

Late harvest resources available from U of M Extension

Soybean moisture levels of 16 to 20 percent or more at harvest have been reported throughout the state as this challenging harvest season continues, according to Lizabeth Stahl, crops educator with University of Minnesota Extension. At these moisture levels, mold becomes a storage concern. Much of the state's corn crop is also wet and unharvested, meaning that drying and storing is an important topic for corn as well as for soybeans.

To provide detailed information for growers, University of Minnesota Extension has developed a website full of resources devoted to dealing with this unusually cold and wet harvest season. Find these resources at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/lateharvest>

Detailed information about the drying of soybeans and corn can be found at this site as well as information about potential corn grain quality issues this fall and advice on

minimizing the effects of soil compaction. Bill Wilcke, agricultural engineer with University of Minnesota Extension says that corn will need to be dried in a high-heat dryer if the corn moisture is higher than about 22 percent. Using energy for heated-air drying is expected add to overall costs for producers this year. For more info, contact Lizabeth Stahl, 507-372-3912, stah0012@umn.edu or Bill Wilcke, 612-625-8205, wilck001@umn.edu.

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture selects three new board members

The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture has appointed three new board members to three-year terms: Atina Diffley, Lisa Smiley and Dale Woodbeck.

Atina Diffley, an organic farmer from Farmington, has been farming for 24 years and formerly co-owned Gardens of Egan, a 120-acre certified organic vegetable farm. She currently owns Organic Farming Works LLC, which provides private consulting services in organic vegetable production systems, marketing and planning.

Lisa Smiley is a former board member for the Minnesota Grape Growers Association, has worked on special projects for the Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute and was conference director for the

MGGA's Cold Climate Grape and Wine Conference. She and her husband own a farm in Cannon Falls, where they use sustainable practices for crop supplementation and for disease and insect control.

Dale Woodbeck, of Excelsior, is a member of the Sustainable Farming Association and a board member for Lakewinds Natural Foods Co-op and the Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners.

All three will serve on the board through August 2012. MISA is a partnership between the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota; the Sustainers' Coalition, a group of individuals and non-

profit organizations; and University of Minnesota Extension.

MISA brings together the diverse interests of the agricultural community with interests from across the University community in a cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture in Minnesota and beyond. Its board of directors includes equal representation of sustainable agriculture practitioners, university representatives, and representatives from the sustainable agriculture community including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and citizens. For more information about MISA visit www.misa.umn.edu.

Farmer-rancher grant proposal deadlines coming up

The deadline for North Central SARE Farmer & Rancher grant proposals is fast approaching—December 3, 2009. Whether you want to explore mushroom production and marketing, identify and raise Hmong medicinal herbs, test a new reduced tillage method, or try an outdoor shelter to use when grazing cattle all winter, you can use these grants to test innovative research and education ideas on your farm! For more information, or to download the application, go to: www.sare.org/ncrsare/

[prod.htm](http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm) or contact Beth Nelson, 612-625-8217, schre002@umn.edu.

You have until January 15, 2010 to apply for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program. Competitive grants for up to \$25,000 are awarded to individuals or groups for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects in Minnesota. The Grant Program funds practices that

promote environmental stewardship and conservation of resources as well as improve profitability and quality of life on farms and in rural areas. For more information or to download the application, go to: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.aspx>. MDA encourages you to contact them for helpful hints, especially if you don't have experience with writing proposals. Contact Jeanne.ciborowski@state.mn.us, 651-201-6217

Finding land to farm

Whether you're looking for 10 acres to raise fruits and vegetables for a CSA just outside the city, or 250 acres to graze cattle near Benson, finding land to buy or rent is one of the biggest challenges for beginning farmers. Two new online tools might help.

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) has launched a free online ad type-service, 'Land Link-Up'. A form is available on the Web site for advertising farmland that is for sale or rent, or to submit an inquiry if you are looking to buy or rent farmland

www.mosesorganic.org/landlinkup.html

The Center for Rural Affairs is taking more of a matchmaking approach to connect would-be farmers and landowners on their Land Link Services Program. Visitors to the site start by completing a clearinghouse questionnaire. The questionnaire identifies if the farmer or rancher needs land or has land to offer, in addition to information about the type of land needed or offered, necessary or available buildings and crop details. Land Link Services matches farmers or ranchers' interests with the farms and

ranches in its database. Once a match is found, beginning farmers or ranchers will receive a description of compatible farms along with the landowner's name and address. Users can then contact the landowner directly. Once a match is found, Land Link staff provides examples of other successful matches and makes suggestions and referrals based on individual circumstances. There is an initial charge of \$20 to become part of the Land Link Clearinghouse data base.

