

Sustainable Agriculture

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Family farmers must organize to survive, Cochrane says

There's a better option for family farmers than "folding their tents and stealing away into the night," says Willard Cochrane, professor emeritus with the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota.

"Farmers could form a national association and call it the National Trade Association of Family Farmers (NTAFF)," Cochrane wrote in an article in the *Minnesota Agricultural Economist*, published by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Cochrane says a powerful trade association of family farmers could bargain with Congress, state governments, suppliers and processors. They could also "negotiate contracts with suppliers that benefit family farmers, such as giving them the same discounts enjoyed by corporate farmers."

"By organizing, family farmers could once again become a vital and thriving part of our nation's economy," he concludes. The article is available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/newsletters/ageconomist/ag237.html. If you can't access it, check with your county Extension Office.

Carolyn Lane is agri-business representative to North Central SARE

Carolyn S. Lane of Northland Organic Foods/Northland Seed & Grain Corp. in St. Paul, Minnesota, was recently elected as an agri-business representative to the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCRSARE) program Administrative Council.

In her position at Northland, Carolyn works with grain purchasing and producer relations. She has experience as a research assistant, decision case developer, curriculum development aide, teacher, and tutor in both English and Spanish.

The NCRSARE Administrative Council consists of representatives from each state in the North Central Region, plus several at-large representatives from across the region. The Council administers about \$2.2 million dollars in federal funds to support research and education projects to improve the sustainability of agriculture in the North Central Region. For more information, see www.sare.org/ncrsare, or contact Bill Wilcke at (612) 625-8205 or wilck001@umn.edu.

Two Minnesotans appointed to SARE Technical Committee

James Ennis and Bruce Vondracek have been named to the Technical Committee for the NCRSARE program, where they'll help evaluate grant proposals.

James Ennis is the director of Food Choices, which develops and implements marketing plans for a new project promoting sustainably-produced products. Jim has extensive marketing experience in both the non-profit and private sectors. He can be reached at (651) 265-3684, or ennis@foodchoices.org.

Bruce Vondracek is the assistant unit leader of the Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. His research includes stream quality, fish habitats and restoration, and biological indicators in aquatic ecosystems. Bruce serves on the board of directors of MISA. Contact Bruce at (612) 624-8748, bcv@fw.umn.edu.

North Central SARE names new regional coordinator

David Baltensperger, a professor and crop breeder at the University of Nebraska, is the new interim regional coordinator of North Central SARE. He will have a split 50-50 percent appointment with SARE and the University of Nebraska. Baltensperger replaces Steve Waller, who held the position for over 10 years. Waller has been named interim dean of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences.

The national SARE program began with the 1985 Farm Bill. Funding goes to producers, scientists, educators, public and private institutions and other organizations through three grant programs. Contact Baltensperger at (402) 472-7081.

You can subscribe to the Home Town Advantage Bulletin

The Home Town Advantage Bulletin from the Institute for Local Self Reliance is a bimonthly newsletter that reports on nationwide efforts to stop chain store proliferation and support locally-owned, independent retail businesses. Learn about land use policies and other tools that can protect the character and vitality of your hometown.

Find out how other communities are bucking the "big box" retail trend and encouraging small-scale, homegrown businesses—and why this approach is proving far more beneficial to the local economy. There's also news on e-commerce and Main Street, independent business alliances, development subsidies and franchisee legislation.

To subscribe, send a blank email to: home_town_advantage-subscribe@topica.com, or contact Stacy Mitchell at smitchell@ilsr.org. (From Prescott Bergh, Minnesota Department of Agriculture)

Some highlights from the National Organic Aquaculture Workshop

The National Organic Aquaculture Workshop at the University of Minnesota June 23-24, 2000, was hosted by the Institute for Social, Economic and Ecological Sustainability (ISEES). The conference attracted national and international participants to help develop the national organic aquaculture standards.

Participants developed a working draft that addresses basic conditions, location of production units and collecting areas, health and welfare, reproduction, breeding and spawning, nutrient management, harvesting, transportation of living aquatic animals and slaughter.

Decisions made by the participants include establishment of an Organic Aquaculture Working Group. For more information, contact Deborah Brister, Organic Aquaculture project manager, at (612) 624-7723 or djb@fw.umn.edu.

New bulletin on managing pests is available from SARE online

The most recent informational bulletin from SARE's Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) was just posted online. "Naturalize Your Farming System: A Whole-Farm Approach to Managing Pests," is the latest informational bulletin from USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN). You can view it at www.sare.org/farmpest/index.htm or go to the publications page from www.sare.org. For more information, contact Valerie Berton, SARE communications specialist at (301) 504-5230.

Calendar of events, 2000

These events are sponsored by numerous organizations. More information is available on MISA's website: www.misa.umn.edu.

August 10 (Two Projects combined into one Field Day)

- **Project 1—First and Second Grazers in a Year Round Pasture Setting Served by a Frost Free Water System.** Dan & Don Struxness farm, Appleton, MN. Call 320-752-4733.
- **Project 2—Using Cereal Rye for Reduced Input Pasture Establishment and Early Grazing.** Greg Cuomo, West Central Experiment Station, State Highway 329, Morris, MN 56267 6:30 p.m. Call 320-589-1711

August 11 **Dairy Farm Pasture Walk**, Pitcher-Williams farms, near Bertha/Eagle Bend. Call Lynda Converse 320-594-2456 or Randy Pitcher or Craig Williams at 218-924-2134. Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

August 17 **Flour Corn as an Alternative Crop—The Benefits of Growing and Using Corn Flour.** Buckwheat Growers' Association/Lynda Converse, RR 3, Box 54, Browerville, MN 56438. Call 320-594-2456. Time 1:00-3:00 pm, Floyd Hardy Farm.

