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January 4, 2002

Fishhouse heaters can bring carbon monoxide poisoning

Ice fishing enthusiasts who have a heater in their fishhouse need to beware of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. A carbon monoxide detector should be standard equipment in every fishhouse with a heater, according to Goodhue County educator Chuck Schwartau of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"A heater that consumes the oxygen in a house can turn the pleasure of ice fishing into tragedy," Schwartau points out.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless gas that tends to sneak up on its victims, says Schwartau. Victims tend to get drowsy and may attribute that to the comfortable warmth of the house and the slow pace of waiting for fish to bite. In reality, the drowsiness may be the first sign of carbon monoxide poisoning. A headache may also be a symptom.

Schwartau lists the symptoms of CO poisoning in order of increasing severity. They begin with headache, shortness of breath, dizziness, fatigue, mental confusion and difficulty thinking, and loss of fine hand-eye coordination. These symptoms may be followed by nausea and vomiting, rapid heart rate, hallucinations, and inability to execute voluntary movements accurately. The most severe symptoms progress to collapse, lowered body temperature (hypothermia), coma, convulsions, seriously low blood pressure, cardiac and respiratory failure, and death.

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"Because of the wide range of symptoms, prevention is a better option than diagnosis by symptom," says Schwartau.

Poorly vented wood or gas heaters are common causes of CO poisoning. However , a catalytic heater can be a cause that sometimes goes unrecognized. "Because catalytic heaters don't have a roaring, open flame, they may be forgotten as burners," says Schwartau. "Actually they consume oxygen, just as does any other burning device."

Schwartau says a simple, battery-operated CO detector in the fishhouse could be the difference between a successful fishing trip and a family tragedy. He suggests it as a post-holiday gift for an ice fishing enthusiast. Hardware stores carry the detectors.

"If you feel some of the symptoms and have any suspicion of CO poisoning, the first action to take is to get into fresh air," says Schwartau. "Then see a doctor immediately for treatment."

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Web,V2,V4,V5,V8MN,V9,E4 schwrt1228

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 4, 2002

Winona will host 4-State Dairy Management Seminar Feb. 21

Dairy feeding and management to maximize profitability will be the focus of this year's 4-State Dairy Management Seminar, scheduled in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois in February.

In Minnesota the seminar will be Feb. 21 in Winona at the Riverport Inn, one block from the junction of Highways 61 and 43 at 900 Bruski Drive. The seminar is designed for dairy producers, feed industry personnel and agribusiness professionals. It's sponsored by the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin, Iowa State University and the University of Illinois.

The seminar will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. following a half-hour for registration. There will be four speakers: Jim Linn, Extension dairy nutritionist, University of Minnesota; Kent Weigel, dairy genetics specialist, University of Wisconsin; Geoff Dahl, Extension dairy physiology and management specialist, University of Illinois; and Leo Timms, Extension dairy physiology specialist, Iowa State University.

Each speaker will make one presentation in the morning and another in the afternoon. Linn's topics will be water quality for dairy cattle, as well as protein in feed, in milk and in manure. Weigel's topics will be genetic improvement to build a longer-lasting cow, along with the impact of inbreeding and the role of crossbreeding. Dahl's

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topics will be accelerating post-weaning heifer growth, and photoperiod management of dairy cattle. The topics of Timms will be maintaining healthy teats, and hemorrhagic bowel syndrome.

The seminar registration fee is $35 per person before Feb. 1 and $25 for each additional person from the same farm. The late registration fee is $45 per person at the door. The registration fee includes lunch. To register for the Minnesota session, send a check payable to the University of Minnesota to Winona County Extension, Attn: Neil Broadwater, 202 W. 3rd St., Winona, MN 55987. To obtain a registration flyer or further information, call (507) 457-6440.

