

Position Announcement – Organic Agriculture Coordinator

This new coordinator position was established as part of the University of Minnesota College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences organic research and outreach program. This position will provide leadership and coordination for the organic program. The individual will be based at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton, Minnesota. The application deadline is May 23, 2005.

Required qualifications include: an M.S. degree in agricultural-related disciplines; three years of experience in specialized knowledge or academic preparation in issues related to organic agriculture; experience in outreach and public relations; demonstrated commitment to the values of inclusivity and diversity; and strong communication, writing and coordinating skills. A complete job description can be found at: www1.umn.edu/ohr/employment/openings/sjob129868.html

For more information contact: Bill Wilcke - Search Committee Chair, 612-625-8205 or wilck001@umn.edu.

Student farm update

Over the course of the last semester, students taking the Student Farm Planning Course have shed blood, sweat and tears to come to a consensus on issues affecting the creation of the University of Minnesota student farm. These issues include important topics such as: partnerships, research, organizational structure, connections to faculty and university courses, farm layout, vision, mission, goals, and, (whew!) guiding principles. As a result the student farm is set for the upcoming growing season, complete with an exciting market booth at the new Minneapolis campus farmers market.

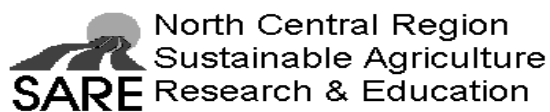
More good news: the student farm now has interns! In addition to myself, there are four other students from the course who will be putting their laboring skills to work (and investigation skills I might add, as each student is conducting a research project on or relating to the student farm). Joining the ranks of the student farm interns are six additional students, (undergraduate and graduate) new to the farm, who will be working part time as well on the student farm this summer.

And the best news of all: The student farm needs your help. Get involved! Thursdays are the official volunteer day, so stop by for a chance to spend some time with some knowledgeable, friendly, student farm interns. We might even send you home with a bag of fresh, organically grown produce. To learn more about the student farm and to stay up-to-date with the progress this summer and beyond, visit www.misa.umn.edu/students/studentfarm/.

—Jared Ashling, Undergraduate and WUSA Co-Chair, ashl0017@umn.edu

2005 Farmers' Market on University of Minnesota East Bank

UPlan Wellness is coordinating the new farmers' market on the campus this summer. The market will be held on seven consecutive Wednesdays, rain or shine, beginning July 13 through August 24, 2005 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The market will be located on the south end of Church Street near Washington Avenue on the east bank. The vendors will be selling locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and cut flowers. For more information contact Jill Thielen at UPlan Wellness, 612-626-9355 or well@umn.edu.



Opportunities and celebration for the future of small towns!

Wondering what our small towns will be like 10, 20, or even 50 years from now? The Third Annual Symposium on Small Towns will be looking forward into the future of our small towns and rural areas. Participants attending the symposium will learn and discuss global trends, how rural communities are shaping trends to meet future challenges, and will seek to understand how our political framework and issues can be changed to better support small towns. Community projects will be showcased, participants will actively engage in visioning sessions, and small towns and rural living will be celebrated. This two-day event is scheduled for June 7 and 8, 2005 and will be held at the University of Minnesota, Morris. For more information call 320-589-6451 or go to www.centerforsmalltowns.org.

Ag diversification on the airwaves

Sometime next spring you may be working in the barn tuned to your favorite farm information station, and hear a 60 second spot about a farmer down the road who is growing and marketing golden flax profitably –or who has put in a stand of hazelnut trees to diversify farm income.

These one-minute inspirational profiles about farmers using alternative and sustainability-oriented strategies on their farms are the focus of a 2004 NCR-SARE Research and Education grant awarded to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) working in partnership with the Minnesota Farm Network (MFN) and the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU).

Farmers Teresa Hall (Butterfield), Andy Hart (Elgin), Jane Grimsbo Jewett (Palisade) and Noreen Thomas (Moorhead) will work together with Meg Moynihan (MDA), Les Heen (MFU), Tom Rothman (MFN) and Curt Zimmerman (MDA) to find and interview 52 growers who are using innovative strategies to diversify their farming enterprises.

