

The Land Stewardship



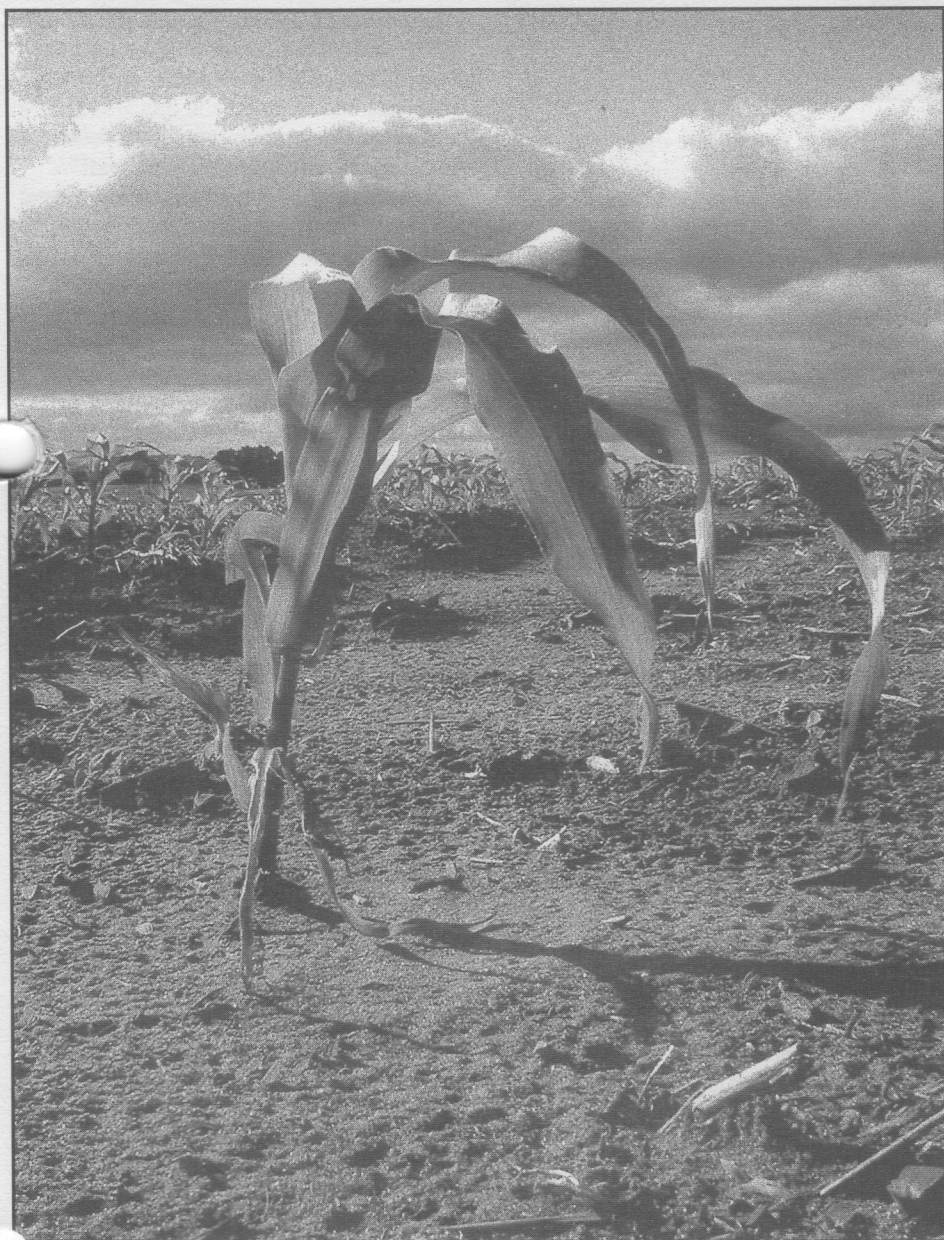
Keeping the Land and People Together

Letter

Vol. 18, No. 6

www.landstewardshipproject.org

DEC 2000



More than a century of public plant research that has developed products such a corn adapted to the Upper Midwest could be threatened by exclusive agreements that involve land grant universities and private corporations. Says one plant breeder of these arrangements: "It will eventually lead to the end of public sector plant breeding, which you could say is an end to innovation as well." (photo by Pat Deninger)

Germinating a Closed Science

By Brian DeVore

If you ever want to get a rise out of someone who is concerned about the intermingling of private agendas and public science, use "Berkeley" and "Novartis" in the same sentence.

"If we did that here I would be run out of town in an hour," says Albert Schneiter, chair of the plant breeding department at North Dakota State University. "That's terrible. The taxpayers should be up in arms over that."

The "that" Schneiter is referring to is this: Under a 1998 agreement, biotechnology giant Novartis gave the University of California-Berkeley's plant and microbial biology department \$25 million over five years to fund research. In return, Berkeley granted Novartis the first rights to license about a third of any research innovations that come out of the department. That

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The
Land
Stewardship
Keeping the Land and People Together
Letter



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

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

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Commentary ! ? ! ? !

Women in agriculture: Gleaning a new relationship with the land & each other

By Audrey Amer

Editor's note: These comments are excerpted from the keynote talk at the Tri-State Fall Harvest Retreat for Women in Sustainable Agriculture. The retreat was held Nov. 10-12 at Good Earth Village in Spring Valley, Minn.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this dynamic group of women involved in sustainable agriculture in Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. I am offering up my comments in dedication to June Redig, my passed-on friend and colleague, a founding sister of Women in Sustainable Agriculture.

We are so fortunate. We are enjoying the budding of the network of women involved in the new agriculture, and I am sensing that we will continue to witness its blossoming in the years ahead. I would like to explore what this means for ourselves, our work as women farmers and food providers, and for the circles we are creating. We are sharing both what, in our cellular structure—in our “lizard brain”—we have always known, and what it is we are learning in this lifetime.

About 20 years ago, I went with my husband to a seed dealers' meeting. While the men discussed sales techniques for varieties of #2 yellow corn, the women were led through a craft project: stitching with acrylic yarn on plastic-gridded crosses. For most of America's agricultural history, a woman's place has been in the kitchen (readying to feed the threshing crew) or in the garden or in the chicken coop, making her egg money to afford luxuries like silverware or a camera.

The number of women-owned businesses in agriculture has doubled since 1980. In recent agricultural history, we women have, for the most part, been positioned alongside the status quo in a post-war food production system designed by men with the tools leftover from making war. We have been the Rosie-the-Riveters of the prairies, driving

the farm machines alongside men.

Now with new awareness we are all beginning to understand the implications of a food production system that is hugely reliant on fossil fuels, fast burning up what author Thom Hartmann calls “the last hours of ancient sunlight.” It prompts me to think about how we fed ourselves before big oil, and even...before agriculture. What is there to learn from the gatherers and hunters?

Before we farmed, women as food providers in tribal culture were well networked. Women provided 70 percent to 80 percent of the diet in feeding the pre-agricultural world. The women's role in providing nourishment was primary—we were truly the historic “breadwinners.”

The female capacity to visualize and integrate complex patterns of plant growth aided in the discovery of plants, seeds and small animals. Gathering, the process of acquiring food, never entailed any pressure or sense of urgency; it was not like agricultural harvesting, considered a battle against time or the elements. Foraging was always interspersed with leisure—sleeping, playing with small children, and spontaneous singing in the midst of harvesting.

As women in the New Agriculture, we are recognizing that we are in the practice of harvesting sunlight. By effectively capturing sunlight with the unique capacity of photosynthesizing plants, we are co-creators of food and fiber and generators of wealth.

In the U.S. today, 30 million people experience chronic under-consumption of adequate nutrients. Meanwhile, the epicurean holiday catalogue I received this week offers 3.4 ounces of balsamic vinegar for \$175. Our collective responsibility is to strike a better balance in our food system.

We are re-learning how to feed the world, region by region. Through relationships with one another, our understanding of how to better do this is growing. The shift toward sustainable food production and distribution is calling

Relationship, see page 3...

...Relationship, from page 2

for a phasing out of the long transportation chains that deliver *great* varieties of foods (even great varieties of *organic* foods) from *all* over the globe in *all* seasons to elites, while the majority of humans survive on a poor and limited diet, or do not survive at all.

We are learning from one another what food will grow in our immediate region. We are learning how to extend the season using appropriate technologies. And women are at the forefront. So many farms in transition have been led by one woman's discomfort with the way things were going and with the poisons that have been the foundation of food production.

We are learning to dance with Nature, farming in her image instead of doing battle with her.

The harvest for ourselves

Now it is late autumn. Our energies are drawing inward and downward. This is a good time for releasing old patterns, letting them naturally dry up and blow away.

In a culture tied to present systems of consumption, we can begin to imagine alternatives that might give us greater peace and wholeness, even though the scramble to "keep up" in the present system leaves us ever more insecure, anxious, and exhausted.

Many of us have been doing this work for a long time now. We are about to harvest our ripening selves. Our own bodies, often sustained by foods we have grown ourselves, are fruits of creation. We are thankful. We are receptive. We are opening to receive what the harvest offers, whether or not we planted it intentionally.

Novelist Toni Cade Bambara tells of her fortuitous experience:

"I had a 'grandmother' (not blood kin but spirit kin) who used to say that if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, then the whole universe will accommodate itself to you. That is to say, if you are on the right track, and you are committed, and your intentions are clear, then you can be passive because the information you need, the teachers you need, the people you need, and the resources you need are going to come towards you. And all you have to do is be receptive."

Harvesting from the networks

As women farmers we are, more and more, inter-networking, over-layering with women in the environmental and health communities. An example is the farmers represented at the Women's Cancer Resource Center's conference on Cancer and the Environment.

Due to the principles of holism, there is enormous potential to take better advantage of our relationships with women chefs, musicians, the League of Women Voters, the environmental community, hunger activists, the American Association of University Women, physicians and immigrants.

We are building what rural sociologist

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As women farmers we are, more and more, inter-networking, over-layering with women in the environmental and health communities.