Other seminar dates and locations are Feb. 19, Breese, Ill.; Feb. 20, Sioux Center, Iowa; and Feb. 22, Arlington, Wis.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,D1MN,X3 lynn0102

Source: Jim Linn, (612) 624-4995
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 9, 2002

Owatonna will host Midwest Ridge and Strip-Till Conference Feb. 5

The 2002 Midwest Ridge and Strip-Till Conference will be Feb. 5 at the Holiday Inn Express in Owatonna. It's designed for farmers who use ridge-till and strip-till planting, as well as those thinking about switching to one of these planting systems.

The program will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It will be preceded by an informal roundtable discussion for those who arrive early. The roundtable will provide farmers an opportunity to share ideas that worked as well as those that didn't work.

Conference topics range from fertilizer management to use of tracks in ridge-till and strip-till. Farmers who have been successful using either of the planting systems will be featured. The conference provides an opportunity for farmers to learn from other farmers, with information exchange taking place throughout the day.

The conference fee is $55 per person. Early registration is strongly recommended. For a registration flyer, call (612) 624-0724 or (800) 318-8636, e-mail extconf@umn.edu or go to www.conferences.umn.edu/mn/crops on the Internet. Registration from the website is also an option.

For further information on the conference program, contact George Rehm at the University of Minnesota at (612) 625-6210 or rehmx001@umn.edu .

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Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4,X2,79 rehm0108

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 9, 2002

'Positive Parenting' classes to be offered throughout Minnesota

The award-winning, video-based "Positive Parenting" curriculum from the University of Minnesota Extension Service is being offered in 10 Minnesota locations starting in late January.

Positive Parenting is an easy-to-use parenting curriculum designed for counselors, social workers, teachers, pastors, youth workers and other interested persons.

Dual tracks--for use with parents of children up to 12 and teenagers—are offered.

Choose the "Positive Parenting I and II" track and curricula for use with parents of children up to 12 years of age. Lesson topics include physical punishment, limits, consequences, listening, anger, challenging behaviors, parenting tools, attention, respect, responsibility, monitoring and siblings.

The "Positive Parenting of Teens" track and curriculum is for use with parents of early adolescents, 10 to 16 years of age. Lesson topics include parenting teens today, perception, development, communication, conflict, discipline, teen decision-making and friends/peers.

The hands-on leadership training includes reviews of the videos and print materials, a model teaching session, research reviews, how to use the curriculum, evaluation and resources. The training team includes Extension staff who developed the curricula. Dual-track training (unless otherwise indicated) will be offered from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at these dates and locations:

Wednesday, Jan. 23, Willmar – Health & Human Services Multipurpose Room, 2200 23rd St. NE.

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Thursday, Jan. 24, Redwood Falls – Redwood County Public Health Building, 266 East Bridge St. (Teens track only).

Wednesday, Jan. 30, Rochester – Olmsted County Extension Office, 1421 SE Third Ave.

Monday, Feb. 4, St. Cloud – Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. South.

Tuesday, Feb. 12, Mankato – Blue Earth County Government Center, 410 South 5th St.

Thursday, Feb. 21, Fergus Falls – Otter Tail Power Company Community Rooms, 216 South Cascade.

Tuesday, March 5, Tower – Fortune Bay Resort, 1430 Boise Fort Rd.

Tuesday, March 12, Two Harbors – Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 601 4th Ave.

Tuesday, March 19, Bemidji – Evangelical Covenant Church, 5405 Hwy. 2 West.

Tuesday, March 26, Carlton – Black Bear Hotel, I-35 and Highway 210.

Registration forms may be obtained by contacting your local University of Minnesota Extension Service office, or from the curricula coordinator at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, (612) 624-1791 or robrecht@che.umn.edu. The training cost is $50, including lunch, and pre-registration is required. The curricula are available at a special training rate of $240 (retail $275) for "Positive Parenting of Teens" and $220 (retail $250) for "Positive Parenting I & II."

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, F1 pparent172

Source: Renee Obrecht-Como (612) 624-1791, robrecht@che.umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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January 9, 2002

Soybean conferences set at Morton, Willmar, Fergus Falls

Updating soybean growers on the many changes and challenges in soybean production is the purpose of upcoming conferences at three Minnesota locations. The 2002 Soybean Production Conferences will be Jan. 28 at Morton at Jackpot Junction, Jan. 29 at Willmar at the Holiday Inn and Feb. 8 at Fergus Falls at the Best Western. The University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council are the sponsors.