Each interview will become a 60-second radio spot that will be broadcast as part of a regular feature on commercial MFN radio stations. Listeners will be directed to additional information and resources about the topic on MDA's Minnesota Grown Opportunities website, www.mda.state.mn.us/mgo.

Transcripts of the broadcasts will be published in MFU's monthly *Minnesota Agriculture* publication, and several stories will have expanded coverage in a new diversification section of the paper.

“What makes this project so great is that it connects farmers with other farmers - even though they may live across the state from each other,” said project leader Meg Moynihan. “There are lots of growers out there who are trying innovative things on their farms in order to keep farming fun and competitive. We're not saying farmers should stop growing what they're good at, but many want to begin diversifying their enterprise a bit, and this series will help them inspire each other.”

These weekly broadcasts will reach an estimated 350,000 listeners. So stay tuned – coming next spring to a station near you. For more information on this project, contact Meg Moynihan, meg.moynihan@state.mn.us, 651-297-8916.

Reducing pesticide use in honey bee colonies

The Secret Life of Bees—yes, the title of a best-selling novel—but also the focus of a 2004 NCR-SARE Research and Education grant awarded to University of Minnesota researcher Marla Spivak. Spivak will work together with her research team, Gary Reuter (U of M) and commercial beekeepers, Darrel Rufer (Waverly, MN), Bill Klett (Jamestown, ND) and Larry Jagol (Fertile, MN) to develop techniques to reduce pesticide use in commercial bee production and improve profitably for beekeepers in Minnesota.

You might not automatically think of our area when you think of honey production—yet MN, SD and ND are the top honey producing states in the U.S. based on yield per colony, and produce over 30% of the nation's total honey production. The majority of commercial beekeepers in the Upper Midwest are “migratory,” meaning that they transport their colonies to warmer climates in the winter, and bring colonies back to the Upper Midwest for honey production in the summer. Honey production has been threatened by the introduction of a mite, appropriately named *V. destructor*, which kills colonies within 1 to 2 years if untreated. Beekeepers have resorted to routinely treating

with pesticides to control the mite, a costly practice that not only affects their bottom line and the environment, but is also becoming less effective as mites develop resistance.

Spivak and her team propose to help beekeepers reduce pesticide use with a multi-pronged approach. First, they will encourage greater use of integrated pest management strategies to determine when beekeepers need to treat. Although threshold levels have been established for the mite, it is often not feasible for large-scale beekeepers to visit all of their apiaries on successive days, to place and collect mite traps.

Spivak's team will develop an easy, relatively accurate, and standardized sampling plan to enable beekeepers to estimate the percent infestation of mites in a colony. This will enable beekeepers to make treatment decisions based on threshold levels, without the burden of multiple trips to their hundred or more apiaries. Spivak is also continuing her work with lines of mite-resistant bees, and developing crosses that retain resistance, but have greater honey production than the current lines. Several beekeepers using the Minnesota Hygienic line for seven years have eliminated disease from their colonies. For more information on this research grant, contact Marla Spivak, 612-624-4798, spiva001@umn.edu

New MN representative on NCR-SARE Administrative Council

Hans Kandel was recently elected to represent Minnesota Extension on the NCR-SARE Administrative Council (AC) for the next four years. Hans is a regional Extension educator in Crookston, and specializes in crop production. He researches organic production systems and alternative crops (field pea, niger) and cover crops using on-farm trials as well as research station plots. Together with farmers and other researchers, Hans hosts an annual bus tour of crop trials in his area.

Hans will be one of four new representatives on the AC this year. The AC includes a diverse mix of agricultural stakeholders from throughout the twelve-state North Central Region. Council members hail from regional farms and ranches, the Cooperative Extension Service, universities, state and federal agencies, agribusiness, and nonprofit organizations. Their primary responsibilities are to set program priorities and make granting decisions.