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Cornelia Flora has turned into a household word among the sustainers: "social capital." We must continue to broaden the diversity of voices, with our local and international allies. Like wind-pollinated plants and seeds transported by our feathered relatives, we are popping up everywhere, our voices carrying the message of the New Agriculture. We are claiming our voice to both hammer out a warning and to herald a new consciousness.

It is a complex harvest we bring back from the networks we have created. It is the net that catches us when we slip up, the net that catches the wind of opportunities. We are pooling our learning, travel, purchasing power, and creatively marketing together to reach more consumers than we could individually.

We offer each other advice for the doe in labor, suggestions for the appropriate cover crop, the name of the songbird nesting in the plum tree at the edge of the field. We share how we extend the growing season, how we kept the predators out of the egg mobile and which processing facility meets USDA standards.

We are crocheting the network and reaping the bounty of the relationships. This is the web we have woven from the fibers of our lives. As Sister Kay Fernholz of EarthRise farm has told me,

"We are weaving our dreams into the fabric of our rural tomorrow."

We are helping one another to make decisions. We are getting ideas for our own planning and problem-solving by learning what others are doing to address similar situations on their own farms and other agricultural businesses. We are choosing appropriate technology and innovation. We are leading by participatory process, modeling a method for the greater movement.

A new look

We are making and holding a New Vision, which is the only way we will reinvent society. There is a popular myth within the university, the legislature, and among rural economic developers: because rural populations and small farm numbers have been deteriorating, this is how it must continue. But we are called to ask instead, "What action is called for to carry us toward the New Vision?"

I've always been steadfast about declaring optimism. I would be unable to continue getting out of bed every morning to do this work if I was not optimistic, I would tell myself. But I've been rethinking that philosophy ever since a senior colleague challenged it. By choosing to be optimistic, there is an underlying assumption that no matter what we manage to do or not do, everything will eventually be okay. If we are pessimistic, then, ultimately change is impossible, so what's the point of doing more?

I am coming to my own realization that our posture now needs to be one of committed love. This means that we remain committed to the vision and to concrete communities of life no matter what the "trends" may be. This will require courage, which is one of the attributes that we harvest from our

Relationship, see page 4...

What's on your mind?

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

Commentary !?!?!?

...**Relationship**, from page 3

investment in networks of women farmers. This is where we've harvested kernels of truth, seeds of change, fruits of

played off of our Team into sustainable community work."

We are harvesting the responsibility of participation in the formulation, development, and implementation of local, national, and international agriculture/food policies. When the subsidies are withdrawn from industrial methods of food production, its actual inefficiency

renewed day born from night and in the new spring that rises from each winter. I am happy to report that there is a new generation of back-to-the-landers—creative, energetic visionaries who will help shape the New Agriculture. A return to the land means recovering something of the biorhythms of the body, the day, and the seasons from the world of clocks,

computers, and artificial lighting that have almost entirely alienated our culture from these biorhythms.

Let us carry on by building strong base communities of celebration and resistance. It is useful to start locally, where we can be concrete and where there is often some possibility of substantive change. We need to read about, and sometimes visit, groups who are organizing elsewhere on the planet and learn from what they are doing. Local face-to-face groups are the foundation from which we build organizational networks that reach out, inform and influence our nation and world.

Our revolution is not just for us, but also for the children, for the generations of living beings to come. What we can do is to plant seeds, nurture seed-bearing plants here and there, and hope for a harvest that goes beyond the limits of our powers and beyond the span of our lives. □



Pictured here are many of the participants in the Tri-State Fall Harvest Retreat for Women in Sustainable Agriculture, held Nov. 10-12 at Good Earth Village in Spring Valley, Minn.
(photo by Mary Doerr)

compassion. Spending this kind of time with one another is like cutting your own firewood—it warms you twice. First, when we take the initial time to be together, and later, when the memory of the conversation and the connection soothes our chilled spirits.

Like home-canned salsa, it keeps well and adds zest to our alone time. We are good at preserving, processing our surpluses, storing the bounty, and saving it for times of scarcity. It helps to nurture us as we become responsible agents for a just and sustainable society. Bev Struxness, a farmer and member of the Chippewa River Whole Farm Planning and Monitoring Team, says, "A real change in me is believing that agriculture can be truly sustainable and to understand the concept of sustainability. I really have

will be revealed. At the same time, we can hold up the many advantages of small farms, reclaiming traditional methods while choosing appropriate new tools.

We are learning from each other's mistakes, oversights, over-optimism, hesitations—infused with courage gleaned from the collective experience. And the gleaners, our collective heritage reminds us, are women, because for all the harvest energies expended, we dare not waste a grain. We are picking through after the harvest for the leftovers. Leftovers often taste better the second day.

After the harvest, there is, eventually, stillness. There is the tendency to burrow into the den and hibernate and brood. We will be fueled in the dark times by this energy. We are helping each other's lives to be made whole again and again, in the

Audrey Arner is a program organizer in the Land Stewardship Project's western Minnesota office. She farms near Montevideo.

Networks of women involved in sustainable agriculture are being developed in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. For more information, contact Mary Doerr, Women in Sustainable Agriculture (WISA)-Minnesota, at 507-789-6606, or dancingwinds@juno.com.



LSP



News

What research should 'U' pursue?

What research should the University of Minnesota do to benefit family farmers? What should the University's outreach and education programs be doing in relation to food and agriculture issues? Those questions were the focus of two Land Stewardship Project meetings held in rural Minnesota in December.

The meetings—one was held in southeast Minnesota near Lewiston and the other was in the western Minnesota community of Granite Falls—began with a brief history of the land grant universities, followed by a discussion of how the University's College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences could better serve family farmers and rural communities.

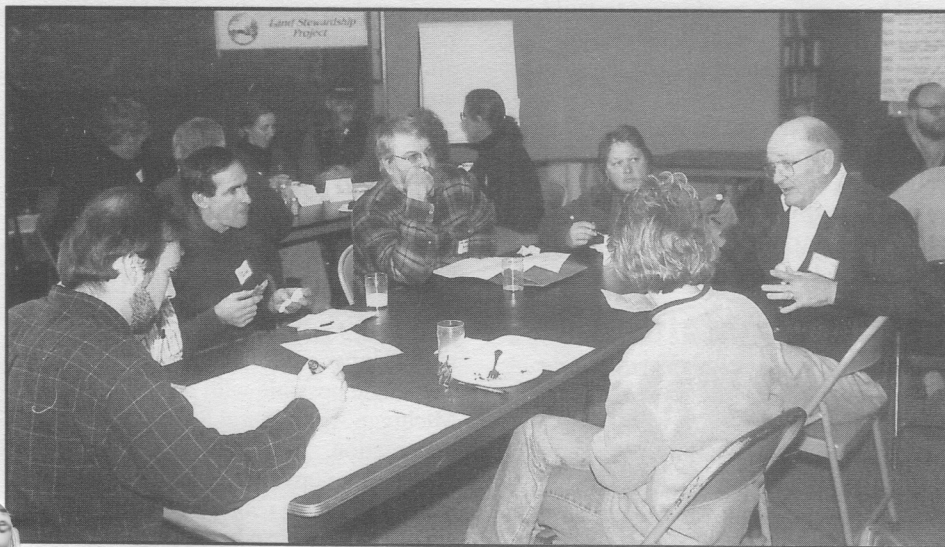
Of particular concern to many in the sustainable agriculture community is the future of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). MISA was started as a partnership at the University in 1992. The Sustainers Coalition, of which LSP is a member, started MISA as a unique experiment in creating links between a land grant university and the public. Since, then MISA has gained a national reputation for

the successful way it has networked farmers seeking alternatives and university researchers. During the past year, MISA's future has been thrown into doubt by proposed budget cuts and the sudden removal of its longtime executive director. LSP and other members of the Sustainers Coalition are in negotiations with Agriculture College Dean Charles Muscopolat over the future of MISA.

Participants in the Lewiston and Granite Falls meetings brainstormed ideas for research areas they would like to see the University pursue, and then voted on a handful of top priorities. Everything from local food systems to grazing techniques were discussed as possible research topics. Several participants pledged to take these ideas to a series of "listening sessions" being sponsored by the University later in December.

For more information, contact Mark Schultz at 612-722-6377, Bobby King at 507-523-3366, or Audrey Arner at 320-269-2105.

The University is also taking suggestions for possible research priorities through a special Web site: <http://www.coafes.umn.edu/listening>. □



Participants at the Lewiston meeting broke up into small groups and then brainstormed ideas on what agricultural and rural development research priorities they'd like to see the University of Minnesota pursue. They then voted as a group on the top nine issues. (LSP photo)

Sustainable ag & wildlife

The 62nd Annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, held in Minneapolis in early December, offered an opportunity for conservation professionals to get together and discuss the latest wildlife management issues. But this year's meeting brought in a couple of "environmental professionals" that aren't government employees or university researchers. Land Stewardship Project members Dave Serfling and Tony Thompson gave presentations during the Federal Farm Programs Symposium at the conference.

Serfling farms near the southeast Minnesota community of Preston, and is active on LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee. Thompson farms in southwest Minnesota, near the town of Windom. He has long been involved in watershed issues. During his presentation, Thompson, who farms 2,000 acres in the midst of an area key to the health of Midwestern waterfowl populations, described how farm policy and the marketplace have shaped the landscape, the ecology and the community as well as his family's place in all of this.

Serfling, whose operation is in the environmentally sensitive "karst limestone" region, described a proposal for rewarding farmers based on good stewardship, rather than commodity production. The Federal Policy Committee's members have developed a "Farm Results Index" that awards points based on how sustainable a farming operation is. Key elements of some of the Policy Committee's other proposals are in the Conservation Security Act, which was introduced into Congress in November. Serfling told the wildlife professionals that such a policy could go a long way toward producing an agriculture that protects habitat while providing a decent standard of living.

"Let's let a million farmers' creative juices run and stop punishing them for grazing or integrating complex crop rotations," Serfling said. "A little public investment up front can produce big benefits down the line."

For more information, contact LSP's Policy Program Office at 612-722-6377. □



LSP News

LSP joins in fighting Waseca mega-dairy

Over 75 local citizens have voiced strong objections to a proposal to build a 1,600 cow mega-dairy near the southern Minnesota community of Waseca, and are calling on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to do a thorough environmental review.

