue of factory farms in Winona County.

••••

These are the most focused and ongoing factory farm campaigns. In addition, LSP members in Lac Qui Parle County have challenged in court that county's decision not to do environmental review on a large factory hog farm. LSP also helped stop a proposed factory hog farm in Houston County. The proposer of this operation had gotten his state feedlot permit even though he had been convicted of a felony for pumping manure directly into a drainage ditch.

In the upcoming year, LSP will continue to help citizens prevent factory farms from dumping their environmental costs onto communities. □

*Bobby King is an organizer in LSP's southeast Minnesota office. He can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org).*





# Making LSP a Stronger Organization



## Major donor funding fortifies the future

By Katie Person

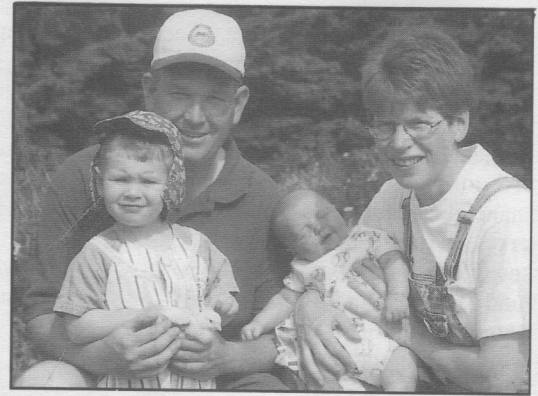
This issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter* features the many ways LSP works to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, promote sustainable agriculture and develop sustainable communities. From initiatives such as the Midwest Food Alliance label and the Farm Beginnings program, to our efforts supporting the Conservation Security Program, LSP continues to strive toward healthy land through a sustainable food system. However, in order to continue protecting the land and the people who rely upon it, LSP depends upon members. Our strength as an organization is built with member support both through participation and contributions. With more members and more funds we have more power to continue pursuing the programs and issues so important to the future of the land.

At this time, much of our budget is funded by foundations and other grant sources. Relying solely on these funds will not lead us successfully through the next 20 years. We need to diversify our funding base in order to be a sustainable organization. This means we must increase contributions from individual donors. Diversifying funding sources allows us to enjoy a more stable way to fund programs, not to mention more freedom to pursue the programs we and our members feel are important. For instance, a few years ago we saw a need for new farmer training in sustainable farming methods. While we did not have a grant to start the program, we did have funds through gifts from members to begin planning it. This first step led to a grant from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Due to its success, the Farm Beginnings Program has since received grants from several other sources.

For this reason, LSP has focused more attention on fund-raising through individual members. A few years ago, LSP was awarded our first matching grant

challenge from the McKnight Foundation. As you may remember, this "match" was a great success. Due to an increase in the number of major donors and their generosity, we not only met our goal but exceeded it. As a result of our success, the McKnight Foundation offered us yet another matching grant in 2001. Once again, donors demonstrated their strong support for the important work that we do. Overall, the McKnight Matches offered a great incentive to encourage major gifts and members responded.

Our success with the McKnight Match was a strong first step toward increasing individual donations over the \$200 level. As we enter our second decade, it is ever more important to continue to diversify LSP's funding with individual gifts. In honor of our 20<sup>th</sup>



**Farm Beginnings graduates Eric and Lisa Klein are shown here with their sons Andy and Ben. The Kleins farm near Plainview, Minn. Without the support of LSP members, Farm Beginnings would have never been launched.**

Anniversary, LSP launched a special giving appeal over the holiday season. This appeal encouraged members to give above their annual gift and offered a pledge program for those who may want to begin giving over \$200 a year. By implementing the pledge program, we hope to accommodate members who may want to give a larger gift but, rather than give it in one lump sum, would prefer to spread it out over a year's time. The special appeal has been very successful. As of this writing, LSP has raised \$15,790 in special gifts since November.

This year, we have also looked at other ways members can contribute to the Land Stewardship Project. This includes giving gifts of stocks and bonds, or making LSP the recipient of a bequest through your will. If you would like to learn more about these options, call Ron Rengel or I in the White Bear Lake office or consult your attorney. As always, people can give to LSP through payroll deductions via the Minnesota Environmental Fund.

