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Reaching diverse audiences

Many organizations are addressing the challenge of broadening participation in the sustainable agriculture movement, as evidenced by the high attendance and lively discussion among participants in the session on reaching diverse audiences at the national SARE conference in August. In this issue of SAN, we are highlighting a few Minnesota projects working with Spanish speaking new immigrants and in future newsletters we will highlight work with Native American and new immigrant populations from Asia and Africa.

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SARE conference diversity session synopsis

This session at the national SARE conference was an interactive discussion among leaders in diversity efforts in the Southern and North Central Regions, and members of the audience. Jose Garcia of University of Missouri Extension presented statistics showing that in 2002, there were 90,000 Latino farmers in the United States; 29,029 African American farmers; 238,000 women farmers; 15,494 Native American farmers; and 8,375 farmers of Asian descent. These farmers are an audience that the sustainable agriculture movement wants to reach.

Jose Garcia presented some of the challenges in outreach to limited resource and minority farmers. Many have little or no contact with USDA offices, and low use

of either USDA or Extension programs. When working with farmers in minority groups, existing materials and methods may not be culturally appropriate; and it takes time and effort for educators to become “culturally competent.”

Winona LaDuke said in her keynote address at the conference, “If you’re not at the table, you might be on the menu.” Participants in the diversity discussion affirmed that statement. They offered a challenge to sustainability organizations: find ways to bring limited resource and minority people into leadership and decision-making roles within the organizations.

“Meeting the Diverse Needs of Limited-Resource Producers” is a free 16-page bulletin from SAN, intended to be a resource for agricultural educators who want to better connect with farmers and ranchers who remain hard to reach. The free bulletin features nine success stories and provides “how-to” ideas for educators, socio-economic characteristics/barriers to working with varied audiences, proven teaching methods and successful connection strategies. Available at: www.sare.org/publications/limited-resource.htm, or call 301-504-5411.

Fields of dreams

The New Immigrant Agriculture Project (NIAP), a program of the Minnesota Food Association, is helping new immigrants learn agricultural production and marketing in Minnesota. NIAP began this work in 1998, and currently 116 immigrant families grow crops in four areas of the state, Worthington, Owatonna, Chaska and at its headquarters near Stillwater. “Many of the new immigrants we work with have a strong agricultural background, but they never lived here,” said Alvaro Rivera, NIAP Director. “They don’t know the climate, the

weather, the agricultural pests and diseases that we have here.” Rivera helps farmers find this information, and also assists with helping them find access to land and markets for their produce. Most of the program participants rent small acreage, although some are starting to purchase land. In Worthington, local farmers Lyle Adolph and Jerry Perkins are providing or leasing small plots of land to new immigrant families for production. They like to see the land being put to good use, and feel they are helping their communities

grow by developing new farming enterprises. Land acquisition is a challenge for immigrants. It’s difficult to plan and implement long-term sustainable production practices, like crop rotation, if there is little assurance that you will farming that same plot next year.

La Esperanza

La Esperanza (The Hope) is a new agricultural business started by three Mexican immigrant farmers working with NIAP. The Sanchez and Benitez families had been farmers for many years in their native country, but everything was new to them in Minnesota. Last winter, they

participated in a weekly education and training program at NIAP. The sessions use a curriculum developed by MFA that specifically addresses the unique production and business planning needs of new immigrants. La Esperanza has used the skills taught in this curriculum to produce and

market vegetables to Mexican grocery stores and wholesalers in the Twin Cities area.

For more information, contact Alvaro Rivera at 651-433-3676, arivera@mnfoodassociation.org

Farm Beginnings program expanding outreach to diverse audiences

The Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings™ program is using a grant from USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) to expand its outreach to people from a greater diversity of social and economic backgrounds. Farm Beginnings students take part in a course that teaches goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and innovative farming techniques. The RMA grant provides funds to involve community leaders in Farm Beginnings training and get

feedback on how to re-tool the program to improve it for a wider audience. It also provides scholarships for Farm Beginnings participants. Getting started in farming is daunting—even more so if people need to cross economic and cultural barriers to access help, according to LSP staff member Amy Bacigalupo. "Farm Beginnings has always served economically and socially disadvantaged people, but this grant significantly expands our outreach and training to people from a greater diversity of

backgrounds such as Latinos and Native Americans," she says. "With this grant we hope to make the opportunities we see in sustainable farming available to a wider group of people." For more information contact Amy Bacigalupo, 320-269-2105, amyb@landstewardshipproject.org

Condensed from an article that appeared in the Oct/Nov/Dec 2005 issue of *The Land Stewardship Letter*.

Spanish language resources

There are several Spanish language agricultural resources available on the web and in print.