The project is being proposed by a group of unnamed outside investors, as well as two farmers who operate a large hog farm in the area. The citizens' objections were submitted as comments to the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), which is an exploratory examination of the project. The citizens, along with the Land Stewardship Project, have charged that the EAW lacked critical information and glossed over serious problems.

Chief among the concerns in the 100-plus pages of comments were:

- **MPCA's failure to address the impact the mega-dairy would have on nearby day-care centers.** The MPCA relied exclusively on the proposers for information about day-care centers. In the EAW, the MPCA states, "To the best of the proposers' knowledge, there are no churches, rest homes, day-care centers or other public entities within one mile of the project site or (manure) spreading sites." In fact, there are at least three day-care centers within a mile of the manure spreading sites.

In comments to the EAW, local resident Gregory Young states: "One of the spreading sites is... within one mile of our home. This is a large concern being that my wife operates a day-care center in our home...Her day-care is a very successful business for our family and the building of this dairy facility will greatly jeopardize our family's livelihood."

- **MPCA's failure to examine the likelihood of the mega-dairy to emit harmful and unlawful amounts of hydrogen sulfide.** No air emissions modeling was done to determine if the mega-dairy will exceed the state's hydrogen sulfide emission standards.

Charles Gantzer of Gantzer Environ-

mental Software and Services, Inc., performs air modeling for large feedlots and stated in his comments: "Because air quality modeling was not performed... readers of the EAW have no way of evaluating if the proposed mitigation technology is sufficient for compliance with ambient air quality standards and for limiting the number of potential odor episodes experienced by the Dairy's neighbors."

An EAW is performed to determine if a project has the potential to significantly harm the environment. If that potential exists, then the MPCA is required to perform a complete environmental review in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). LSP joined local residents in calling for an EIS.

For more information, contact Bobby King in LSP's Lewiston office at 507-523-3366. □

Policy surveys

In December, the Land Stewardship Project's Policy Program mailed surveys to all of our members. The survey seeks to get member input on what priorities LSP should work on during the 2001 session of the Minnesota Legislature. Issues possibly considered by the Legislature include the state corporate farm law, genetically modified organisms, environmental review of large feedlots, aid to family farmers to implement upgrades necessary to comply with new feedlot regulations, township zoning, neighbor notification of intent to build a large feedlot, beginning farmers, and corporate consolidation of the livestock industry.

If you haven't returned your survey, there's still time. For more information, contact the Policy Program at 3203 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55407; phone: 612-722-6377; e-mail: marks@landstewardshipproject.org. □

On-line sustainable calculator available

Do you want to "calculate" your farm's sustainability? The Land Stewardship Project's Web site (www.landstewardshipproject.org) is now host to an innovative new cyber tool for doing just that. This is an electronic version of the calculator that appears in *Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional*

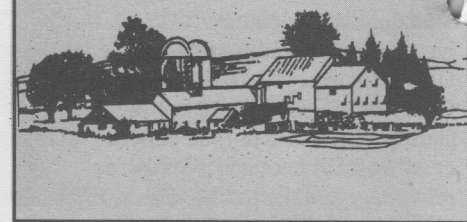
Financial Data, the popular publication written by agricultural economist Dick Levins in 1996. A pdf version of the entire publication is available on LSP's Web site.

Levins presents four financial indicators to evaluate the sustainability of farming operations: 1) reliance on government programs; 2) use of equipment, chemicals and non-renewable energy; 3) creation of jobs; and 4) balance between feed use and feed production.

The Web site calculator is designed to be used with "Financial Indicators for Sustainable Agriculture" worksheets that

Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional Financial Data

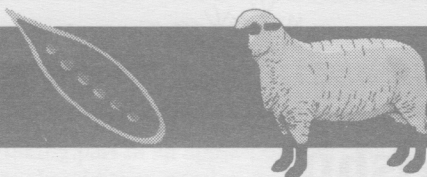
by Dick Levins



are found on pages nine and 10 of Levins' book. The calculator is easy to use, allowing users to enter concrete dollar amounts in various categories, and then crunching the numbers.

Support for putting *Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional Financial Data* and the calculator on LSP's Web site was provided by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA and the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It was made possible with a grant to the Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association.

A paper copy of *Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture with Conventional Financial Data* can be purchased by sending \$7 (\$6.40 for LSP members) to: LSP, 2200 4th Street, White Bear Lake, MN 55110. Call 651-653-0618 for more information. □



Sustainable seal of approval is looking for more farmers

By Ray Kirsch

As the snow begins to fly, the Midwest Food Alliance is wrapping up its fall promotional retail campaign. Throughout the fall, at Kowalski's Markets in the Twin Cities and at Coborn's stores in the St. Cloud area, LSP member-volunteers have demonstrated and promoted Midwest Food Alliance approved apples. For many shoppers, the ability to choose this type of food—locally grown, sustainably raised—has been a breath of fresh air.

For this, our first year, we have developed a program and standards to certify the production of apples, squash, beef and pork. We are working to provide education and marketing help for these products in both direct markets and retail markets. In addition to apples, we had hoped to promote meats and squash in our fall retail campaign. However, piecing together the infrastructure to make this happen has taken more time than we had anticipated. We anticipate promoting these foods, through our collaborating retail partners, in 2001.

As we look to the new year, we hope to expand our program considerably, including the number of participating farms, participating retailers, and products that we certify. We anticipate certifying dairy products and a wider range of vegetables (e.g. sweet corn, potatoes, cabbages, berries, etc...). We may also certify other meats, such as lamb and poultry. And in fact, the products we can certify and promote depend to a great extent on the farmers who wish to participate in the Alliance.

As farmers working their booths on Saturday mornings at the market can attest, there is an awful lot of consumer education and marketing that needs to go on. The Midwest Food Alliance can help with this effort. In doing so, we can help farmers distinguish their products, link them to their communities, and (we hope) help them expand their markets.

If you're a farmer and would like to participate in the Midwest Food Alliance program in 2001, please get in touch. We will send you an informational packet and the necessary (and brief) instructions to get started. You can also learn about our program on the LSP Web site, www.landstewardship-project.org (click on *Food & Farm Connections*). You can also get information from the Web site of The Food Alliance, our partner organization in the Pacific Northwest

(www.thefoodalliance.org). Finally, we will be at many of the local winter conferences (*see sidebar*); stop by our booth and get the low-down in person.

Our work toward a regional, sustainable food system is certainly swimming upstream. Almost all of us, when we walk into our grocery store—be it a tiny cooperative or local family chain—can expect to find foods intensively grown at a great distance. Moving to a system of locally grown, extensively grown, sustainable foods will take a collaborative, long-term effort. I ask that you join us in this effort in 2001. □

Ray Kirsch is Farm Program Coordinator for the Midwest Food Alliance and an LSP staff member. He can be reached at 651-653-0618 or rkirsch@landstewardshipproject.org.



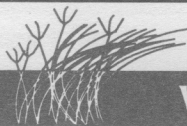
MWFA winter meeting schedule

- ✓ **Minnesota Apple Growers Association**, Jan. 10-11, La Crosse, Wis.; Contact: Ralph Yates, 507-895-4750; rpyates@means.net
- ✓ **Practical Farmers of Iowa**, Jan. 12-13, Ames, Iowa; Contact: Nan Bonfils, 515-294-8512
- ✓ **3rd Annual Value Added Conference**, Jan. 26-27, Eau Claire, Wis.; Contact: Jody Padgham, 608-262-0705
- ✓ **Minnesota Grazing Conference**, Jan. 31-Feb 1, Morton Minn.; Contact: Jan Gunnink, 507-237-5162; dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com
- ✓ **Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association**, Feb. 1-2, St. Cloud, Minn.; Contact: Marilyn Johnson, 763-434-0400
- ✓ **Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society**, Feb. 2-4, Aberdeen, S. Dak.; Contact: Tonya Haigh, 605-627-5862.
- ✓ **Minnesota Organic Conference**, Feb. 8-9, St. Cloud, Minn.; Contact: Jan Gunnink, 507-237-5162; dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com
- ✓ **Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota**, Feb. 24, St. Cloud; Contact: DeEtta Bilek, 218-445-5475, deebilek@wcta.net
- ✓ **Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference**, March 15-17, La Crosse, Wis.; Contact: Faye Jones, 715-772-3153, fjeoc@win.bright.net

Attention CSA farmers

If you are planning on operating a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm and will deliver the produce in the Twin Cities during the 2001 growing season, contact Brian DeVore at the Land Stewardship Project's Twin Cities office for information on being listed in our annual directory. DeVore can be reached at 651-653-0618, or bdevore@landstewardshipproject.org.

The 2000 directory, which listed 27 farms, was sent to consumers throughout the Twin Cities. An electronic version of the directory is placed on LSP's Web site, www.landstewardshipproject.org. □



Main street stewardship

By Patrick J. Moore

For the past 18 years, the Land Stewardship Project has focused on fostering an ethic of stewardship toward our nation's farms and the waterways that run through them. Along with many other organizations, we've been carrying the torch that Aldo Leopold lit back in the 1940s when he called for the establishment of a "new land ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac*.

As our work has evolved, we've come to realize that a viable land ethic in action requires a community-building component that extends from the fields to our cities and towns. In other words, farmers can't continue to take good care of the land without consumers who support them. And we city folk can't expect to have a system that produces wholesome food and keeps farms from falling victim to sprawl without deeply knowledgeable

stewards in our rural areas

As always at LSP, we don't simply like to talk about ethics, we try to put them into action. We attempt to "build the road by walking" as Myles Horton of the Highlander Center would say. In this tradition, we have been working over the past several years to build models for sustainable communities where healthy, prosperous, diversified farms interact with a healthy, prosperous Main Street, that in turn supports and depends on these stewardship-minded farmers.