USDA Launches New Web Pages and On-Line Tools to Help Consumers Make Healthier Food Choices

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack launched the 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' initiative on Sept. 15 to begin a national conversation about food and to help connect people more closely with the farmers who supply their food and increase the production, marketing and consumption of fresh, nutritious food that is grown locally in a sustainable manner. Web pages include three new online tools that will help consumers make healthier food choices and gain a better appreciation of the role of American agriculture in food production from the farm to the table. [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/knowyourfarmer?](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/knowyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER)

[navid=KNOWYOURFARMER](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/knowyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER)

"Because more than 80 percent of our population lives in suburban and metropolitan areas, when we think of food, we more often think of the grocery store than the farm," said Vilsack. "There is a

disconnect between the farmer and the food that consumers buy and we want to reconnect these long standing ties between the people who produce the food and those who purchase and prepare it. These new online tools will help do that."

The three new online tools are:

Growing a Healthier You: Nutrition From the Farm to the Table - This new web page links garden and farm produce to the nutritional well-being of the public and the significance of locally grown fruits and vegetables. This web page, located at www.cnpp.usda.gov/KnowYourFarmer.htm, will promote national initiatives, such as National Nutrition Month and feature interesting facts about specific fruits, vegetables and other foods. It will also feature What's for Dinner (or Breakfast or Lunch); Your Garden, Your Produce, Your Menus; and From Garden to Plate, Safety Matters.

MyFood-a-pedia - The much anticipated MyFood-a-pedia is a new online tool that gives consumers quick access to nutrition information for over 1,000 foods. The MyFood-a-pedia provides calorie count information on the contribution of the food to the five food groups people need to be healthy. MyFood-a-pedia, located at www.MyFoodapedia.gov, also provides the number of "extra" calories in foods from solid fats, added sugars, and alcohol.

10 Tips Series - "10 Tips" will feature a variety of topics under CNPP's Nutrition Education Series. The "10 Tips" begins with cutting back on salt and sodium, followed by tips for setting good examples to be a healthy role model for children, tips for following a vegetarian diet, and tips for making more environmentally friendly food choices. Other tips will be added regularly, and can be downloaded at www.MyPyramid.gov

Help with business and market planning

Once it dries up a little and you can get those crops harvested—you'll have time to look over and review your business plan and make changes for next year! A number of new resources are available.

SARE has released the second in its series of online courses, "Strategic Farm/Ranch Planning and Marketing Course." While this free online course is designed for ag professionals wanting to help clients make better business planning and marketing decisions, it is also appropriate for farmers.

The course covers goal setting, developing business and marketing plans, managing risk, meeting with lenders and alternative financing, and transferring farms and understanding retirement options. You can preview the course at <http://www.sare.org/coreinfo/ceprogram.htm>. To take the course, register through eXtension's online campus at <http://campus.extension.org>.

Interpreting Financial Statements and Measures is an excellent new online video workshop series from the Center for Farm Financial Management. It helps ag producers understand and use the 4 major

financial statements and the 21 financial measures recommended by the Farm Financial Standards Council. Each session provides benchmarks, based on actual farms, that producers can use to evaluate their own financial position and their financial performance. <http://ifsam.cffm.umn.edu/>

Also from the Center for Farm Financial Management a free online business planning tool, "AgPlan", www.agplan.com. It offers tips and resources for writing your online plan, then lets you share the plan with reviewers, if you choose.

Conferences, conferences, conferences!

There are great conferences to take advantage of throughout the winter. These conferences bring in superb speakers and offer informative and helpful breakout sessions as well as opportunities to share information with other farmers. We highlight a few of the major conferences below, but check out the MISA calendar for more events and workshops.