University of Missouri Extension has three new publications in Spanish: a Sustainable Business Planning Guide (agebb.missouri.edu/sustain/espanol/negocios.pdf) (this is a translation of a condensed version of MISA's Building a Sustainable Business guide);

a compilation of risk management materials (agebb.missouri.edu/sustain/lac/RiskMgmt.pdf); and a publication on

human risk management (agebb.missouri.edu/sustain/lac/HumanRiskMgmt.pdf). Call 573-882-7216 to request copies of these publications.

ATTRA offers a Spanish language version of their website and resources (www.attra.org/espanol/index.html) as well as a new Spanish-language e-newsletter, *Monthly Harvest*, that you can subscribe to at attra.ncat.org/espanol/boletin.php.

And finally, the Sustainable Agriculture Network offers a Spanish-language version of their "Profitable Pork: Strategies for Hog Producers" on the web and in print: www.sare.org/publications/cerdos.htm or call 301-504-5411 to request a free copy.

MISA announces School of Agriculture Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems recipients

Organic marketing is one of the fastest growing segments in the food industry, and a good production/marketing option for Minnesota farmers. Yet there is little marketing data about how farmers market organic products. As a part of her 2007 School of Agriculture Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems, **Gigi DiGiacomo** will develop and test sample surveys aimed at gathering organic marketing data in Minnesota. DiGiacomo is a consultant specializing in farm business management,

marketing and planning. She is co-author of *Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses* and is frequently asked to speak at business planning workshops around the region. Her work in the Endowed Chair will provide valuable information about organic markets to producers, educators, lenders, and government agencies throughout the North Central region. Ultimately, DiGiacomo will refine the surveys for use by a public

institution, to allow on-going data collection and distribution. For more information about this project contact Gigi DiGiacomo, 612-710-1188, rgdigiacomo@earthlink.net.

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(*Endowed Chair, Continued from page 2*)

DiGiacomo is just one of several Chairs chosen in the last funding cycle. Additional projects will begin in 2007 and specific information about them will be available in upcoming newsletters. These include:

Gary Holthaus will lead discussion groups around the topics of new agrarianism. Gary has recently been named the director of the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (NPSAS) and will divide his time

between the Fargo-Moorehead area and southeast Minnesota.

Larry S. Lev is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at Oregon State University. He will be working on bringing a set of three overlapping tools he has developed around marketing alternatives to Minnesota.

Katherine L. Clancy, most recently was a Senior Scientist, 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 has a great number of contacts in the state and 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.

Grant writing workshop for farmer grant programs

Do you have a great new idea for production or marketing that you'd like to try out on your farm? To learn more about competitive grant programs for farmers to implement innovative projects, and even get started writing a grant—plan to attend a grant-writing workshop, November 15, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00p.m. at the New Century Charter School in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Representatives from three sustainable agriculture and value-added grant programs will be on hand to present information about writing successful grants, specific farmer grant programs, and to work with you on your ideas:

- NCR SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program. www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm
- MDA ESAP Demonstration

Program. www.mda.state.mn.us/esap/default.htm

- USDA Rural Development VAPG Program. www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm

**Grant Writing Workshop
November 15, 2006
6:00p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Hutchinson, MN**

Call (800) 909-6472 to register

Connie Karstens and Doug Rathke, owners of Liberty Land & Livestock and The Lamb Shoppe near Hutchinson, will also talk

about their experiences as recipients of both SARE and MDA grants for production and marketing projects.

There is no charge for the workshops, but **pre-registration by Monday, November 13th is requested.** To register or for more information, contact Beth Nelson: schre002@umn.edu, 800-909-6472. Please leave your name, phone number, and number of people planning to attend

Announcements and Upcoming Events — Mark your calendars!

Congratulations to Dave and Florence Minar who received October's "Good Farm Neighbor Award" from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Dave and Florence Minar and their family operate Cedar Summit Farm, a certified organic, grass-based creamery. The award honors livestock producers who are good neighbors and caring stewards of the environment. For more information visit www.mda.state.mn.us/newsreleases/2006news/10-26-2006a.htm

November 9, 2006. Pride of the Prairie Annual Fall Farmers Market, U of MN-Morris. 320-269-2105.

November 14, 2006. Ground Water Management, U of MN, St. Paul, MN. www.mgwa.org/meetings/meetingf2006.html, 651-276-8208 .

December 10-13, 2006. Third National Conference on Grazing Lands, St. Louis, Missouri, For more info www.glci.org

January 17, 2007, Local Energy/Local Opportunities, Saint Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN. For more information, contact the Minnesota Project, 651.645.6159 x6 or visit www.cleanenergyresouceteams.org.

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