

Traditional Agriculture Restoration in American Indian Communities

In the last issue of the SAN, we discussed working with diverse audiences on sustainable agriculture issues, and work with Spanish-speaking new immigrant groups. In this issue, we highlight a few research and outreach projects taking place in American Indian communities. Many of these projects are using sustainable agriculture practices as a means to address critical health issues. While obesity and diabetes are increasingly common problems in the United States, the percentage of people afflicted are even higher in American Indian communities.

Dream of Wild Health

Dream of Wild Health, in Hugo, Minnesota is addressing the obesity and diabetes crisis among urban American Indian youth by promoting a return to growing and eating traditional foods. Dream of Wild Health is dedicated to preserving and sharing indigenous seeds and to preserving the traditional Indian relationships between plants and people. Cora Baker, a Potawatomi Elder, had saved seed from more than 90 different corn, bean and squash heirloom varieties that she gave to Dream of Wild Health to propagate and pass onto the next generation of native gardeners. Dream of Wild Health grows their seeds on an organically-managed ten-acre farm. They use traditional methods such as the Three Sisters, an intercropping of corn, squash and beans, to grow

indigenous varieties. The corn provides support for the beans, the beans supply nitrogen to the corn, and the squash vines help prevent weeds, conserve moisture, and deter pests. Some of the varieties grown are black turtle beans, arikara squash and blue and red popcorn. Dream of Wild Health has worked with Craig Hassel at the U of MN to compare the nutritional quality of indigenous varieties with modern market varieties. A new project this year involved growing and increasing 10 precious ancient heirloom varieties of corn—some hundreds of years old. Using grants from MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), they are working with Karen Ketterling and Bud Markhart, U of MN Horticulture Department, to germinate the

seeds, grow the plants and increase the seed.

The farm is also a place to teach and learn. Fifty Native American young people, ages 5 to 19, from the city spend a month working on the farm each summer. Students learn how to grow and cook nutritious native foods and set a goal for eating healthy foods. They use the curriculum “In Cora’s Garden,” which celebrates Native American traditions and culture, and demonstrates the health benefits of indigenous foods and agriculture. For more information about Dream of Wild Health, contact Sally Auger, 651-646-8167, odawa@comcast.net

Marketing Local Food Handbook

The options for farmers to market their products locally are growing, thanks in part to growing consumer awareness and interest in purchasing food from farmers they know. For farmers considering marketing via alternatives to traditional commodity markets, the options may be overwhelming. Where do you start? What option will work best for you? “Marketing Local Food” is a handbook designed to help Minnesota farmers explore the various options for marketing local food. The book introduces farmers to the basics of different marketing

systems, suggests resources and includes profiles of farmers who are selling farm products directly to consumers via farmers’ markets, roadside stands, CSAs, on-farm stores; as well as information and profiles about selling indirectly via retail food establishments or food services. Stories of farmers who are developing their farms as agritourism destinations are also included. The handbook project was coordinated by MISA and developed with contributions from a team of experienced farmers, personnel from Minnesota nonprofit

organizations, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and University of Minnesota researchers and Extension educators. The book will be in print in late January and available from MISA, 800-909-6472, misamail@umn.edu.

“Marketing Local Food” is being printed with the help of a Small Sessions grant from USDA’s Risk Management Agency. The grant also provides funding for a series of speakers addressing local marketing topics

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White Earth Traditional Community Agriculture Restoration Program

The White Earth Land Recovery Project in northwestern Minnesota is educating the White Earth community about the advantages of growing and eating traditional foods, and providing the knowledge and means to grow traditional foods using grant funds from NCR-SARE Research and Education grant funds and MDA demonstration grant funds. The aim of their Traditional Community Agriculture Restoration Program is to secure environmental, economic and social justice for the Anishinaabeg people on White Earth.