The Minnesota Organic Conference & Trade Show, January 15-16, St. Cloud

Farmers, buyers and curious consumers are encouraged to save the date for the annual Minnesota Organic Conference. Scheduled January 15-16 in St. Cloud, the conference will feature sessions on topics ranging from growing organic foods and enterprise planning to human nutrition.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture organizers expect 500 people to attend the event. Keynote speakers will be agricultural journalist Alan Guebert, whose "Farm and Food" opinion column is syndicated in more than 70 rural and farm publications; and Angie Tagtow, a registered dietitian who helps audiences connect the dots between healthy soils, healthy foods, and healthy people.

The conference will also offer more than 35 breakout sessions for crop, livestock, fruit and vegetable growers. A concurrent trade

show will feature seed companies, machinery dealers, fertilizer suppliers, grain and dairy buyers, certifying agencies, and educational displays.

Watch the conference web site www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic for updated information about attending the conference or exhibiting at the trade show. Please contact Mary Hanks at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more information: 651-201-6277 or mary.hanks@state.mn.us

Midwest Value Added Conference, January 21-22, 2010, Eau Claire, Wi

The conference brings together farmers, entrepreneurs, educators, and others to discuss topics like farm business management, marketing your products and on-farm bio energy options. The keynote speakers will be Will Allen, Founder and CEO of Growing Power; Melinda Hemmelgarn, Registered Dietitian, Freelance Journalist and Food Sleuth; and Michael Perry, Author, Humorist and Amateur Pig Farmer. For more information, go to:

www.rivercountryrccd.org/valad.html or call River Country RC&D 715-834-9672. This year also features an all new Value Added Agriculture College on Wed. Jan. 20, 2010 with full and half-day workshops on topics ranging from permaculture, and post

harvest vegetable handling to grant writing, and on-farm food safety.

Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Conference, February 20, Northfield

Mark your calendars for the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's 19th Annual Conference on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010. The event is being held at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. Mark Ritchie, Minnesota's Secretary of State will be the keynote speaker. Visit www.sfa-mn.org for conference details, or contact Anne with SFA at communications@sfa-mn.org, 320-226-6318.

MOSES Organic Farming Conference February 25-27, 2010, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Learn from a community of over 2,000 farmers, educators, and advocates. Share best practices, enjoy incredible food, choose from over 60 informative and dynamic workshops and experience 130+ booths in the exhibit hall! This year's keynotes include Lynn Miller "Farming the Future", Chuck Hassebrook "A Wave of Change: Challenges and Hope for Transforming the American Food and Farming System" and Dr. Margaret Melon "Two Views of Food Safety: Organic Agriculture and Biotechnology". For more information, go to: www.mosesorganic.org or call 715-772-3153.

What the World Eats is focus of U of M Bell Museum's "Hungry Planet"

The grocery lists and dining tables of people around the globe are the subject of a provocative exhibit called "Hungry Planet: What the World Eats," at the University of Minnesota Bell Museum of Natural History. Based on the national best-selling book by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio that explores the dinner tables of families around the world, "Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" combines mesmerizing photos with hands-on displays that explore issues of food in the 21st century—what people eat, how much it costs and where it comes from—as well as learning how different cultures approach the growing and processing of food and eating it.

The Bell Museum's exhibit focuses on 10 cultures, many with ties to Minnesota, and lets visitors "shop" for global produce from

world markets and track that food as it travels from field to fork. The exhibit features special sections on the rise of fast food culture, the evolution and history of food plants, current and ancient agricultural methods and the practice of raising and eating meat.

Menzel's large format photos of outdoor markets, restaurants and kitchen tables from around the globe also provide the backdrop for displays of real food products. Museum visitors also can contribute photos of their own family dinners for posting on a digital display within the exhibit.

Every Thursday evening during the exhibit's 26-week run, the museum will host a range of provocative programming on the topic of food — from panel discussions on food-

related topics in the news, to presentations by university experts and local food gurus, to tastings of locally produced foods and beverages. Thursday evening programming is free with museum admission.

The Bell Museum, located at 10 Church St. S.E. in Minneapolis, is part of the university's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. More than a half a million Minnesotans are reached each year by programs operated by the Bell Museum, which is Minnesota's official natural history museum. For more information, visit www.bellmuseum.org.

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