Members support the Land Stewardship Project in many ways. Whether it be volunteering, contributing dues, giving gifts above membership, or taking action on various issues, LSP members are truly the force behind 20 years of keeping the land and people together. □

*Katie Person is LSP's Development Associate. She can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [kperson@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:kperson@landstewardshipproject.org).*

### Desired outcomes

LSP's five year plan includes several goals for **Making LSP a Stronger Organization**:

- Increase membership and involvement of members in our work.
- Diversify funding sources.
- Update administrative communications systems.

### What LSP has accomplished in the past year

- We have developed a strong major donor program to help diversify our work and ensure a solid future.
- We have made it easier for our members to support us financially and taken solid steps toward diversifying our funding base.
- LSP has continued to strengthen an active Board of Directors that represents all aspects of the organization's work.
- We have refined our accounting system, helping the organization run more efficiently while remaining accountable to LSP members and foundations who fund us.

# The work behind the scenes

## Board of directors

By Cathy Eberhart

LSP is fortunate to have an active and committed Board of Directors to guide its work. The 12 Board members meet four times a year in various parts of the state to discuss LSP program work, as well as review administrative and financial reports. Each Board member serves on one of four standing committees: Executive, Board Development/Fund Development, Program and Membership.

According to our bylaws, the LSP board must include as much as possible representation from the religious community, active or retired farmers, regional groups active in the cause of soil stewardship, and farm organizations or other groups whose purposes are consistent with LSP. More specifically, we have set as a priority that at least 25 percent of the board (three to four people) should be active farmers and at least six should be actively involved in LSP program work. All board members are expected to be members of LSP.

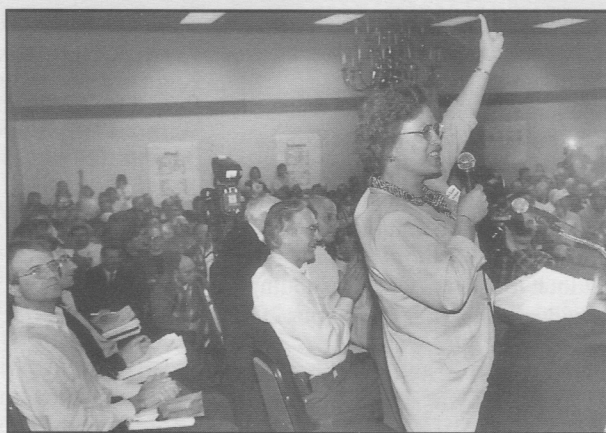
The following people are serving on LSP's Board of Directors for our 2001-2002 fiscal year:

- **David Andow** is a Professor of Entomology at the University of Minnesota and an international expert on biotechnology and exotic invasive species. He is the Chair of the Board.
- **Dan French** is a grass-based dairy farmer in Dodge Center in southeast Minnesota, and one of four farms in PastureLand, a dairy cooperative that markets cheese and butter. He serves as LSP's Vice-chair and is active with the Farm Beginnings Program and the Federal Farm Policy Committee.
- **Ruth Murphy** is the Executive Director of the Community Design Center, whose purpose is to help low- and moderate-income people participate effectively in planning and implementing community and business development.

Ruth has been active in her organization's urban youth gardening project. She is LSP's Secretary/Treasurer.

• **Cheryl Miller** is the Watershed Program Director for the Minnesota Chapter of the National Audubon Society. She serves on the Board and Fund Development Committee.

• **Ron Kroese**, originally LSP's cofounder in 1982, is currently the Executive Director of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, a coalition of over 70 environmental groups. He also serves on the Board and Fund Development Committee.



Like LSP's other Board Members, Monica Kahout is active in many areas related to farm and food issues. Here she is pictured speaking at a rally protesting consolidation in agriculture.

• **Ken Peterson** is a direct marketing beef farmer in Tamarack in northeast Minnesota. He has been a leader in the Lutheran Church and the northeast chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association. He serves on the Membership Committee.