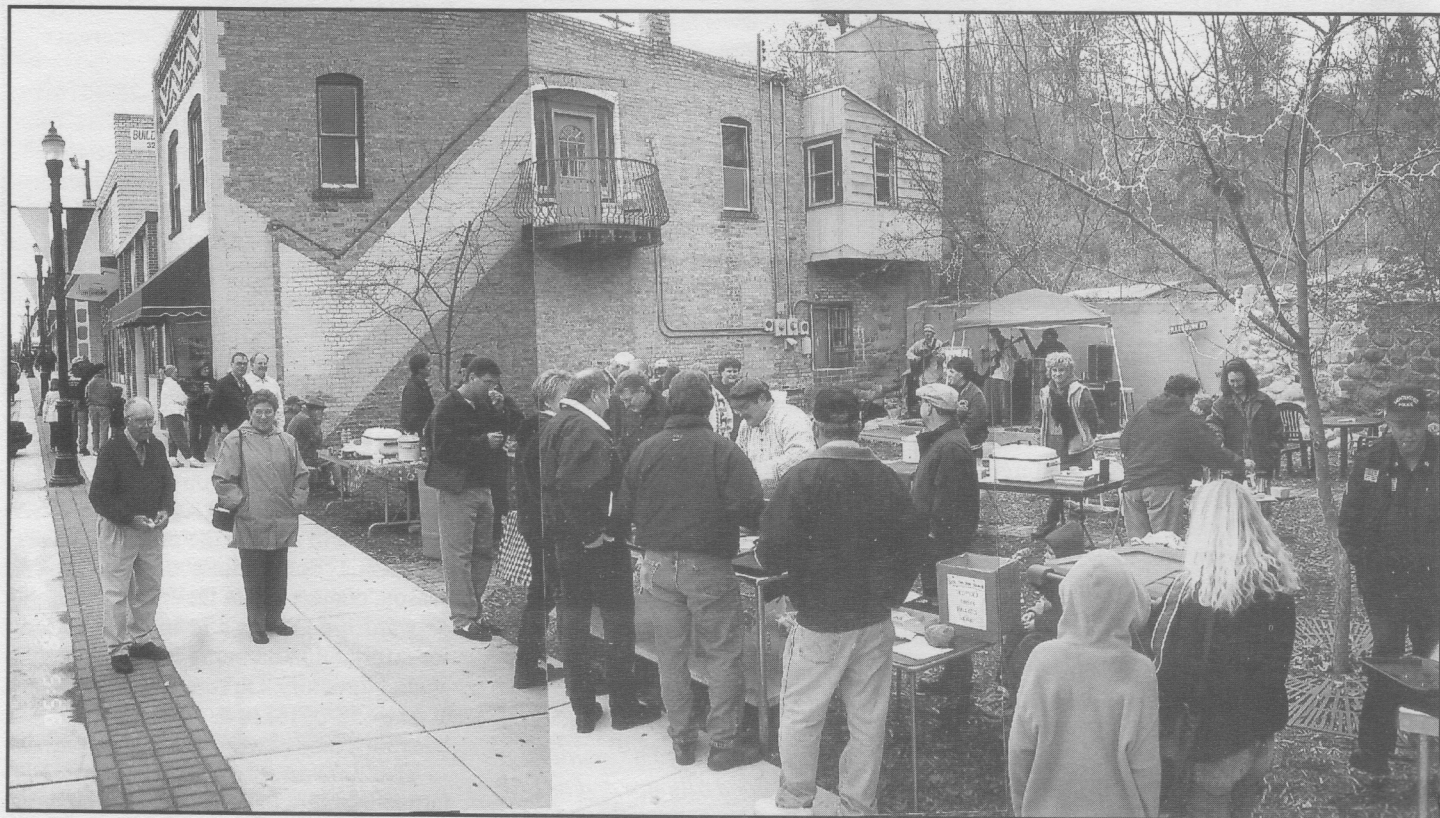
Main Street Montevideo and the Java River cafe is one such model. Our vision has been to extend Leopold's ethic for land stewardship to "building stewardship" of the run-down and abandoned storefronts that can be found in almost any small town in the Upper Midwest. The idea was "simple" enough: buy an old building for cheap, fix it up with sweat equity and private capital, 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.

That pretty much is what has been happening through Java River over the past two years. The spirit of revitalization that stems from Main Street stewardship community building has been infectious. In just the past year alone, three buildings adjacent to Java River have been fixed up and rented out. Now, in addition to a coffeehouse, the south end of Main Street has a massage therapist, a reflexologist, a letterpress print shop and an artist's studio. Plans are underway to restore the historic Hollywood movie theater and to create a main street bed and breakfast. Already 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, chickens and organic vegetables.

Add to these developments the fact that Montevideo's Main Street has recently undergone a \$3.5 million

Main Street, see page 9...



In late October, a multi-day event was held to celebrate the re-opening of Montevideo's Main Street after it had been closed for six months for renovation. Pictured is a scene from the Java River Chili Cookoff Contest, which resulted in the consumption of 99 quarts of chili. Nine different recipes were entered, and several included beef grown locally. (composite photo by Judy Morelli)

...Main Street, from page 8

renovation complete with new old-fashioned cast iron street lamps, brick accented sidewalks, benches and trees, and you have the feeling that maybe, just maybe, we can combat the trend toward strip malls and farm consolidation with community and character. In October, we put an exclamation point on this renovation by holding a multi-day celebration marking the "re-opening" of Main Street. Local food, homegrown music and the involvement of a variety of people helped make this event a great success.

What are the key ingredients to successful main street community building? First, you need a sense of fun

and adventure. For example, during our recent Main Street celebration, we were able to talk several bankers, as well as the town's mayor and city manager, into taking part in an apple-bobbing contest.

In addition, passion for quality, integrity and the honest exchange of ideas lay at the foundation of our work. On top of that we add food, lovingly produced, and conversation over and about that food. The magic comes in with openness to the unexpected and to the inclusion of anyone who happens to walk in the door. Complete strangers come together over food and drink in a setting designed with a reverence for place, history and nature. Relationships are formed, ideas are hatched and collaborations result. Stand back and watch community blossom, new

businesses form and a new people-centered economy emerge.

We are attempting to "build a new society in the shell of the old" as Peter Maurin of the *Catholic Worker* would say. The "land ethic" can spread by extending it to the stewardship of old buildings and the creation of community centers based on the wealth of that land and the people who care for it. This is our on-going goal, anyway. Please come to Montevideo and see it for yourself in action. □

Patrick J. Moore is an organizer in LSP's western Minnesota office. He and his wife Mary own and operate Java River. He can be reached at 320-269-7106 or pjmoore@landstewardshipproject.org.

Update

Southeast

LSP members take concerns to AG

By Bobby King

This fall, a group of Land Stewardship Project members and staff had a golden opportunity in terms of getting their concerns heard by someone in authority. Just a few days before Thanksgiving, they met with Mike Hatch, Minnesota's Attorney General. As the state's chief law enforcer, Hatch has the authority to wrestle with many of the issues that affect family farming and rural communities.

The story of how this meeting came about is a perfect illustration of how one issue—in this case factory farms—can open the door to discussions over a number of related topics of concern. It happened like this: During the spring and summer, LSP members from Fillmore County were in the midst of a battle to keep a 500-cow factory dairy (and its seven million gallon manure lagoon) from being railroaded through the permitting process. These citizens were able to convince Hatch to meet with them in September. The focus of that meeting was how the Reiland Dairy Environmental Assessment Worksheet was handled by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The citizens also asked Hatch to investigate inappropriate involvement in the process by local legislators.

But the broader issues facing farmers today were also brought up at that meeting. It became clear that LSP and the Attorney General had many concerns in common. Hatch suggested a second meeting in November to further discuss these broader issues.

So, in November eight LSP members and staff from southeast Minnesota, as well as other parts of the state, met with the Attorney General and key members of his staff to discuss the following issues:

• **Enforcing the Corporate Farm Law:** The Attorney General agreed with LSP that the corporate farm law should be aggressively enforced and he has committed significant resources to doing that.

• **Corporate Concentration and Antitrust:** With Smithfield attempting to buy out IBP, this issue is more important than ever. LSP staffer and hog farmer Paul Sobocinski explained to Hatch how this could be the final straw for many independent family farmers.

• **Environmental review of large feedlots:** LSP members Dave Applen, Monica Kahout and Don Maronde told the Attorney General about how the MPCA, instead of critically reviewing the environmental impacts of a feedlot proposed near them, acted as an advocate for the feedlot. We told the story of a recent environmental review of a 1,600

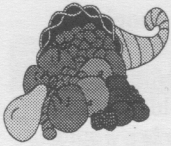
cow dairy near Waseca that, among other things, failed to consider the impact on nearby day-cares or to analyze the likelihood that the feedlot would exceed our state's hydrogen sulfide standards (see page 6). The Attorney General agreed to work with LSP to defeat any legislative attempts to weaken environmental review.

• **Powers of townships to implement planning and zoning:** Township resident and LSP member Dave Applen explained to the Attorney General why it is so important that townships retain the right to implement planning and zoning. Hatch expressed his strong support for township powers and promised to work with LSP on defeating an expected attack on township powers.

• **Genetically Modified Seed** (see page 15).

We ended the meeting with an agreement to follow up on all these issues. We know that follow-through on our part is what will produce concrete action by the Attorney General. And when it comes time for him to wrestle with some of these problem in the legal world, I know he will keep in mind the concerns that have been relayed to him personally by LSP members. □

Bobby King is an organizer in LSP's southeast Minnesota office. He can be reached at 507-523-3366 or bking@landstewardshipproject.org.



Stewardship Food Network



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

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

The listing provides contact information for the farmers so consumers can call or e-mail them personally to learn more about production methods, availability of products and prices. For a complete listing, contact our Twin Cities office at 651-653-0618; lspwbl@landstewardshipproject.org.