The program will include several topics related to marketing, including grain marketing tips, movement patterns of Minnesota grains, the 2002 Farm Program, and implications of a biodiesel mandate. Topics directly related to production will include soybean diseases and control, weed control, soybean aphids, iron chlorosis and soil fertility, soybean breeding, the 2002 weather outlook and choosing varieties for protein.

Presenters will include U of M research and Extension personnel, along with a producer and a soybean exporter. There will be opportunities for interaction between producers and presenters.

A panel discussion on the future of soybean production in Minnesota will also be part of the conferences. Panelists at Morton and Willmar will be Gyles Randall, U of M

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soil scientist, and Bruce Potter, U of M Extension integrated pest management specialist. Panelists at Fergus Falls will be Carol Windels, U of M plant pathologist; Jochum Wiersma, U of M Extension small grains specialist; and Paul Porter, U of M agronomist.

The conferences will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. following a half-hour for registration. The fee is $15 at the door, which covers lunch and registration materials. For further information, contact Seth Naeve at (612) 625-4298 or naeve002@umn.edu . There is a flyer on the conferences at www.soybeans.umn.edu/pdfs/2002soybeanconference.pdf on the U of M soybean website at www.soybeans.umn.edu .

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,F4,X2,34,56 naev0107

Source: Seth Naeve, (612) 625-4298
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 11, 2002

Restrict farm payments to family farmers, students in U of M class say

You can ask agriculture's movers and shakers to define a family farm, but you'll get no agreement. That's what happened to the editors of "Progressive Farmer" magazine (www.progressivefarmer.com, December 2001 issue) after they talked to several Congressmen, farm organization and commodity group leaders, ag business executives and environmental leaders.

"Everyone has a definition (of a family farm), but their answers confused us completely," the article says. "Each of these people claims to be interested in saving the family farm, but nearly all of them have a different image of what they want to save. This may be why it is so difficult to write a farm bill that treats everyone in agriculture equally and fairly."

But Richard A. Levins, economist and professor with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says 23 undergraduate students in one of his classes narrowed it down to three criteria.

The family farm question was the final paper project for the class, which was divided almost equally between students with city and farm backgrounds. The students didn't agree on an exact definition, but Levins says there was general agreement on three points:

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1. To be eligible for farm payments and to be a family farmer, one must make all major management decisions for the farm. The students said situations where off-farm corporations make management decisions—as happens frequently in broiler production—should not be eligible.

2. Again, to be a family farmer and eligible for farm payments, one must declare that his or her principal occupation is farming. "The students said that Scottie Pippen, Ted Turner and others who are clearly not farmers should not get farm payments," Levins says.

3. Farm payments should be based on financial need, not production levels. The students said only those who can demonstrate low income should receive payments. "This is more controversial, but also more in line with public perceptions," Levins says.

"Sometimes an old problem is best viewed through new eyes," Levins says. "I was pleased to see that almost all the students valued family farming and thought it should be supported. The trick is to bring what is actually being supported, and what the public thinks is being supported, more in line."

The applied economics course, "Economic Development of U.S. Agriculture," was taught by Levins, with guest lectures by Professor Emeritus Willard W. Cochrane and former Congressman David Minge.

Levins may be reached at (612) 625-5238, or dlevins@apec.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2, P1

levins182

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 11, 2002

Here's a handy reference for federal and Minnesota tax rates

If you're a bit hazy about the individual tax rate bracket you're in, or want to see how your favorite celebrities may be taxed, you can check it out on a University of Minnesota website.

The site has tables for individual federal and Minnesota tax rates. For example, the federal tax rate for a married couple filing jointly is 15 percent up to $45,200 of income. Then it's 27.5 percent up to an income of $109,250. For singles, it's 15 percent up to $27,050 and 27.5 percent to $65,550.