• **Jim VanDerPol** raises crops and livestock near the southwestern Minnesota community of Kerkhoven. He has helped develop the alternative swine program at the University of Minnesota's West Central Experiment Station in Morris and served for a year as the Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems for the School of Agriculture at the university. He is the Chair of LSP's Board and Fund Development Committee.

• **Sister Mary Tacheny** is one of the directors of the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry with the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato, Minn. She serves on the Membership

## Making LSP a Stronger Organization

Committee and provides strong support and encouragement to all of LSP's programs.

• **Jo Anne Rohricht** is a resident of St. Paul, Minn., who has actively promoted links between local stewardship farmers and urban consumers through her neighborhood and church. She is the chair of the Program Planning Committee.

• **Monica Kahout** is a crop and hog farmer near Olivia, in south-central Minnesota. Over the past few years, she has been an active member of LSP's Livestock Concentration Committee, in particular working on the pork checkoff referendum campaign. Monica serves on LSP's Membership Committee.

• **Bruce Vondracek** is a fisheries research scientist with the University of Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and formerly a member of the board of directors for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). He worked extensively with the Monitoring Project. Bruce serves on LSP's Program Planning Committee.

• **Char Brooker** is a retired teacher from Maplewood, Minn., who chairs the National Board of Directors of the Izaak Walton League. She also serves on LSP's Program Planning Committee. □

## Support services

By Ron Rengel

None of the program work that is described on the pages of this newsletter would be possible without the very able support of the administrative staff that work out of each of LSP's offices. Karen Benson in Lewiston, Michele Skogrand in Montevideo, and Louise Arbuckle, Ron Rengel, and Tara Blumer in White Bear Lake all juggle a wide variety of tasks—from answering the phone, sending out publications and handling information requests, to updating databases and managing our financial records. They coordinate the event details, get mailings out, update resource libraries, keep calendars up-to-date, pay bills, manage complicated

...Support see page 19



employee benefits programs, and much more.

A lot of attention goes into making sure all of these administrative systems are working as smoothly and efficiently as possible. This past year a number of important changes were made to strengthen LSP's organizational capacity.

Our accounting system was enhanced to more effectively report information on programs. This reporting system allows the yearly financial audit to be completed more efficiently. It also makes it possible for Program Directors to receive monthly project reports; this means they can better manage their expenses. Also, depreciation schedules have been updated to accurately log all our assets and expense them in a timely fashion. This allows managers to see at a glance what has been purchased and when it was purchased, as well as to get a monthly view of depreciation expenses for the current fiscal year. Processes for tracking grant applications and reporting requirements have also been systematized.

As we try to do more work with limited time and dollars, we will continue to fine-tune our administrative systems to make the rest of our work more effective and more efficient. □

*Ron Rengel is LSP's Business Manager. He can be reached at 651-653-0618 or [rrengel@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:rrengel@landstewardshipproject.org).*

## How you can help make LSP stronger

- Give a gift membership to a friend or family member.
- Ask someone to join LSP. "Someone asked me to" is the most common reason people give for why they choose to join.
- Distribute information about LSP. Contact the LSP office nearest you for promotional materials that you can give out at your local coffee shop, health clinic, etc.
- Support LSP through the Minnesota Environmental Fund (MEF). Call Katie at 651-653-0618 for more information.
- Support LSP through additional gifts beyond the cost of membership. Donations to LSP are tax-deductible.
- Volunteer to help with mailings, database entry and other administrative projects.
- Include LSP in your will or estate plan.
- Give a gift in honor of a loved one.

# Land Stewardship Project Celebrates 20 Years of Keeping the Land & People Together



**JOIN US IN A FESTIVE OBSERVATION OF  
THIS IMPORTANT MILESTONE**

**Saturday, August 24th, 2002**

**3 p.m. - 9 p.m.**

**Good Counsel Hill in  
Mankato, Minn.**

**Come to enjoy:**

- Sumptuous local foods
- Informal gathering
- Award ceremony
- LSP storytelling
- Family-friendly activities
- Music & dancing
- Stewardship Shop
- Beer tasting

**There will be a drawing for a Mississippi River houseboat excursion that includes a gourmet dinner of locally grown food prepared by the famous *Blue Heron Cafe*.**