LSP will periodically update and make corrections to our Food Network listing. If you are an LSP member who would like to be listed, please contact us at our Twin Cities office. Here are the latest corrections/additions:

Badger Ridge Garden

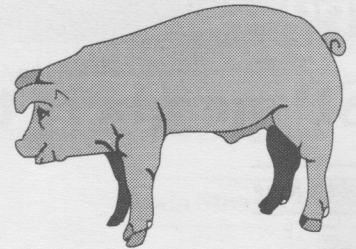
Ruth Viste
N2041 430th St.
Maiden Rock, WI
Phone: 715-594-3196
E-mail: rviste@win.bright.net
→ Products: *CSA produce operation*
✗ Also services: *Hastings, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.*

Hermanson's Harvest

Don, Rhonda, Gwen, Hannah & Andrew
RFD 2, Box 153
Nicollet, MN 56074
Phone: 507-246-5335
E-mail: drhenry@prairie.lakes.com
→ Products: *Produce & poultry*
✗ Also services: *Gaylord Farmers' Market; LeSueur Farmers' Market*

Prairie Pride Farm of MN

Roger & Dawn Hubmer
Route 4, Box 146
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone: 1-866-245-PORK (7675)
E-mail: rdhubmer@prairiepridemn.com
Web site: www.prairiepridemn.com
→ Products: *Pork & chicken*
✗ Also services: *Burnsville, Eagan, Lakeville, Mankato, St. Peter, Twin Cities*



The Stewardship Food Network can now be found at www.landstewardshipproject.org by clicking on *Food & Farm Connections*.

If you are a Land Stewardship Project member (from any state, not just Minnesota) and are direct marketing food to consumers, send us a short (a few paragraphs maximum) description of what you have available, how you raise it and ways you market it. We will include your information in periodic updates of our Stewardship Food Network. We'd also like to hear from LSP members who are retailers selling or processing food produced by other LSP members.

Name _____

Address _____

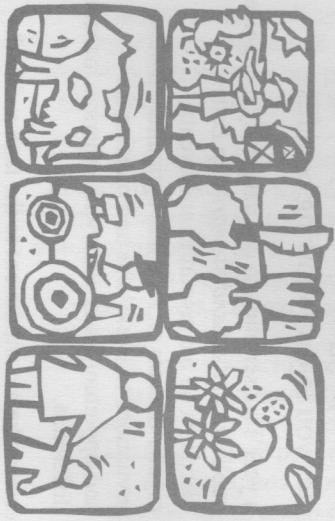
Phone number _____ E-mail _____ Web site _____

I have attached a description of what I produce and how I produce it.

If you market your products outside your immediate region via direct deliveries, farmers' markets or mail/UPS etc., please indicate which communities you serve _____

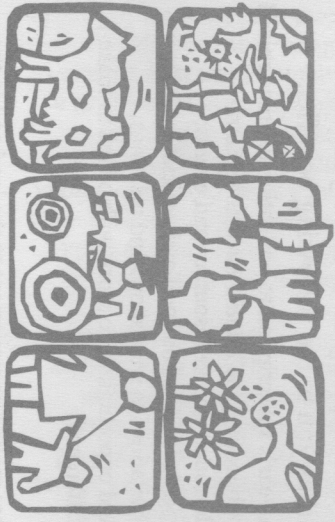
I am not an LSP member, but would like to join for \$35 and be listed in the directory.

Our Future Depends on the Choices We Make Today!



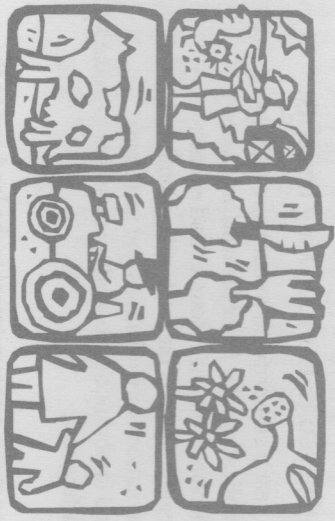
Cheap food prices and overflowing store shelves are hiding the true environmental and social costs of our food and agriculture system—rapid erosion and degradation of soil, chemical contamination of our water, loss of genetic diversity, destruction of wildlife habitat, loss of family farmers and impoverishment of rural communities.

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There is a widespread assumption that the future of agriculture lies in large, corporate farms that drain the natural and financial resources of rural communities. We know there are other choices—choices that provide decent incomes for family farmers while protecting land and water; choices that create thriving rural communities and link urban populations with sources of healthy food; choices that preserve farmland, wildlife and natural resources.

Each of us can make a difference by joining others to address these problems. **Become a member of the Land Stewardship Project (LSP)**, and together we can protect soil and wildlife, fight for fair markets, demand that farm policies support independent family farmers and clean water, and eat more healthful food.

For more information about LSP or to join on-line, visit our Web site: www.landstewardshipproject.org.

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Make a choice today to become a member of the Land Stewardship Project.

Membership begins at \$35 a year and entitles you to the following benefits:

- a year's subscription to our nationally recognized publication, the *Land Stewardship Letter*;
- discounts on our resources and events;
- regular updates on food and agriculture issues;
- invitations to workshops and meetings;
- and opportunities to work with others to make a difference.

Please make a commitment to the land and to the Land Stewardship Project. Get connected, informed, and involved. **Become a member today!**

Take a moment now to fill out the membership form below and return it with your dues. Please consider a gift of \$35, \$50, \$100 or more to help us carry out this important work.

Membership Levels

Stewardship **Supporting** **Basic**
 \$200 or more \$50 \$35 Basic
 \$ _____ \$100 \$20 Limited Income

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (_____) _____
 E-mail _____
 Return with payment to: Land Stewardship Project
 2200 Fourth Street
 White Bear Lake, MN 55110
 651-653-0618
 Referred by: _____

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 651-653-0618
 Referred by: _____

...Closed Science, from page 1

covers the results of research funded by state and federal sources, as well as Novartis. The agreement also gives the company two of the five seats on a departmental committee that determines how research money is spent.

This arrangement has been widely touted as a new high—or low, depending on how you view it—in public/private partnerships involving agribusiness firms and universities. It's served as a lightning rod in the debate over how much influence the private sector is gaining over public research institutions, and whether that influence serves the public well. In the agricultural land grant university research system, it's a concern that increases in urgency with each passing year. In 1972, private funding supported 14 percent of all land grant university agricultural research, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Current Research Information System. By 1992, that share was 19 percent. In 1998, as much as 29 percent of the research at some land grant colleges was funded by the private sector, according to various estimates.

Such trends are bound to accelerate, thanks to biotechnology. The manipulation of genes is extremely expensive—the cost of bringing a plant product to market through traditional breeding can run in the tens of thousands of dollars; the research and development price tag of a genetically modified plant is in the tens of millions of dollars. One estimate presented at a recent seed trade conference is that the expense of corn breeding research within the past five years alone has been equal to what it cost to do this kind of plant science in the several previous decades combined.

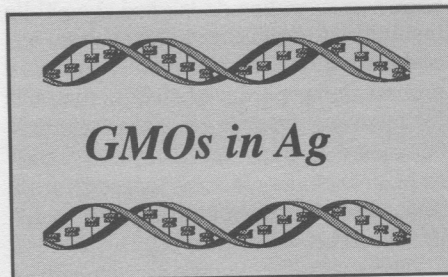
So, for any land grant university looking to excel in this hot new area of agricultural research, close ties to agribusiness companies is seen as a requirement.

"We will be a player," says Charles Muscoplat, dean of the University of Minnesota's College of Agriculture, Food and Agricultural Sciences. "There will be a Cargill Genomics building and we will have people there...and we will be a player."

Indeed, Cargill recently donated \$10 million toward the construction of a plant and microbial genomics center at the university. Last spring the Minnesota Legislature responded to the generosity of

this hometown agribusiness giant by forking over \$10 million in matching tax money to the center. A spin-off of the new "Center for Microbial and Plant Genomics" will be a biotechnology business incubator where university and industry researchers can work together. This fall the university announced plans to turn an experiment station south of the Twin Cities into a world class biotechnology "institute."

Such big plans garner a lot of public attention and generate heated debate on both sides of the issue. But there's a less noticeable trend taking place in agricultural biotechnology research: quietly, steadily, the nation's entire public plant research system is going private. It's not being done through headline-grabbing raids of entire departments or the construction of privately funded "institutes" on university property. Rather, companies



are using patents, exclusive research contracts and other legal arrangements to tie up the very essence of this science. Universities, for their part, are responding with their own information lock-downs as they scramble to "protect" their research from being used freely by private companies, and, in many cases, other public institutions.

To the general public, biotechnology's dangers are often discussed in terms of potential impacts on environmental or human health. But if genetic manipulation does indeed bring about the complete demise of public plant breeding, the harm done to society could rival any number of headline-grabbing eco-scares. Losing the Monarch butterfly to GMO-tainted pollen is one thing; losing this country's public plant science system is quite another: plants are at the basis of all aspects of our food and fiber system, from bread to bovines. Perhaps the most significant thing about this issue is that concerns are being voiced by people who are not necessarily opposed to genetic engineering.

"I've actually been accused by colleagues here of being against biotechnology and transgenics," says Bill Tracy, a sweet corn breeder at the University of Wisconsin. He recently helped create a group consisting of plant breeders who are concerned about the threat public-private partnerships pose to their profession. "But I'm just against what it's done to the seed business. It will eventually lead to the end of public sector plant breeding, which you could say is an end to innovation as well."

A private gene war

Plant breeding on behalf of the public takes place at land grant colleges, experiment stations and USDA research facilities. It is the system that does the painstaking, long-term basic research on everything from disease tolerant wheat to palatable pasture grasses. Once research breakthroughs are made, they are released to the public, allowing private firms to pick up the innovations if they like and develop them into profitable products. Public plant breeding's contribution to agriculture is significant. During the 20th Century, this research was responsible for the development of all domesticated crops—mostly from weedy wild relatives we would barely recognize.

But these days, public plant breeding is withering on the vine. Private industry now sinks a bit more money into agricultural research than the public sector does; it's been that way since the early 1980s.

A recent national study done by Iowa State University showed that plant breeding research and development in the public sector has decreased 2.5 scientist-years annually between 1990 and 1994. During the same period, private industry had an annual net growth of 32 scientist years.

One of the major reasons for this decline is the role patenting and exclusive research agreements have come to play in agricultural science in recent years. The expense of biotechnology provides corporations with a great incentive to protect their "intellectual property" with legal paperwork. The government authorized the issuing of utility patents for plants in 1985. In 1970, the Plant Variety Protection Act made it possible for plant breeders to protect their developments using legal restrictions that were not as involved, or expensive, as patents.