Beginning Minnesota individual tax rates for a married couple filing jointly are 5.35 percent to $26,480; then 7.05 percent up to $105,200.

There's also a list of standard deduction rates, personal exemptions, 2001 mileage rates and 2001 self-employment tax information. In addition, you'll find corporate, estate/trust and Minnesota corporate tax rates.

Check the tax rate information out on the U of M Southwest Research and Outreach Center's site at http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu, then click on "farm management." Or, ask a county office of the U of M Extension Service to download it from the Internet.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

weness1102

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 11, 2002

4-H livestock Quality Assurance and Ethics certification offered

Minnesota 4-H members who want to exhibit livestock or poultry at the Minnesota State Fair this year will need to be certified in a new Quality Assurance and Ethics curriculum. Certification is available for participants in a workshop that will take place Saturday, March 2 in St. Paul.

The Quality Assurance and Ethics training will be on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus in the Animal Science-Veterinary Medicine Building. It will begin with registration at 9 a.m. and run until about noon. It will be held in conjunction with a Spring Sheep Workshop that will be in the same building at the same time. The QA&E training will make up the morning portion of the youth component of the Spring Sheep Workshop. The afternoon portion of the workshop's youth component will focus on show lamb health, and will run until about 3 p.m.

The QA&E session can provide certification for all Minnesota State Fair beef, dairy, goat, poultry, rabbit, sheep and swine exhibitors.

The sheep workshop adult sessions will cover scrapie eradication, raising lambs for ethnic markets, pasture improvement, using guard animals and lambing challenges. A question-and-answer session with a veterinarian will also be available.

The workshop fee if you register in advance is $25 for the first person and $5 for each additional person from the same flock. If you pay at the door, the cost is $30 for the

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first person and $10 for each additional person from the same flock. The fee includes lunch, refreshments and materials.

For more information or to obtain a registration flyer, contact Jeremy Geske at the Dakota County Extension Office by phone at (651) 480-7704, by fax at (651) 463-8002 or by e-mail at geske002@umn.edu .

Spring Sheep Workshop sponsors are the U of M Extension Service and College of Veterinary Medicine and the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,A4,Y1 gesk0111

Source: Jeremy Geske, (651) 480-7704
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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January 11, 2002

Spring Sheep Workshop at U of M will be March 2

Improving pastures for sheep and using guard animals will be two main topics at a Spring Sheep Workshop on Saturday, March 2 in St. Paul. The fourth annual workshop will be on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus in the Animal Science-Veterinary Medicine Building.

The workshop is designed to help sheep producers from around Minnesota improve sheep management skills. It will include a youth program focusing on the Quality Assurance and Ethics curriculum required for all State Fair 4-H sheep exhibitors. Participants in this workshop will meet their State Fair certification requirements.

In addition to quality assurance, tentative topics include scrapie eradication, raising lambs for ethnic markets, pasture improvement, using guard animals and lambing challenges. Workshop participants will have an opportunity to ask a veterinarian questions about lambing.

Registration for the program will begin at 9 a.m., and the workshop will end around 3 p.m. The fee if you register in advance is $25 for the first person and $5 for each additional person from the same flock. If you pay at the door, the cost is $30 for the first person and $10 for each additional person from the same flock.

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For more information or to obtain a registration flyer, contact Jeremy Geske at the Dakota County Extension Office by phone at (651) 480-7704, by fax at (651) 463-8002 or by e-mail at geske002@umn.edu .

Spring Sheep Workshop sponsors are the U of M Extension Service and College of Veterinary Medicine and the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,S1,X6 gesk0110

Source: Jeremy Geske, (651) 480-7700
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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January 15, 2002

Workshops on tile drainage design, drainage water management set

Farmland tile drainage design and drainage water management will be the subject of three workshops in Crookston and North Mankato later this winter. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is planning the workshops in cooperation with several other agencies.

The first two workshops will focus on tile drainage design. They will be Feb. 26 and 27 in Crookston at the Northland Inn and March 4 and 5 in North Mankato at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center. The third workshop will be a seminar on drainage issues and applications. It will be March 6 in North Mankato at the Best Western.