August 21 **Techniques for More Efficient Utilization of Vetch Cover Crop for Corn.** Carmen Fernholz, Route 2, Box 9A, Madison, MN 56256. Call 320-551-0898. Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

August 25 **An Agroforestry Field Tour in Alexandria.** Sites with alternative woody vegetation such as hybrid poplar and hazelnuts are planned. Time: 9:00 am-4:00 p.m. Call Mike Demchik, Agroforestry Management Extension Educator, at 218-894-5167 or medemchik@forestry.umn.edu.

August 26 **Horse Pasture Improvement Through Grazing Management and Red Clover.** 1st Field Stop—Scott and Terry Johnson, 3126 - 50th Street SE, Delano, MN 55328 and 2nd Field Stop—Mary Gumingo, 3276 County Road 30 SE, Delano, MN 55328. Call 612-682-7394 or 1-800-362-3667. Time: Delano Library 8:30 a.m.

August 30 **Forage Production to Maintain One Mature Dairy Cow Per Acre for 12 Months.** Ralph Stelling, Ral-Den Dairy, RR 1, Box 19, Millville, MN 55957. Call 507-798-2410. Time: 10:30 am - 2:30 p.m.

August 31 **Soil Conservation of Canning Crop Fields.** Andy Hart, R., C. & A. Hart Farms, 10805 County Road 11 NE, Elgin, MN 55932. Call 507-876-2256. Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Sept. 6 **Grapes as an Alternative Crop for the Family Farm.** Don Reding farm, 38577 Highway 68, Morgan, MN 56266. Call 507-249-3462. Time: 1:00 -4:00 pm

Sept. 7 **Bee Pollination on Red Clover.** Leland Buchholz, Route 1, Box 62A, Grey Eagle, MN 56336. Call 320-285-5401. Time: 1:00 pm

Sept. 8 **Programmatic Approach to Pasture Renovation for Cell Grazing.** Dan Persons, Route 1, Box 82, Kensington, MN 55343. Call 320-986-2336. Time: 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Sept. 8 **Cheese Making Field Day.** Kevin and Brad Donnay, Stickney Hill Dairy, Watkins, MN. Time: 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Sustainable Farming Association of Central MN.

Sept. 13 **Three Northwest Minnesota Grazing Group** Projects (c/o Burkel Grain Service Inc.) combined into one Field Day.

- *Project 1*—**Dairy Heifer and Dry Cow Supplementation on Pasture.** Schafer Farm, Strathcona, MN 56759. Call 218-528-3241. Time: 10:00 a.m.
- *Project 2*—**Dairy Heifer Feeding on Pasture.** Paul Duray, Greenbush, MN 56726. Call 218-782-2950 Time: 12:00 p.m.
- *Project 3*—**Dairy Heifer Growing on Pasture.** Barry Kirkeide, Greenbush, MN 56726. Call 218-782-3421. Time: 1:30 p.m.

September 15 **A Low-Cost Mechanism for Inter-seeding Cover Crops in Corn.** Tony Thompson, Willow Lake Farm, Box 128, 339 - 11th Street, Windom, MN 56101. Call 507-831-3483. Time: 10:00 a.m.

September 15 **Development and Continuation of a Community Based Sustainable Organic Growers Cooperative and Marketing System.** Patty Dease, 15832 County Road 7, South Haven, MN 55382. Call 320-236-7852. Time: 1:00 -7:00 p.m.

September 15 **Five Steps to Better Pasture: How Does it Really Work?** Sarah H. Mold, 7560 Sunrise Road, Harris, MN 55032. Call 651-674-7212. Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

September 16 **Horse Pasture Improvement Through Grazing Management and Red Clover.** Dale and Kathy Ronning, 3803 Dempsey Avenue SW, Waverly, MN 55390. Call 612-682-7394 or 1-800-362-3667. Time: 8:00 a.m. Registration at Delano Library, 12:00 p.m. bus leaves after lunch for Ronning's.

September 19 **Reviving and Enhancing Soils for Maximizing Performance of Pastures and Livestock.** Doug Rathke & Connie Karstens, 61231 MN Highway 7, Hutchinson, MN 55350. Call 320-587-6094. Time: 1:00 p.m.

September 22 **Turkey Litter—More is not Always Better.** Meierhofer Farms c/o Jeff Koehler and Belgrade Co-op, Dennis Zenner, 21518 Farm Crest Road, Belgrade, MN 56312. Call 320-254-8231 (Belgrade Co-op). Time: Registration 10:30 a.m.

September 23 **Soil Ecology and Managed Soil Surfaces.** Peter Seim, Thomas Hansmeyer, Bruce Bacon, 7363 - 175th Avenue NW, Ramsey, MN 55303. Call 763-753-5099. Time: 11:00 am-4:00 p.m.

October 10 **Improving Quality and Quantity of Pasture Forage with Rotational Grazing Reducing the Need to Convert Forest to Pasture.** Michael Harmon, Route 2, Box 348, Shevlin, MN 56676. Call 218-657-2592. Time: 1:00 p.m.

October 12 **Flour Corn as an Alternative Crop—The Benefits of Growing and Using Corn Flour.** Buckwheat Growers' Association/Lynda Converse, RR 3, Box 54, Browerville, MN 56438. Call 320-594-2456. Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Marvin Duhn Farm.

October 26 **Applying Manure to Corn at Agronomic Rates to Achieve Desired Yield and Reduce or Eliminate the Need for Commercial Fertilizer Use.** Project site at Taylor Farms will demonstrate nutrient management utilizing hog manure. Call 651-480-7704 or 651-480-7781. Time 1:00-2:30 p.m.

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.