Closed Science, see page 14...

...Closed Science, from page 13

Farmers see the results of intellectual property protection every time they pay a "technology fee" to plant Roundup Ready soybeans, the pioneering genetically modified plant product.

"You are no longer buying the seed, you are buying the right to use the genetic material in that seed," says rural sociologist Cornelia Flora.

But don't get the idea that biotechnology companies don't need the land grant universities to attain their goals. Despite its reputation for being a precise science, genetic engineering still requires access to a lot of germ plasm—the stuff of which plant heredity is made. Most of that germ plasm is in public institutions like land grant universities. Over several decades these schools have developed lines of, say, corn or wheat, that do well in their particular area for their particular farmers. Even the biggest biotechnology company couldn't replicate and maintain these massive collections of germ plasm. That's why these companies are so eager to approach land grant plant breeding departments about doing some scientific sharing. And these biotech companies bring with them the trappings of intellectual property protection.

When a company approaches a land grant plant program about a research partnership, there are great incentives for that institution to bite. For one thing, it brings in money, an item increasingly in short supply around public universities. But it also gives university scientists access to cutting-edge technologies like herbicide-resistant soybeans or insect-killing corn.

Under such an agreement, a school may send seed down to Monsanto's research facilities in St. Louis. There, company researchers insert, say, the gene that makes a plant resistant to Roundup herbicide. Then the modified seed is sent back to the university, where plant breeders do further work to propagate and develop it. However, things have changed since that seed passed through a corporate laboratory. Since a patented gene has been added, that seed is burdened with the expense of developing that modification. Thus, such an "improved" seed becomes subject to license fees and contracts. That means parts of a university's germ plasm—which was developed with public funding—can suddenly take on the air of privatization.

Access is limited to those who are willing to pay high license fees and agree to sometimes overwhelming legal entanglements—whether it's a seed company, a farmer, or another land grant institution conducting research.

And land grants are playing this protectionist game as well. In 1980, the Bayh-Dole Act made it legal for universities to patent inventions that resulted from federally funded research. Universities responded almost immediately, developing "technology transfer" offices that could make sure no inventions passed off campus without patent protection of some sort. Membership in the Association of University Technology Managers increased from 113 in 1979 to 2,178 in 1999, according to the Council on Governmental Relations. Before the law was passed, universities produced roughly 250 patents a year. In 1998, universities produced more than 4,800 patent applications. The Act in essence allows an invention developed at a public institution to be licensed to a private corporation, producing royalties in the process. It has produced plenty of income for these schools, but has also made ties between the private sector and university researchers even closer as these scientists seek research innovations that will "sell" in the marketplace.

This scientific clamp-down on both sides of the public-private divide has resulted in a significant reduction in the trading of germ plasm among scientists. For researchers who are doing "basic science"—science that advances knowledge but doesn't produce an economically valuable product right away—this can be death to their work.

In a recent survey that represented 25 U.S. universities and 41 different crops, Iowa State researcher Steven Price found 48 percent of respondents had experienced difficulty in obtaining genetic stocks from private companies, and 45 percent said that this had interfered with their research. But even more alarming is that public-private partnerships are making it difficult to obtain germ plasm from other universities.

"In 10 to 15 years, it may be almost impossible to get access to some of this stuff," says North Dakota's Schneider. "It's unfortunate."

Unfortunate, but inevitable, say people like Minnesota's Muscopolat.

"Some of the impact of this new technology for the ag industry will mean a major shift in the landscape of technol-

ogy access," he says. "Patenting protection will be absolutely essential. ...There will not be free access to genes."

Such talk frightens people like Tracy, who relies on trading of public germ plasm to do his research. He's already run into problems with getting seed from other land grants, and has resisted attempts on the part of his own university to tie up his germ plasm with contracts and restrictions. The way he sees it, live by closed science, die by closed science.

Tracy says he's not against certain legal protections that produce royalty fees for their producers. But he thinks such restrictions go too far when they stymie the free exchange of ideas needed to do basic research.

And "inventing" a new product by inserting genes into plant varieties that were developed with the help of nature—and public resources—is an example of the technological tail wagging the dog. There are roughly 60,000 different genes in a kernel of corn, for example; and that one modified gene can suddenly change it in a way that no amount of cross-breeding or natural revolution ever would.

"Once their genes get in there, [the biotech companies] call all the shots, even though there was thousands of years of development before the insertion," says Tracy. "There's no question it's the most expensive gene, but that's not saying that's the best gene."

That brings up the key point of contention here: the concern that innovation itself is being threatened by these agreements. Members of the biotechnology community—both public and private—say this kind of protection is a necessity if science is to advance. But, ironically, it could bring about just the opposite circumstance.

Observers of trends in agricultural research say that a closed system is much more likely to produce only innovations that benefit the private sector. The share of private sector research devoted to basic research is 16 percent, as compared to 47 percent for public sector research, according to the USDA. Seed companies are in business to sell seeds, and are not likely to support research that produces, for example, a perennial grain plant variety that thrives on its own year after year. Land grant universities, on the other hand, are directed by their mission statements to conduct research that serves the public good.

Closed Science, see page 15...

...Closed Science, from page 14

It's not just land grant research that plays a role in keeping agricultural science working for the public good. A recent survey of public and private plant breeding research showed that the USDA's Agricultural Research Service concentrated more on long-term breeding, while corporate laboratories focused on short-term production of new varieties. However, there are signs that private partnerships within the USDA are producing science that is of questionable value to society. For example, in 1998 Delta and Pine Land Company (now owned by Monsanto), and the Agricultural Research Service were given a patent for the controversial "terminator" gene. This gene makes a plant sterile, ending the traditional farmer practice of saving back seed each year for future plantings. Such a technology is great for a seed company that wants to force farmers to come back each year to purchase inputs. However, it's not so good for farmers who are trying to cut costs.

A Canadian economics study found that when brewing companies increased their financial support of public barley research, greater weight was given to improving malting quality rather than increasing yields. Higher yielding varieties would have been more beneficial to livestock producers, according to the study. The study's authors concluded that while both the public and private sectors gain from the joint research effort, "the social cost of private assistance was high."

Conclusions like this raise alarm bells in the sustainable agriculture community, where farmers and others are battling constantly to get their local land grants to conduct research pertinent to them. A USDA task force found that out of thousands of ag research projects reviewed between 1993 and 1996, less than 5 percent of the research could be defined as related to sustainable agriculture systems.

Rather than looking at ways to increase corn yields, why not research how to replace corn-fed livestock diets with grass? In an increasingly privatized, closed system, the answer is simple: because a better grazing system isn't as patentable and marketable as a high tech corn plant.

Tracy's group, "The Caucus on the

Future of Public Plant Breeding" as it's temporarily being called, represents land grant universities from seven states—Midwestern as well as on the East and West coast. The goal of the group is to raise awareness of the importance of keeping the public germ plasm open. To do that will require increased public funding of agricultural research, a tough feat at a time when both state and federal research dollars are becoming scarcer in the land grant system.

The scientist realizes he and other public plant breeders need to "justify the support" of the public by showing how their research contributes to the societal good. For example, Tracy has developed a type of sweet corn that is more tender, has a longer shelf-life and can be canned using less salt and sugar. Those are improvements, but the private sector wasn't very interested in funding such research. The canning industry controlled the market and saw no reason to innovate. So Tracy used public money to research the corn. Once it proved itself in the researcher's test plots, the food industry did pick up the variety. Tracy's innovation now makes up about one-third of Wisconsin's sweet corn crop, and is a popular export item. In the end, Tracy says, this research has helped the economy of the state as a whole, as well as those involved in the sweet corn business, including farmers. It's also been a positive development for health-conscious consumers. The university gets no direct cash reward for it, but that's OK, as long as public funding keeps coming in from the other end. But it isn't, and that's the problem.

Universities and public officials who control the destiny of these institutions may also need to show the public that they believe public land grant research is a valuable asset to the community. Remember that \$10 million Cargill have to the University of Minnesota? Cornelia Flora, the rural sociologist, says critics of the deal may be flinging their barbs at the wrong target.

"Cargill isn't wrong for offering it. The legislature is wrong for accepting it. It's buying too much influence with too little." □

The next issue of the Land Stewardship Letter will tell the story of a land grant university plant breeding department that is fighting to keep its germ plasm public.

Holding GMO companies accountable

Farmer-members of the Land Stewardship Project met with Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch in late November to explain their concerns over genetically modified organisms (see page 9). Chief among LSP's concerns are making sure the manufacturers of products containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are held liable for contamination of non-GMO crops.

"The companies that produce and sell GMO seeds created the problem and should be held liable," says Winona, Minn., farmer Jim Riddle. "They create a product they know will trespass onto the fields of farmers who don't want it and then try to walk away from responsibility when there's a problem. After all, they're the ones profiting from this mess."

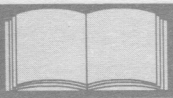
LSP commended Attorney General Hatch on the strong action he has taken to protect farmers who planted StarLink corn, and encouraged him to take further action to protect farmers who find themselves in the midst of an agricultural system contaminated by GMOs. Hatch agreed that more needs to be done to protect farmers.

"I'm very concerned about how these GMO seeds are being marketed, the contracts farmers planting them are signing and who should be liable for the loss GMO contamination causes," says Hatch, "We want to see that Minnesota farmers are protected and that liability is placed where it belongs."

LSP met with Attorney General Hatch as part of the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering. This is a collaborative effort among family farm organizations in eight states to promote the farmer perspective on genetic engineering. Besides Minnesota, farmers from South Dakota, Montana, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Vermont are participating in the campaign. Family farm groups in each of these states are calling on their respective attorneys general to fill a policy vacuum caused by national inaction on the GMO issue.

For more information on the Farmer-to-Farmer Campaign, contact Bobby King in LSP's Lewiston office by calling 507-523-3366, or e-mailing bking@landstewardshipproject.org.