They have established a Three Sisters garden demonstration site, and provided tilling services and seeds, fruit and nut trees to over 200 community gardeners. They also built greenhouses (12'X14') for distribution to community gardeners

interested in getting an early start on spring planting. They have hosted community workshops on food preservation, food safety, and growing traditional seed. They've established a seed bank and a regional network of seed savers, increasing both the quantity and diversity of traditional seed for flint corn, tomatoes, potatoes, squash and beans. Gardeners delivered fresh produce from the demonstration garden to community members through the elder nutrition program, Mino-Miijim, and sold fresh organic produce at a stand located outside the White Earth Health Clinic from July through September. They are also working to provide fresh produce to the Tribal Lunch program and the diabetes program.

Implementation of the Traditional Agriculture program has increased

community awareness about the benefits of eating traditional foods versus the canned, salty and processed foods provided by commodity programs or purchased in the store. The program is changing the way the community views foods, agriculture and their relationship to their health. With the implementation of community workshops, the community has a renewed interest in growing their own foods for better health and the sharing of knowledge and food for others as well.

The White Earth Land Recovery Project will also be hosting the 4th Annual Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference, February 9 -11, 2007 at Maplelag Resort on the White Earth Reservation. For more information contact the White Earth Land Recovery Project, Andrea Hanks, 218-375-2600, hanksandrea@yahoo.com.

University of Minnesota Extension American Indian Task Force

In March, 2006, the University of Minnesota Extension Service Dean and Director, Beverly Durgan, appointed an American Indian Task Force. The Task Force was established to increase the number and effectiveness of the ways in which Extension works with American Indian populations and their governments in Minnesota, and to make a measurable difference in relevant Extension program areas on the Reservations.

Members of the Task Force spent a day at each of the Tribal Colleges in Minnesota - Fond du Lac, Leech Lake and White Earth, to learn more about their programs and opportunities to connect with the University of Minnesota. Several members spent additional time on five reservations hosting listening sessions to learn more about what is currently happening on reservations and to explore opportunities for partnerships with the U of M. Those

reservations included Red Lake, Leech Lake, White Earth, Fond du Lac and Mille Lacs. The findings from those listening sessions are being summarized. For more information about the Task Force, contact Deb Zak, Campus Regional Director, Crookston, 218-281-8684, dzak@umn.edu; or Dawn Newman, Regional Director, Cloquet, 218-726-6464, danewman@umn.edu.

What's for dinner? The ethics and aesthetics of eating

Join Michael Pollan, author and journalist at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum on Thursday, April 19, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. in the MacMillan Auditorium. What should we have for dinner? That simple question is at the heart of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Penguin Press), Michael Pollan's celebrated new book, which explores the complex food chains that get our meals from farm to table. Join us as Pollan surveys this often bewildering food landscape and the dynamic relationship that exists between us and the handful of plant and animal species we

depend on. When it comes to food, says Pollan, doing the right thing often turns out to be the tastiest thing an eater can do. Is he correct?

Pollan's presentation will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Allen Levine, Dean of the U of M's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, along with regional experts, growers, and distributors. Participants are also invited to continue the conversation with Pollan at a special luncheon benefiting *Comercopia*, the U of M's student organic farm and the

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Author has agreed to sign books at the event.

Registration information: \$100 for full day including keynote, panel and special luncheon discussion with author. Morning Session keynote and panel only: \$35.00. Tickets are limited! For more information contact the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 952-443-1422, ArbEdu@umn.edu or <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/education/adult/publicpolicy.htm>

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at five Minnesota winter conferences:

1) On **Friday, January 19th**, at the **Minnesota Organic Conference** in St. Cloud, in addition to delivering the keynote address, Diana Endicott will conduct a session about "Direct Marketing in the Supermarket." Find out how to sell your local foods to the store customers and how to sell the store management on your local foods. For more information about the conference, go to www.mda.state.mn.us/esap/organic/2007orgconf.htm or contact Mary Hanks, Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us, 651-201-6012.

