

Sustainable Agriculture

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Visions for Change will award up to \$100,000 in grants

Visions for Change, a program of communities and universities working together to strengthen our food and fiber system, will award grants of \$500 to \$10,000. It's part of a national program sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to help educate people about food system issues and create a sustainable food supply for the next century.

Visions for Change is particularly interested in supporting projects aimed at traditionally underserved constituencies that foster community-university collaboration in innovative ways; and creative approaches to research, teaching and/or outreach. Representatives from the private sector, educational institutions and non-profits may apply. Examples of types of projects that might be supported include:

- Development of community-based models for addressing food systems concerns.
- Faculty exchanges between tribal colleges and 1862 land grant universities.
- Computer access projects that provide communities with information about the food system.
- Arts projects that reflect the program's vision.

Up to \$100,000 will be awarded in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota in 1997; the application deadline is June 15. For more information on the grant application, contact Visions for Change, 277 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 625-7062, vision@beauty.agri.umn.edu.

Legislature funds regional sustainable development partnerships

The Minnesota Legislature has appropriated \$8.2 million in new funds to the "Agriculture Special" through the Higher Education funding bill. The appropriation was based on an overall request made by the College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences (COAFES), the College of Natural Resources (CNR), and the University of Minnesota Extension Service (MES). Of that amount, \$1.2 million has been proposed for Regional Agricultural and Natural Resource Sustainable Development Partnerships.

The partnerships provide an opportunity for citizens and communities to be more actively involved in guiding the university's research, education, and outreach capacities to meet their local and regional needs. The Branch Experiment Stations and other sites will serve as regional focus points where the community and the university can work together to address community-identified issues on an on-going, long-term basis.

Activities will focus on establishing a community-driven process for identifying and addressing local, regional, and statewide agricultural, environmental, social, and economic issues; directing research, education, and outreach dollars to meet agreed-upon needs; increasing community input and access to the University of Minnesota; and fostering the development of agricultural and agro-forestry systems that

increase profitability for farmers while enhancing environmental quality and supporting rural communities.

Additional university partners include the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Visions for Change, and the Center for Integrated Natural Resource and Agricultural Management.

Governor Carlson had not yet signed the bill by our mid-May press date, but will hopefully do so. A group will soon meet to start planning for the partnerships. For more information, please contact Debra Elias at (612)625-8217 or elias005@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

New pocket field guide developed through water quality project

Keeping field records, checking nitrogen recommendations for corn or identifying weeds by referring to drawings. These are only a few of close to 100 potential uses for a new “Pocket Guide & Field Record” published by the University of Minnesota’s Extension Service.

The handy pocket guide is also the final grower publication of the Anoka Sand Plain Water Quality Demonstration Project, says David Cooper, project coordinator. The new guide is now being distributed with help from agricultural business firms in the 11-county project area of central Minnesota.

But Cooper says that 90 percent of the guide also applies to statewide conditions. Limited copies are available from some county extension offices or by calling the Distribution Center, Minnesota Extension Service at 1-800-876-8636.

The Anoka Sand Plain project was one of 16 U.S. Department of Agriculture water quality demonstration projects nationwide. Project goals were to help farmers voluntarily change management practices to reduce adverse effects on water quality while maintaining farm profits. In-depth, on-farm demonstrations were conducted on about 50 farms. For more information on the project, contact David Cooper, Biosystems & Ag. Engineering, University of Minnesota, St. Paul 55108, (612) 625-2713, dcooper@extension.umn.edu.

A new name: University of Minnesota Extension Service

The “old” Minnesota Extension Service is now officially the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The name change was approved by the university’s Board of Regents at their May meeting. In case you’re wondering: we’ll use up existing paper supplies with preprinted letterheads (like our front page).

Two Minnesota projects receive SARE funding

Marla Spivak, a faculty member in the Department of Entomology at the University of Minnesota, was recently awarded a grant from the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program to support research on pests of honey bees. The project, entitled “A Sustainable Approach to Controlling Mite Pests of Honey Bees,” focuses on non-chemical approaches to controlling the parasitic mite *Varroa jacobsoni*.

This pest has virtually destroyed all of the wild honey bee colonies and a high percentage of the commercial colonies in the U.S., negatively impacting crop pollination and threatening the vitality of the beekeeping industry nationwide. The long-term goal of the study is to breed honey bees that demonstrate natural mechanisms of defense against the mite. Spivak initiated the project in 1993.

The SARE funds will enable this work to be continued and expanded. The study will also examine a short-term solution to mite control using botanical oils to treat the mites. For more information contact Marla Spivak, 219 Hodson Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 624-4798, spiva001@tc.umn.edu.

Chuck Schwartau of the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Doug Nopar of the Land Stewardship Project also received a grant from SARE. They are leading a team of farmers, non-profit staff and Extension Service personnel to develop a program to help beginning farmers get established in profitable and environmentally sound dairy farming operations in the ecologically fragile southeast corner of Minnesota.

The program has five major elements: an apprenticeship and mentoring program; a beginning farmer educational program; a retiring farmer educational effort; establishment of beginning farmer “incubation” sites; and development of a long-term plan for the program. For more information contact Chuck Schwartau, University of Minnesota Extension Service, 611 Broadway Ave. South, Suite 40, Wabasha, MN 55981, (612) 565-2662, cschwartau@extension.umn.edu.

New publication documents economic benefits of intensive rotational grazing

“Dairy Farmer Profitability Using Intensive Rotational Stocking” is the title of a new U.S. Department of Agriculture publication. It’s based on an intensive grazing study in a five-county region of northeastern Pennsylvania. Limited supplies of single copies are available from Bill Wilcke, Biosystems & Ag. Engineering, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 625-8205, or wwilcke@extension.umn.edu.

