

Hot off the Press. Marketing Local Food available from MISA

The options for farmers to market their products locally are growing! 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. It introduces 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 to retail food establishments or food services.

It also includes information about a fast growing area of farm marketing, agritourism. From the story about the

Broodio, a "bed and bagel" in Montevideo, to a profile about Nordic Ridge Gardens, a pumpkin U-Pick operation in Bovey that now receives over 10,000 visitors in the fall, you'll be inspired to view your own operation with new eyes!

Marketing Local Food is available from the MISA office, misamail@umn.edu, 612-625-8235, 800-909-6472. The complete publication is also available online: www.misa.umn.edu/Marketing_Local_Food2

Artisan Cheese

The State of Minnesota recognizes "Farmstead Cheese" as a specialty product of Minnesota farms. Farmstead cheese must be made on the same farm that produces the milk used to make the cheese. Artisan cheese is a broader category that can include specialty cheeses made by anyone, with their own farm's milk or purchased milk. Farmstead and artisan cheeses are most often made from the milk of sheep, goats, cows – but can even be made from the milk of exotic livestock such as water buffalo and moose!

Artisan cheeses are great value-added products. Milk can be converted into

cheese that could sell for \$9 per pound to more than \$30 per pound. Cheesemaking is one way that some dairy farmers have found to make a good profit from the milk they produce – whether they do it by direct sales of cheese to customers at a farmers' market, by supplying grocery stores or restaurants with their cheese, or by selling their specialty cheese to a distributor.

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA) has made a commitment to support the development of an artisan cheesemaking community in the state. Their website section on Artisanal Cheese, <http://www.sfa-mn.org/cheesemaking.php>,

includes links to lots of useful information on equipment, supplies, recipes, and regulations. The SFA website also hosts an online discussion forum on artisan cheesemaking, moderated by Jodi Ohlsen-Read, an experienced cheesemaker from Shepherd's Way Farms near Nerstrand, MN. Sign up at the website given above.

Want to learn more about cheesemaking? Visit Jodi Ohlsen-Read's farm for an Artisan Cheesemaking Field Day on June 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. The event is free, but please register with Anne Borgendale at communications@sfa-mn.org or 320.226.6318.

Support a rural community - travel Green Routes!

Just in time for the summer travel season, Green Routes is launching the "What I did this summer" pledge. Everyone who travels in Minnesota is invited to make a pledge to visit 5 Green Routes destinations. The GreenRoutes website, www.greenroutes.org,

includes a map of Minnesota with links to travel routes that include places to eat, play, learn, and sleep! Be sure to check out the new Tatanka Bluffs Green Route that features destinations in Redwood and Renville Counties.

When you make a pledge to travel Green Routes, you will receive the Travelogue—a handy card to record your visits. Those who keep their pledge will receive a thank you gift. The Green Routes goal is 500 pledges by June 1!

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New University of Minnesota soybean varieties provide options for organic producers

New soybean varieties released by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station will give organic soybean growers increased ability to deal with troubling soybean diseases. Minnesota ranks number one in organic soybean production and produces 20 percent of all organic soybeans raised in the U.S., according to the USDA. "These new varieties from the University's plant breeding program provide new options for growers and will help Minnesota organic growers expand their market," said Beverly R. Durgan, Director, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station and Dean, University of Minnesota Extension.

These three varieties were developed by conventional breeding techniques, are classed as non-GMO, and have some disease resistance traits usually found only in soybean varieties not approved for organic production. They have demonstrated excellent yield potential in University of Minnesota trials.

- MN 1410: This variety has good iron chlorosis tolerance, carries the Rps1k gene for phytophthora resistance, has above average protein content, average oil content and a buff hilum (seed coat marking). It has a 1.4 maturity ranking which makes it most adaptable to the south central area of

Minnesota. MN 1410 has average height and good lodging resistance.