The workshops are designed for tile drainage contractors, farmers, landowners, crop consultants, soil and water resource advisers, public officials and other interested persons.

Pre-registration for the workshops is required, and seating is limited. The fee is $100 per person for the two-day workshops or $60 for a single day. Certified Crop Adviser credits (five to six per day) are available through the Minnesota Certified Crop Adviser program.

For registration information contact Jean Spohr at the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris at (320) 589-1711 or spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu. Program information is available from Jerry Wright at the same phone number or at jwright@umn.edu.

The first day of the two-day workshops will cover subsurface tile drainage design, including planning, tile sizing, lateral spacing and the Minnesota Drainage

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Guide. Environmental concerns and tile drainage experiences will also be topics. The second day will include hands-on tile drainage design exercises, farmer/contractor tile installation experiences and economics. Presenters and discussion leaders will be university faculty members, tiling contractors and soil and water resource advisers. Several tile manufacturers and equipment suppliers will host display booths.

The March 6 seminar at North Mankato will feature several concurrent topics. They include tile drainage research by the U of M and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, tile drainage and farm management, alternative land use, and drainage and USDA farm programs. Other topics will be laser calibration and maintenance, tile line assessment and tile installation accuracy. There will also be an OSHA-led training session on excavation safety. Tile drainage impact on the water quality of lakes and streams will be emphasized.

In addition to Wright, further program information is available from Gary Sands in St. Paul at (612) 625-9733, Lowell Busman in Waseca at (507) 835-3620 or Zach Fore in Red Lake Falls at (218) 253-4401.

Workshop sponsors are the U of M Extension Service, Iowa State University Extension, the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service and the North Dakota State University Extension Service in partnership with the Minnesota Land Improvement Contractors Association.

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Web,V2,V4MN,A2MN,C4,F4MN,07,61 wrigh109

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 15, 2002

Rochester dairy seminars will feature nationally-known speakers

"The good, the bad and the ugly" of modernizing a dairy farm will be a main topic at a seminar for dairy producers Jan. 31 in Rochester. The program at the Holiday Inn South will be followed by a seminar on dairy cow foot and leg health Feb. 28 at the same location. The University of Minnesota Extension Service in southeast Minnesota and AgStar Financial Services are sponsoring the events.

The Jan. 31 program will feature John Smith, head of the Dairy Science Department at Kansas State University. Smith is a prolific researcher and author who has been a featured speaker at many regional and national dairy programs. He will address "the good, the bad and the ugly" and "avoiding the nightmares" of dairy modernization. He will focus on lessons that can be learned from others who have expanded a dairy operation, including how the original decision was made regarding whether to expand.

In the second program segment Smith will discuss dairy herd "special needs and grouping strategies." The emphasis will be on grouping cows that have similar special needs or need similar management. The final program segment will be on "managing cow comfort and milking parlor decisions."

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The seminar will be from 10:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Holiday Inn South on Highway 63 South in Rochester. A fee of $25 per person covers lunch, refreshments and handouts. Pre-registration is requested by calling AgStar Financial Services at (800) 327-3416.

The Feb. 28 seminar on dairy cow foot and leg health will be at the same location, with the same fee and pre-registration at the same phone number. It will also begin at 10:45 a.m.

The Feb. 28 seminar will feature Jan Shearer, professor and Extension dairy veterinarian at the University of Florida. He will focus on the negative impact of cow lameness on dairy profits. He is nationally know for his research, teaching and writing about foot and leg health in dairy cows.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,D1,Z4 swrta111

Source: Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 15, 2002

Livestock and Poultry Odor Workshops set at Morton, Owatonna

Odor from livestock and poultry production will be the subject of workshops at Morton and Owatonna later this winter. The workshops at Morton will be Feb. 20 and 21 at Jackpot Junction, and those at Owatonna will be March 7 and 8 at Cabela's.