2) On **Saturday, January 27th**, at the **Midwest Value Added Conference** in Red Wing, a session on "Setting a Price for Your Agricultural Products" with Jean Andreasen and Gigi DiGiacomo is one of many sessions that address marketing local food. Jean is the General Manager for Pastureland Co-op, and Gigi is an

Agricultural Marketing Consultant. For more information about the conference, go to www.rivercountryrcd.org/Registration2007_rev4.pdf or contact Diana Strain, Hiawatha RC&D, Diana.Strain@rcdnet.net, 507-281-1959 ext. 4.

3) On **Saturday, February 17th** at the **Sustainable Farming Association annual meeting** in St. Peter, Paula Marti from Morgan Creek Vineyards will talk about the burgeoning Minnesota grape growing and wine making industry and the development of their New Ulm winery as a tourist destination. For more information about the conference, go to: www.sfa-mn.org/conference.php or contact Anne Borgendale, communications@sfa-mn.org, 320-226-6318

4) On **Monday, February 26th** in Morris, at **The Home Grown Economy: Foods from Local Farms as an Economic Development Tool** conference, we will sponsor a panel discussion on the "New Value Chain—Keeping Value Added Dollars Local" with

Dan Struxness, Co-owner of Double D Natural Meats; Todd Churchill, Owner of Thousand Hills Cattle Company; Jessi Gurr, Manager of Pomme de Terre Foods Coop; and Terry VanDerPol, Program Organizer, Land Stewardship Project. The conference is sponsored by Representative Collin Peterson, and hosted with the University of Minnesota. For more information contact Dorothy Rosemeier at rosemeie@umn.edu or 320-760-3735. To register on line, go to www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

5) On **Thursday, March 1st**, at the **Minnesota Grown Marketing conference** in St. Paul, we will sponsor an afternoon session about public relations and working with the media. For more information about the conference go to: www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/conference.htm or contact Paul Hugunin, MDA, 651-201-6510, paul.hugunin@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Author Tells the Farm Story

"From the Farm to the Table: What Every American Needs to Know about Agriculture, a new book by Gary Holthaus, has reached bookstores nationally," announces Erin Tegtmeier, Executive Director of the University of Minnesota Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership - The Experiment in Rural Cooperation (ERC). The book is a collaborative project of ERC and The Rural America Writers Center in Plainview.

A resident of Red Wing, Minnesota since 1995, Holthaus recently accepted the position of Administrative Director of the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society in LaMoure, North Dakota.

"This began as a book about farming in southeast Minnesota," Holthaus says, "but

it became a story of agriculture not only here, but globally." The first part of the book features the voices of local farmers talking about their farm practices and their values. "Everything is connected now: what the WTO does in Geneva affects the farmer in Altura, Olivia, and Wadena," according to Holthaus. "It became impossible to limit the story of farming to a small locale. It did become possible to show that our regional agriculture represents a microcosm of the larger picture of agriculture, wherever it is practiced."

For more information, contact Erin Tegtmeier, ERC's Director, 507-536-6313, tetgm003@umn.edu or visit www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

During his tenure as an Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems at the U of MN, Gary will lead discussion groups around the topics of new agrarianism. These conversations will be held in three communities to discuss pre-selected articles about sustainability. He has conducted similar conversations in southeastern Minnesota and has identified essays with the future of agriculture, community, food, and food security. These conversations will begin in the Winter of 2007. For more information, contact the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture: 800-909-6472 or misamail@umn.edu.

Sharing Indigenous Wisdom conference

The second Sharing Indigenous Wisdom: An International Dialogue on Sustainable Development conference is being hosted by College of Menominee Nation's Sustainable Development Institute at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin, June 11-15, 2007. The

conference is designed to bring together scholars and practitioners who are committed to the concepts of sustainable development. A forum will be created that encourages dialogue, learning, solidarity, and cross-fertilization of ideas. This year the conference will focus on the Natural

Environment foundational element in the Menominee model of sustainable development. For more information contact Dale Kakkak, 715-799-6226 ext. 3264, dkakkak@menominee.edu or visit <http://www.sharingindigenouswisdom.org/>

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