**Tickets are \$25.00 for adults, \$10.00 for children 13-17 (12 and under are free). Get your tickets now! Only 300 tickets will be sold for this event.**

**For more information and to purchase tickets, call or visit your local LSP office:**

- Southeast Minnesota, 507-523-3366
- Twin Cities Area, 651-653-0618
- Western Minnesota, 320-269-2105

**For more details, check  
[www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org)**

## STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

- **APRIL 22—Earth Day**; Contact: [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net)
- **APRIL 26-28—ReVisioning: Building Community for a Sustainable Future conference**, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.; Contact: 612-827-1894; [www.JustView.org/revisioning.html](http://www.JustView.org/revisioning.html)
- **MAY 11-12—Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival**, Washington County Fairgrounds, Lake Elmo, Minn.; Contact: Pat Ryan, 651-459-8554; <http://burroak.hypermart.net/festival.htm>
- **MAY 14—Rocks & Water: Understanding Minnesota's Limestone Country** (a groundwater education project of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources), Eagle Bluff Environmental Center, Lanesboro, Minn.; Contact: Melanie Miland, 507-285-7151; [melanie.miland@pca.state.mn.us](mailto:melanie.miland@pca.state.mn.us)
- **MAY 15-16—Rocks & Water** (see May 14 item), VFW Hall, Zumbrota, Minn.
- **MAY 20-22—Urban Agriculture: Emerging Opportunities in Science, Education & Policy**, Dallas, Tex.; Contact: <http://urbanag.tamu.edu>
- **MAY 21—Rocks & Water** (see May 14 item), Minnesota Valley Regional Library, Mankato, Minn.
- **MAY 22-23—Rocks & Water** (see May 14 item), Dakota County Conservation & Extension Center, Farmington, Minn.
- **JUNE 1-2—Solar for Farmsteads**, DreamAcres, Wykoff, Minn.; 800-498-2700; [www.wmich.edu/tillers/](http://www.wmich.edu/tillers/)
- **JUNE 5-8—Farming with Oxen & Horses**, DreamAcres, Wykoff, Minn.;

## Community Food & Farm Festival

An annual event that gives Twin Cities consumers a chance to meet with local direct-marketing farmers is being merged with a larger sustainable living event. The Community Food and Farm Festival will be held as part of the Living Green Expo, April 27 at the Minnesota State Capital Grounds and Armory in St. Paul.

If you are a farmer who would like to have a booth at this event, call Dana Jackson at the Land Stewardship Project's Twin Cities office (651-653-0618), or Melissa MacKimm at the Minnesota Food Association (651-766-8895). Check [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) for updated information.

Contact: 800-498-2700; [www.wmich.edu/tillers/](http://www.wmich.edu/tillers/)

## Opportunities Resources

### Farm Beginnings research assistant needed

Are you a University of Minnesota student who would like to help create a future for family farms? Would you like to gain valuable experience while getting paid? Apply to be a research assistant with the Farm Beginnings program through the University of Minnesota's Community Assistantship Program.

The Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings program in western Minnesota is looking for a research assistant to help with the mentoring component of the program. The research assistant will be involved in training, evaluation, reporting and on-farm visits. Results of this work will be instrumental in guiding the development of the program. Flexible starting times and hours during the spring and summer of 2002 are available.

To learn more about the position, please contact: Amy Bacigalupo at 320-269-2105 or [amyb@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:amyb@landstewardshipproject.org). You can also call Jan Joannides at 612-251-7304. □

### MWFA looking for farm evaluators

The Midwest Food Alliance (MWFA) is seeking individuals interested in serving as MWFA farm evaluators. Evaluators visit farms throughout the Upper Midwest and, using MWFA certification criteria, evaluate farms for the program. A training will be held this spring.

MWFA evaluators must have a combination of agricultural experience and education sufficient to guide their farm evaluations. Well-qualified MWFA evaluators would include current or former farmers, Extension agents, and graduate students in agricultural studies. Evaluators must have strong verbal and written communication skills and be able to travel.

If you're interested in being a MWFA farm evaluator, or would like to know more about the position, please contact MWFA Farm Coordinator Ray Kirsch at 651-653-0618 or [rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org). □



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