- MN1011CN: This variety has soybean cyst nematode resistance, carries the Rps1 gene for phytophthora resistance, has good iron chlorosis tolerance, good protein content and a yellow hilum. It is slightly taller than the Surge variety and has a 1.0 maturity ranking which makes it most suitable to central and south central Minnesota.

- MN0101: This variety has very good iron chlorosis tolerance, carries the Rps1 gene

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School of Agriculture Endowed Chair Updates

Larry S. Lev is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at Oregon State University. He will bring to Minnesota a set of three overlapping research efforts intended to strengthen locally-based agricultural marketing system in Minnesota: Alternative marketing and distribution channels in Minnesota will be explored and assessed; peer review and information exchange systems for farm market managers will be tested; a structure to bring together locally-oriented marketing groups to share information will be established and evaluated. Larry says he "is excited to work with University of Minnesota faculty, staff

and students, and more broadly with the diverse participants of the Minnesota sustainable agriculture community." He will visit Minnesota several times over the next year to conduct workshops and research activities.

Katherine L. Clancy most recently was a Senior Scientist in the Food and Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists. In the fall of 2007, she will teach a one credit graduate seminar on food systems. Additionally she will collaborate with the Institute for Social, Economic and Ecosystem Services (ISEES) on developing a course module to explore the interaction of nutrition, food safety and

public health concerns with the environmental effects of conventional and alternative production. Kate will be in residence in Minnesota from mid-June until mid-December 2007. To reach Kate or Larry contact the MISA office misamail@umn.edu

SARE Calls for Preproposals

The North Central Region SARE currently has two open Calls for Preproposals: the Research and Education (R & E) Program, and the Professional Development Program (PDP).

The PDP call is specifically for projects in bioenergy. The R & E program is interested in the bioenergy topic, but is also open to other topic areas. NCR-SARE has issued a position paper on bioenergy that should help potential applicants to see the kinds of things NCR-SARE is interested in funding. To view this document online, go to: http://ncr.sare.org/documents/NCRSARE_Bioenergy_Draft.pdf

The R&E Call is posted on the NCR-SARE website, <http://ncr.sare.org/resedu.htm>, but potential applicants can also contact the NCR-SARE office in Minnesota (phone: 612-626-3113 or email: ncrsare@umn.edu) to get a copy of the call. Preproposals are due in the Minnesota NCR-SARE office by 4:30 pm, June 19, 2007.

The PDP Call is posted at: <http://ncr.sare.org/pdp/pdp.htm>. Preproposals must be received by 4:30 p.m. May 25, 2007. PDP projects should directly contribute to the overall desired outcome of the North Central SARE PDP, which is: Educators who are knowledgeable in the general concepts of sustainable agriculture,

and motivated to work in partnership with farmers, ranchers, and the general public on developing programs and activities that enhance the sustainability of rural communities and the food and agricultural system.

In Minnesota, for more information about submitting preproposals to R&E or PDP, contact Beth Nelson, Minnesota NCR-SARE Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator, 612-625-8217 (toll-free, 800-909-6472), schre002@umn.edu.

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for phytophthora resistance, a yellow hilum and above average protein content. With its 0.1 maturity group ranking, MN0101 is best suited for northern soybean producing areas or for growers further south who are replanting or planting soybeans later in the season. It matures one to two days earlier than the slightly shorter Traill variety and has equally good lodging resistance.

These new soybean varieties are the latest releases from the University of Minnesota Soybean Breeding Program led by Jim Orf,

professor of agronomy and plant genetics. Orf's breeding program focuses on developing soybeans that provide better yields, resistance to yield hazards and increased protein levels. His project also works to develop specialty soybeans, including high-oil varieties suited to biodiesel production; and food-grade soybeans for the export market that are used for soy milk, tofu, and natto (a traditional Japanese fermented soy dish).