International livestock environment conference May 29-31

Minnesota is hosting the Fifth International Livestock Environment Symposium May 29-31 at the Hotel Sofitel in Bloomington, Minn. Experts from around the world will present the latest information on designing and controlling environments for livestock health and well-being. Contact Kevin Janni, Biosystems & Ag. Engineering, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 625-3108 or kjanni@tc.umn.edu.

Train the trainer workshop July 28-30 in Morris

“Linking People, Purpose and Place: An Ecological Approach to Agriculture” is a multi-state train-the-trainer conference scheduled July 28-30 in Morris, Minn. The primary audience is extension, NRCS and agency people, plus farmers and members of non-profit organizations involved in sustainable agriculture training. Expenses will be reimbursed for members of state teams. If you’re interested in attending, contact Bill Wilcke, Biosystems & Ag. Engineering, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 625-8205, or wwilcke@extension.umn.edu.

Announcements...

The Organic Growers and Buyers Association is seeking part-time independent contractors to enhance its certification committee. Call them at (612) 572-2527 or 1-800-677-6422.

How to Farm for Profit is a new book written by Donald M. Fedie, a financial and management adviser who has helped restructure failing farms into profitable business operations. It sells for \$19.95 from Iowa State University Press at 1-800-862-6657.

Coming events...

The following field days are sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Program. For more information about the program call (612) 296-7673.

June 10, 10 a.m. to noon, Field Day, "Seasonal Dairying and Value-Added Enterprises in Southwest Minnesota," Robert & Sherrill Van Maasdam, Route 2, Box 209, Westbrook, MN, 507-274-5129.

June 14, 9 a.m. to noon, Field Day, "Small Farm Market Development: Mobile Poultry Processing," John Fisher-Merritt farm, 2612 County Road 1, Wrenshall, MN. Contact Jenifer Buckley at 218-727-1414. (See July 5 listing)

June 21, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Field Day, "Propane Flame Weeding Vegetable Crops," Jean Peterson, Peterson Produce, 8910 Hwy 12, Delano, MN, 612-972-2052.

June 21, 11 a.m., Field Day, "Poultry Production and Marketing Network," Everett Koenig farm, from Plainview go toward Elba until you hit the four-way stop on County 25, turn left, go two miles, farm is on left. Contact Bev Sandlin at 507-689-4370.

June 28, noon to 3:00 p.m., Field Day, "Wine Quality Grapes in Otter Tail County," Michael & Vicki Burke farm, Route 1, Box 147A, Erhard, MN. Contact 218-739-4549.

June 28, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Field Day, "Collaborative Poultry Production and Marketing Network" and "Renovation of River Bottom Pasture and Stream Bank Management," Jon Peterson, Route 1, Box 7, Peterson, MN 55962, 507-864-2722.

July 5, 9 a.m. to noon, Field Day, "Small Farm Market Development: Mobile Poultry Processing," John Fisher-Merritt farm, 2612 Country Road 1, Wrenshall, MN. Contact 218-727-1414.

July 12, 10 a.m. to noon, Field Day, "Soil Quality Factors Affecting Garlic Production," The Joel Girarding farm, one mile north of Cannon Falls on U.S. Hwy 52, go west on County Road 86 one mile to Gaylord Ave. Turn left on Gaylord. Contact Tim King at 320-732-6203. (See July 28 listing)

July 18, 1:30 p.m., Field Day, "Development of Mating Disruption and Mass Trapping Strategy for Apple Leafminer Control in Commercial Orchards," Leidel's Orchard, 406 N. Hill St., La Crescent, MN. Contact Bernie or Rosanne Buehler at 507-895-4832.

July 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Field Day, "Establishing Pastures Using Various Low-Input Practices," Ralph Lentz, Route 2, Box 78, Lake City, MN 55041, 612-345-2557.

July 19, 11 a.m., Field Day, "Collaborative Poultry Production and Marketing Network," Greg Erickson farm, approximately four miles past Lewiston west on Hwy 25, left side of road. Contact Bev Sandlin at 507-689-4370.

July 20, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Field Day, "Alternative Point Sources of Water," Joseph & Mary Routh, North Light Farm, 4480 North Road, Grand Marais, MN, 218-475-2245.

July 20, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Field Day, "Grass and Forage Based Finishing of Beef and Pork," Lake Superior Meats Cooperative, 2553 County Road 3, Wrenshall, MN, 218-727-1414.

July 22, 10 a.m., Field Day, "Dairy Steers and Replacement Heifers Reared on Pasture," Melissa Nelson,

Route 1, Box 234, Ortonville, MN, 320-273-2340.

July 28, 1:30 p.m., Field Day, “Soil Quality Factors Affecting Garlic Production,” the Phil Arnold Farm, near Gutches Grove, southwest of Long Prairie at the intersection of County Highways 10 and 11. Contact Tim King at 320-732-6203.

Late July, Wednesdays 2-4 p.m., Fridays 3-5 p.m. Come to the Farmers’ Markets on market days (above) to speak with growers about the progress of markets. Wednesday market at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 45th Avenue East and Colorado Street, Duluth. Friday market at the First United Methodist Church on the Skyline, 230 East Skyline Pkwy, Duluth. Contact Jenifer Buckley at 218-727-1414

About this newsletter...

For the past year we’ve been funded by the Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) with support from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

We’re always looking for story ideas. Send them to the editor: Jack Sperbeck, 405 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108, (612) 625-1794. E-mail: jsperbeck@extension.umn.edu. Other editorial board members: Helene Murray (612) 625-0220, murra@021.tc.umn.edu; Tom Wegner (612) 374-8400, twegner@extension.umn.edu; and Bill Wilcke (612) 625-8205, wwilcke@extension.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.