Reviews



Ripples from the Zambezi Passion, Entrepreneurship, and the Rebirth of Local Economies

By Ernesto Sirolli

1998

176 pages

\$14.95

New Society Publishers

P.O. Box 189, Gabriola Island,

B.C. Canada, V0R 1X0

www.newsociety.com

Reviewed by Peter Donovan

Many people wish to strengthen their local economies, reduce dependence on multinational corporations, build community by doing things, or achieve self-fulfillment through meaningful work. Yet these results are not coming easily or economically from the top-down, programmatic, and strategic approaches typically used by governments, economic development districts, and even by community groups, nonprofits, and advocacy organizations.

As E. F. Schumacher observed in *Good Work*, we cannot expect to raise the wind that will push us to a better world. What we can do is hoist a sail to catch the wind when it does come. *Ripples from the Zambezi* tells the gripping story of how Ernesto Sirolli learned to catch the wind of passionate, skillful, creative, intelligent, and self-motivated entrepreneurs—the acknowledged powerhouse of the economy as well as of social change.

Sirolli's experiences as a volunteer for the Italian government in Africa during the 1970s convinced him that "development" schemes were anything but. After absorbing Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* and the person-centered psychology of Carl Rogers, Sirolli put his radical, anti-dogmatic ideas to the test in rural Western Australia. Instead of trying to motivate people, he made himself available as coach and advocate for anyone who was serious about starting or expanding a business enterprise.

By treating economic development as

a by-product of personal growth and self-actualization, Sirolli was able to make a quantum leap in the effectiveness of business coaching, as well as create local miracles of economic development. He has devoted himself since to teaching committed civic leaders how to do what he has done.

"In every community, no matter how small, remote, or depressed, there is somebody who is scribbling figures on a kitchen table," writes Sirolli. "If we can be available, for free and in confidence, to help that person go from the dream to establish an enterprise that can sustain that person and his or her family, we can begin to change the economic fortunes of the entire community."

The strategy that Sirolli teaches to communities involves a committed local volunteer board, which hires an "Enterprise Facilitator," who is then trained by Sirolli. The facilitator does not initiate projects or promote "good ideas." He or she responds to the interests and passions of self-motivated people. Because no one has equal passion for production, marketing, and financial management—all of which are necessary for business success—and because people only do well what they care about doing, the secret of success and survival for a business of any size is to find people who love to do what you hate. "The death of the entrepreneur is solitude," writes the author. The facilitator and the board, with networking, help people form teams to advance their idea.

This is a strategy that is always followed in large business, but remains unusual in small business, where most people are still advised to write business plans single-handedly. And farmers, whose inclinations and personalities do not lend themselves to marketing are told that they must learn marketing skills to get off the commodity roller coaster.

Sirolli's ideas are not just good. They are inspiring, inflammatory, they resonate—and they

are based on 15 colorful years of failing and succeeding at hoisting the sail in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S.

His underlying philosophy has to do with empowerment rather than control. "A shift from strategic to responsive development can only occur," Sirolli writes, "if we are capable of believing that people are intrinsically good and that the diversity, variety, and apparent randomness of their passions is like the chaotic yet ecologically sound life manifestations in an old-growth forest."

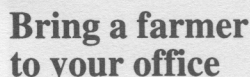
The message is that bottom-up, person-centered, responsive economic development works—and if well understood and led at the community level, it works better than anything else. When a community can help motivated people succeed, the motivation spreads. "The future of every community," Sirolli writes, "lies in capturing the energy, imagination, intelligence, and passion of its people." □

Peter Donovan (pdonovan@orednet.org) is editor and publisher of *Patterns of Choice*: a journal of people, land, and money, a quarterly that reports on what people are learning from conscious attempts at managing wholes rather than parts in agriculture, forestry, and community development (www.orednet.org/~pdonovan). He has helped initiate a Sirolli-trained Enterprise Facilitation project in his own rural county of 7,200 people in northeast Oregon.




"Milan Skyline" by Patrick J. Moore





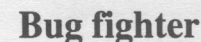
Would you be interested in a presentation given by a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmer? The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Health is developing educational units for worksite health coordinators, and a CSA farmer presentation is included in one of the programs. CSA operations offer consumers an opportunity to buy a "share" in a farm. In return the shareholder receives a weekly delivery of fresh, chemical-free produce during the growing season.

For more information on having a CSA farmer speak at your worksite, call Brian Erickson at 651-296-4939. □



Minnesota farmers are eligible for cost-share moneys to help them with the expense of organic inspection and certification. This cost-share program is the first of its kind in the country.

Applicants must provide proof of certification and proof of payment, and they must fill out the Organic Cost Share Application form. This form can be obtained on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture web site: www.mda.state.mn.us. Farmers can also get the form by contacting: Prescott Bergh, MDA Organic Program Director, 90 West Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107; phone: 651-215-0367; e-mail: prescott.bergh@state.mn.us. □



Naturalize your Farming System: A Whole-Farm approach to Managing Pests is a 20-page bulletin that defines ecologically based systems, outlines pest management principles and suggests how to apply those principles to the farm.

Free copies are available by calling the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program at 402-472-7081, or e-mailing ncrsare@unl.edu. You can also download the bulletin from www.sare.org/farmpest/index.htm. □



Upper Midwest Organic Livestock Producers' Directory is a 76-page guide intended for farmers in Iowa, Minnesota,

North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. It contains contact information for animal health consultants, veterinarians, buyers, distributors, internet resources, meat processing facilities, organizations, certification agencies, health products, annual events and producer cooperatives.

For a copy, send \$5 (that includes shipping and handling) to: Cooperative Development Services, 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 401, Madison, WI 53703; phone: 608-258-4396. Make checks payable to Cooperative Development Services. □



The "Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits" project works with small-scale, fresh market vegetable growers to research, develop and share tools and techniques which increase work efficiency and reduce the risk of back injury, repetitive motion strain, etc. The project has developed a series of "Work

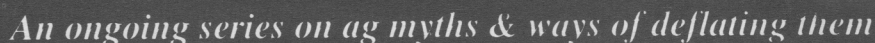
Efficiency Tip Sheets" for growers. Two recent titles are *A Rolling Dibble Marker for Easy Transplant Spacing* and *A Specialized Harvest Cart for Greens*.

For free copies of these tips sheets, call 608-265-9451. They are also available on the Web: <http://bse.wisc.edu/hfhp/>. □



If you are looking for an internship or apprenticeship opportunity on a sustainable farm, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas has just the resource for you. *Sustainable Farming Internships and Apprenticeships* is a listing of farms from throughout the country that provide opportunities for getting your hands dirty. Just about any type of farming operation you can think of is represented here. Each listing contains information on what type of work will be involved, housing opportunities, pay scale, etc.

For a free copy, contact: ATTRA, P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702; phone: 1-800-346-9140. The listing can also be found on the Web: http://www.attra.org/attra-rl/intern_ne.html. □

→**Myth:** Genetically modified corn and soybean products are an agronomic and economic success for farmers.

→**Fact:** Analyses of Roundup Ready soybeans (they resist being killed by the herbicide Roundup) and Bt corn (it kills the European corn borer pest) indicate yield problems and user fees threaten to make these products a bust, as far as farmers are concerned.

An analysis of more than 8,200 university-based soybean varietal trials in 1998 found that Roundup Ready soybeans averaged about 3.1 bushels per acre less than all conventional varieties. The study, which was done by Charles Benbrook for "Ag Bio Tech Info Net," also found that in some areas of the Midwest the best conventional variety sold by seed companies produced yields that were on average 10 percent or more higher than comparable Roundup Ready varieties sold by the same seed companies. A Nebraska study came up with similar conclusions in that state.

Combine this yield drag with extra "technology fees" farmers must pay to plant genetically engineered seed, and these products don't pencil out so good, concludes Benbrook.

"The RR soybean yield drag and technology fee impose a sizable indirect tax on the income of soybean producers, ranging from a few percent where RR varieties work best to over 12 percent of gross income per acre," he wrote.

And technology fees can make Bt corn an economic loser for farmers as well, according to a Purdue University study. That analysis found that farmers pay from \$6 to as high as \$12 extra for Bt seed. Based on historical data tracking when European Corn Borers become a major economically significant pest in Indiana farm country, the Purdue researchers concluded that the value of Bt seed is between \$4.50 to \$5 greater. In other words, that's how much more a farmer could justify paying for the seed.

Benbrook's study can be found at <http://www.biotech-info.net/herbicide-tolerance.html>. The Purdue University study can be found at <http://persephone.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/ID/ID-219/ID-219.html>.

Membership Update

Recruit members—win prizes

By Cathy Eberhart

I hope all of you have begun thinking about the people you could ask to join the Land Stewardship Project, in the process helping us reach the goal of recruiting 850 new members before June 30, 2001. The more of us who join together to work on these issues, the bigger difference we can make on the land, in the marketplace and in the democratic process.

Because we believe our members are so important, we want to reward you for your efforts in introducing others to LSP. We have gathered some fantastic prizes for those who recruit the greatest number of new members:

- Recruit at least one new member before June 30, 2001 and we will list your name in the July/August 2001 *Land Stewardship Letter*.
- Recruit at least two new members and choose either an LSP T-shirt or hat.

The prizes

If you are among the five who recruit the greatest number of members before June 30, 2001, you will have an opportunity to choose from the following fantastic prizes:

- \$50 gift certificate for food items from the Whole Farm Coop, a group of 35 Minnesota sustainable farmers that deliver to the Twin Cities, St. Cloud, Alexandria, Brainerd, Cambridge, and Wadena.

- The five people who recruit the most new members will get to choose from the fine prizes listed below.

Turn to page 11 for a set of recruitment flyers you can cut out and share with your friends. Call us at 651-653-0618 if you need additional flyers to give away. You can also go to www.landstewardshipproject.org to print out a form. New members can join with a credit card over the phone or on-line on LSP's Web site. They can also mail their membership dues to any of the LSP offices. In all cases, to make sure you receive credit toward the prizes, make sure your name is mentioned or included with the membership.

For more information, contact me at our Twin Cities office. □

Cathy Eberhart is LSP's Membership Coordinator. She can be reached at 651-653-0618 or cathye@landstewardshipproject.org.