Other Minnesotans currently on the Council are Amy Bacigalupo, the regional foundation/non profit representative, and Dan French, the outgoing Minnesota farm/ranch sector representative. Dan has just completed a term as chair of the council, so he will continue on the Council in the Past-Chair role for the next year. If you would like to contact Hans, you can reach him at 218-281-8688, kande001@umn.edu

NCR-SARE 2006 Call for Research and Education Preproposals

NCR-SARE announces the 2006 Research and Education call for preproposals. You can access the call on the NCR-SARE website <http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/cfp.htm> or contact the NCR-SARE Lincoln office at 402-472-7081 or dsylofski2@unl.edu. Preproposals are due in the Lincoln NCR-SARE office by June 15, 2005. It is essential that preproposal authors use the 2006 Call for Preproposals because each year there are some changes to the call.

NCR-SARE 2005 Professional Development Program

NCR-SARE announces the 2005 Professional Development Program (PDP) call for proposals to train educators. Proposals are due in the Lincoln office by May 27, 2005. Complete proposal requirements, application, and program logic model can be downloaded from www.sare.org/ncrsare/. For more information contact: Paula Ford, 785-532-5328 or pford@oznet.ksu.edu. In Minnesota, you can also contact Beth Nelson, MN NCR-SARE schre002@umn.edu or 612-625-8217.

Get your foot in the door with CSP

Sign-ups in the six CSP watersheds of the state are light as of the last week of April. (The watersheds are the Root, Blue Earth, Redwood, Sauk, Redeye and Red Lake.) The take-home message is that producers who can meet the minimum criteria for one or two fields or pastures at Tier I should be strongly encouraged to sign up now, before May 27. Once in the program, farmers

can move up non-competitively in Tiers and payments. Farmers should not base a sign-up decision on the initial payments, which will be low for Tier I, but should instead look at what the payments will be once they've brought the rest of the farm up to the minimum standards and into the program. In summary, anyone who meets the minimum criteria for one or two fields for Tier I should insist on and exercise their right to sign up for the program, no matter the enrollment category, since this one-time opportunity to get a foot in the door will not return anytime soon. For more information, visit your NRCS office, or see www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html.

MDA seeks organic advisory board members

To help support the important organic farm and food sector, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is looking for volunteers to serve on the Minnesota Organic Advisory Task Force. The Secretary of State's office will accept applications until May 24, 2005. The MDA encourages applicants to submit a cover letter and resume with their applications. Task Force members will be appointed by Commissioner Hugoson. Applicants must complete an Open Appointment application form, which is available on the web at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/openapp/> (click on .Forms.) or by contacting the Secretary of State's office at 1-877-551-6767 or open.appointments@state.mn.us.

Upcoming Events

Annual Barn Preservation Workshop. May 21, 2005, near Nerstrand, MN. Contact John Hagel, 763-428-2100, or 612-338-2276 for more information.

Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) Sustainable Agriculture Camp, June 8-11, 2005. Contact Bradley Meyer for more information, 515-230-1439 or pfifarmer@hotmail.com.

North American Agroforestry Conference. June 12-15, 2005, Rochester, MN. For further information contact: Dean Current, curre002@umn.edu or 612-624-4299.

7th Annual National Value Added Conference. June 16-17th, 2005, Indianapolis, Indiana. For more information visit <http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/AICC/valueaddconf/> or contact Jane E. Anderson, 765-496-3099.

The National Farm to Cafeteria Conference. June 16-18, 2005, Gambier, Ohio (an hour from Columbus). If you have any questions, call the CFSC office: 310-822-5410 or visit www.foodsecurity.org.

What we're about...

This newsletter is supported by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA)—a partnership between the Sustainer's Coalition and the University of Minnesota College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences (COAFES); the University of Minnesota Extension Service; the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCRSARE) Professional Development Program (PDP); and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

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You can find more University of Minnesota Extension Service educational information at www.extension.umn.edu. Also check MISA's home page at www.misa.umn.edu.

Our mission statement: To help bring people together to influence the future of agriculture and rural communities to achieve socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable farms and communities. To stimulate thinking and discussion about sustainability, we try to present items that reflect different points of view. This being the case, we aren't promoting and don't necessarily agree with everything we publish.

Produced by Communication and Educational Technology Services, University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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