Yield information on the new soybean varieties is available at www.maes.umn.edu (Click on 2006 varietal trials, then

soybeans, and look under "Performance of special-use soybean varieties")

All three of these new soybean varieties are distributed through Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) members. Information on MCIA and certified seed producers is available through their website (www.mncia.org) or by calling 800-510-6242.

Minnesota SARE Grant Awards

North Central Region SARE's most recent round of grant awards resulted in a new list of sustainable agriculture projects funded in Minnesota. We can look forward to some interesting research results and workshops in the coming years! Minnesota applicants received five Farmer-Rancher grants, two Graduate Student grants, and one Professional Development grant.

Farmer Rancher grants:

Tim Carroll, Lyle, Minn. *Equine Forestry: Promotion of a Low-Impact Forest Harvesting Method.*

Mark Thell, Wrenshall Minn. *Lake Superior Chapter SFA Farm Beginnings Program.*

Peter Hemberger, Hutchinson Minn. *Controlling Western Striped Cucumber Beetles Using Organic Methods: Perimeter Trap Crops and Baited Sticky Traps.*

Carol Ford, Milan, Minn. *Improved Productivity in Winter Greenhouse.*

Jerry Tourtillott, Salol, Minn. *Impacts of Aeration Incorporation of Turkey Litter on the Yield and Quality of Alfalfa Production in Northern Minnesota.*

Graduate Student Grants

Michael Kantar and Paul Porter, Univ of Minnesota. *Evaluating Rye Germplasm for Use as a Cover Crop in the Upper Midwest.*

Jodi Swanson and Marla Spivak, Univ of Minnesota. *Determination of volatile compounds that elicit removal of diseased brood by hygienic honey bees.*

PDP Grants

Meg Moynihan. Minnesota Department of Agriculture. *Organic Dairy Short Course for Ag Professionals.*

Get involved !

An April 19, 2007 New York Times editorial by Michael Pollan, "You are what you grow," (www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4908.cfm) encouraged everyone who eats to become knowledgeable about the farm bill. There are hundreds of ways that you can connect to farm bill information and advocacy efforts, but here's a short list of good entry points:

- The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's website has a "Farm Bill Action Center" www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) recently launched a new "Rural US" website to help people track national legislation that affects rural areas. www.ruralus.org.
- National Farmers Union has a "Take Action" section of their website that includes legislative alerts, <http://capwiz.com/nfu/home/>.

• The National Grange offers legislative alerts on its home page, <http://www.nationalgrange.org/>.
You can also connect to legislative work on agriculture at the state level.

- Land Stewardship Project keeps its members informed of activities at the Minnesota Legislature. You must be a member to receive the print version of the "Land Stewardship Letter," but anyone can access the online archive of newsletters and action alerts in the Newsroom, www.landstewardshipproject.org/news-main.html.
- Minnesota Farmers' Union offers regular legislative updates; find these on the website, www.mfu.org/, under the "Advocacy" link at the top of the home page.

- Minnesota Environmental Action Network is a broad coalition of sustainability, conservation, and environmental organizations in the state that works on legislation at the state and national level. Anyone can sign up online to receive information and action alerts, <http://www.mnaction.org/>

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Upcoming Events!

June 2-3. 2007 Goat Expo, Howard Lake, MN. Contact Minnesota Meat Goat Producers committee, mmgp@mmgponline.com

June 2nd. Lamb Shoppe Farm Tour, Hutchison, MN. RSVP to Amy Bacigalupo, 320.269.2105

June 7-9th. Wild Food Summit II, Rediscovery Center, White Earth Reservation. Register by May 31st, call 218.936.5620, ext. 313.

June 27th Farm Beginnings Field Day, Plainview, MN, RSVP Karen Stettler, 507.523.3366.

June 29th Land Stewardship Project's 25th Anniversary Celebration. Farmer/author Wendell Berry will be at the College of St. Catherine in Saint Paul to help launch a series of events celebrating LSP's 25th anniversary. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased in advance by calling 651-653-0618 or e-mailing lsplib@landstewardshipproject.org.

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