- Guided canoe tour on the Chippewa River near Montevideo in Western Minnesota.
- A night's stay at Moonstone Bed and Bagel Farmstay near Montevideo.
- \$25 gift certificate at Java River coffee and sandwich shop in downtown Montevideo.
- \$20 gift certificate for Winona Food Coop in Winona, Minn.
- \$20 gift certificate for Blue Heron Coffee House in Winona.
- One weeknight's stay at the Dancing Winds Farm Bed and Breakfast near Kenyon.

Workplace giving

The Land Stewardship Project is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund (www.mnenvirofund.org). You can support LSP in your workplace by giving through the Fund. If your employer does not provide this opportunity, ask the person in charge of workplace giving in your office to include it. For more information, contact Katie at LSP's Twin Cities office, 651-653-0618; kpersion@landstewardshipproject.org.



takes advantage of consumer preference for locally produced ag products.

There were a record 620 growers and marketers who purchased the \$5.00 license to use the logo in the year 2000, and the MDA would like to see that number grow further.

For an additional \$30, licensed producers who sell direct to consumers can be included in both a glovebox-sized annual print publication and on a user-friendly list of the same farms on the MDA Web site at www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown. The *Minnesota Grown Fresh Produce and More Directory* is a free consumer directory, listing apple orchards, berry patches, farmers' markets, roadside stands, Christmas tree farms, and other locations selling their products direct from the farm.

The deadline for directory applications is Feb. 3. To request an application for the license and/or directory, growers may call and leave their name and mailing address on the Minnesota Grown Answerline at 651-297-8695 or 800-657-3838. □



Opportunities

Resources

“Minnesota Grown” promotional program

Minnesota Grown is a trademarked logo and labeling statement the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)

offers to farmers, processors and others for use on advertising, packaging and other promotional materials. The logo

A salute to our volunteers

Land Stewardship Project members work in many ways to make our shared mission of land stewardship a reality. One important way that members help is through volunteering their time in LSP's four offices. Volunteers help with database entry, preparing mailings, making phone calls, sitting on committees, writing book reviews, hosting meetings, traveling to our state or national capital to testify on important issues, and many other important tasks. We want to say a special **THANK YOU** to the following people who have helped during 2000! If we've missed anyone in this listing, please accept our apologies beforehand.

- Ranjan Ahuja
- Jitla Meyerhoff-Arner
- Dave Applen
- Nancy Aspelund
- Paul Aukes
- Becky Ault
- Dwight Ault
- Jim Bakken
- Ashley Benson
- Ralph Bertram
- Dena Boldenow
- Tamie Bremseth
- Roger Brandl
- Mike Briggs
- Ernie Broekemeier
- Jessica Brown
- Michele Burlew
- Steve Braatz
- Alan Byker
- Jim Fassett-Carman
- Jack Christiansen
- Jan Christensen
- Judy Christans
- Dan Chouinard
- Jen Clough
- John Conzemius
- Karen Crago
- Rich Dauer
- Pat Deninger
- Anthony Derner
- Steve Dingels
- Keith Dolven
- Shannon Dolven
- Melissa Driscoll
- Elizabeth Dyck
- Arlis Ellinghuysen
- Herb Fellows
- Jane Fellows
- Carmen Fernholz
- Chuck Fernholz
- Marlo Flo

- Dan French
- Greg Gabriel
- Diane Green
- Larry Green
- Allen Gregg
- Dale Hennen
- Tim Henning
- Jim Joens
- Brad Johnson
- Dennis Johnson
- Nolan Jungclaus
- Susan Jungclaus
- Richard Handeen
- Alice Hanson
- Matt Heinsch
- Ardis Helland
- Beth Henderson



- Chris Henderson
- Paul Homme
- Julie Jansen
- Monica Kahout
- Kari Kleven
- Jeff Klinge
- James A. Knight
- Greg Koether
- Celia Kohrman
- Kayla Johnson
- Jean Larson
- Jay Lyons
- Suzanne Lyons
- Don Maronde
- Mildred Martin
- Tom Mattox
- Linda Maus
- Eunice McCleod
- Jane McKeown
- Tom McMillin
- Eli Meyer
- Anna Moore
- Mary Moore
- Judy Mork
- Dick Moudry
- Merry Nelson
- Jacob Niemond
- Tom Nienaber
- Linda Noble

- Mike Noble
- Betty Noordmans
- Dale Noordmans
- Dean Nordaune
- Jeri Nordaune
- Kylene Olson
- Tia Olson
- Liz Oxenreider
- Claude Patzner
- Marlin Petzel
- Sever Peterson
- Mike Phillips
- Keith Poier
- Vicki Poier
- Dorothy Pollema
- Mark Rekow
- Jim Riddle
- Brian Romsdahl
- Evelyn Ross
- Jerry Ross
- Leo Rowekamp
- Mary Rowekamp
- Emily Saeger
- Charlie Schmidt
- Ron Seitz
- Dave Serfling
- Patricia Shifferd
- Joan Skalbeck
- Rodney Skalbeck
- Beth Slocum
- Rich Smith
- Candy Sobocinski
- Dan Specht
- Ralph Stadick
- Isis Stark
- Kathleen Storms
- Bev Struxness
- Donald Struxness
- Ralph Suprenant
- Avis Swenson
- Annette Thompson
- Mary Thompson
- Ruby Thompsen
- Ambrose Throener
- Dennis Timmerman
- Jim Van Der Pol
- LeeAnn Van Der Pol
- Leander Wagner
- Don Wheeler
- Duane Wheeler
- Phil Winger
- Roger Wisniewski
- Charles Wood
- Grahm Wood
- Gretchen Wood
- Ken Wood
- Diane Kirchmann Wood
- Wynne Wright

• If you are interested in volunteering, contact the office nearest you and we'll be happy to put you to work. □

STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

→ **JAN. 24-26** — LSP's George Boody will discuss the **Multiple Benefits of Agriculture Project at the Sharing Responsibility for Promoting Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Development conference**, Lisbon, Portugal

→ **JAN. 30** — LSP's Dana Jackson will speak at the annual meeting of the **Agricultural Ecosystems Research Group**, Madison, Wis.

→ **JAN. 31-FEB.1** — **Minnesota Grazing Conference**, Morton; Contact: Jan Gunnink, 507-237-5162; dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com

→ **FEB. 1** — **Governing GMOs: Developing Policy in the Face of Scientific & Public Debate**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Contact: 888-671-6214; www.conferences.umn.edu/mn/policy/

→ **FEB. 1-3** — **Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show**, St. Cloud, Minn.; Contact: 763-434-0400

→ **FEB. 2** — **Application Deadline for grant proposals to the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program (north central region)**; Contact: 402-472-7081; www.sare.org/ncrsare

→ **FEB. 2-4** — **Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society's Winter Conference**, Aberdeen, S. Dak.; Contact: 701-883-4304; www.npsas.org

→ **FEB. 3** — **CURE 9th Annual Meeting**, Appleton, Minn.; Contact: 320-269-2984; cure@info-link.net

→ **FEB. 8-9** — **Minnesota Organic Conference**, St. Cloud; Contact:

Jan Gunnink, 507-237-5162; dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com

→ **FEB. 9-10** — **10th Annual Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Ag Farming for the Future Conference**, featuring **Jim Hightower & Winona LaDuke**, State College, Penn.; Contact: 814-349-9856; www.pasafarming.org

→ **FEB. 10** — **League of Women Voters Farm Forum 2001: Farm, Food & Community**, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn; Contact: Deanna Lederer, 320-253-5704

→ **FEB. 14-16** — **Advanced Organic Vegetable Production Workshop**, Jefferson City, Mo.; Contact: Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, 262-642-3303; gkahovic@mfaai.org

→ **FEB. 17** — LSP's Dana Jackson will be a keynote speaker at the **Vermont meeting of the Natural Organic Farming Association**, Randolph, Vt.

→ **Preserving Farm Diversity to Secure Our Future**, Columbia, Mo.; Contact: 417-345-4157; www.agebb.missouri.edu/sustain

→ **FEB. 18-20** — **Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Conference**, Oconomowoc, Wis.; Contact: 262-335-4480

→ **FEB. 23** — **The Practice of Restoring Native Ecosystems**, Bunker Hills Regional Park, Andover, Minn.; Contact: 888-448-7337; www.arborday.org/rneseminar

→ **FEB. 24** — **Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's 10th Annual Meeting**; St. John's University, St. Cloud, Minn.; Contact: 218-445-5475; deebilek@wcta.net

→ **MARCH** — **Annual Meeting of LSP members in southeast Minnesota (details**

to be announced); Contact: 507-523-3366

→ **MARCH 3** — **Keep the Tractors Running—Energy Efficiency & Alternatives (central Minnesota location to be announced)**; Contact: 320-594-2456

→ **MARCH 16-17** — **Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference**, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; Contact: 715-772-6819; www.mosesorganic.org

→ **Cooperation & Linking Offer Unbeatable Transactions (CLOUT) conference**, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa; **Contact: Successful Farming** magazine, 515-284-2852; looker@mdp.com

→ **MARCH 17** — **Midwest Pastured Poultry Workshop**, featuring **Joel Salatin**, Herscher, Ill.; Contact: 815-937-3233 or 815-426-2154

→ **MARCH 21-23** — **North Central Region Small Farm Conference**, University of Illinois-Springfield; Contact: Debi Kelly, 573-882-1905; www.aces.uiuc.edu/~asap/smallfarm

→ **MARCH 30** — **Deadline for SARE program grant applications for the North Central Region**, Contact: 402-472-7081; www.sare.org/ncrsare

→ **MAY 11-13** — **Biointensive Mini-Farming/Gardening Workshop**, Madison, Wis.; Contact: 608-238-7966

→ **MAY 19-20** — **CURE 9th Annual Spring Observation Trip**, 6 western Minnesota prairie rivers; Contact: 320-269-2984; cure@info-link.net

Event information

Check the *News Department* at www.landstewardshipproject.org for the latest on upcoming LSP events.

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White Bear Lake, MN 55110



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