The odor workshops organized by the University of Minnesota are now in their fourth year and will be in two separate programs. Workshop I is entitled "Introduction to Odor Emissions, Measurement, Dispersion and Control." It will be Feb. 20 at Morton and March 7 at Owatonna. It's designed for county commissioners, township officers, planning and zoning officials, livestock producers, Extension educators, ag loan officers and concerned citizens.

Workshop I will cover factors affecting livestock odor emissions, basics of odor measurement and control, community relations and odor regulations. Participants will receive an update on health issues related to air emissions; current air quality research at the University of Minnesota; and state and federal concerns regarding ammonia, dust and global warming gases. The information can be useful to those who develop regulations, zoning guidelines or land use plans for rural Minnesota, as well as others who have a general interest in livestock and poultry odor.

Workshop II is entitled "Technical Training on OFFSET, Biofilters, Anaerobic Digestion and Odor Management Plans." It will be Feb. 21 at Morton and March 8 at

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Owatonna. It's designed for private and public engineers, consultants and technicians, county feedlot officers, planning and zoning officials, Extension educators and livestock producers.

Workshop II will teach the skills necessary to use a new tool for estimating odor setback distances. It will also provide an assessment of anaerobic digestion, as well as information on designing biofilters and developing odor management plans.

Workshop presenters will include David Schmidt, Kevin Janni and Larry Jacobson, all engineers with the University of Minnesota Extension Service; Kathy Norlien, research scientist with the Minnesota Department of Health; and Tina Rosenstein, Nicollet County environmental services director.

Fees are $65 per person for Workshop I or II or $120 for both workshops. To get registration information or a workshop flyer call Barb Oliver at (612) 625-7024 or go to www.bae.umn.edu/ on the Internet and click on the icon for the 2002 Livestock and Poultry Odor Workshops. For workshop program information call David Schmidt at (612) 625-4262.

Workshop sponsors are the University of Minnesota's Extension Service and Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

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Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,T2 schmt111

Source: David Schmidt, (612) 625-4262
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 18, 2002

'Soybean Schools' set at six sites in NW Minnesota

Updated soybean production information and research results will be topics at "Soybean Schools" at six northwest Minnesota locations in February. The events are designed for growers and will be at Hallock, Argyle, St. Hilaire, McIntosh, Twin Valley and Detroit Lakes. The University of Minnesota's Extension Service and Northwest Research and Outreach Center and the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council are sponsors.

Presenters will be University of Minnesota research and Extension faculty members. They will cover weed control, soybean diseases and disease management, iron chlorosis and soil fertility, and soybean aphids. Soybean variety selection, planting dates and seeding rates will also be topics.

Producers are encouraged to bring samples of soybeans and other crops to be tested for quality traits at no charge by U of M researchers.

Continuing education units have been applied for, and will be available to participants with a $10 fee.

The schools are free and open to the public. Further information is available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service in northwest Minnesota.

Soybean School dates and locations are:

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--Feb. 5, 9 a.m.-12 noon, Hallock, Courthouse meeting room; 2-5 p.m., Argyle, Farmer Dell;

--Feb. 6, 9 a.m.-12 noon, St. Hilaire, Northwest Grain Elevator meeting room; 2-5 p.m., McIntosh, Municipal Building auditorium;

--Feb. 7, 9 a.m.-12 noon, Twin Valley, Community Center; 2-5 p.m., Detroit Lakes, Holiday Inn.

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Web,V2MN,F4MN,Z1,03 naev116

Source: Seth Naeve, (612) 625-4298
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 18, 2002

Houseplant care in northern climates presents special challenges

Taking good care of houseplants in climates as far north as Minnesota can present some special challenges. The great variation is seasonal temperatures is an obvious factor. However, changing daylight conditions can also have a big impact on plants, according to Deb Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"To keep houseplants healthy throughout the year, it's necessary to consider variations in moisture, humidity and nutrient requirements along with light and temperature changes," says Brown. "And we need to remember that these factors are all interrelated."

Brown is the author of a U of M Extension publication entitled "Caring for Houseplants in Northern Climates." The publication provides tips on helping plants adjust from long hours of daylight in spring and summer to much shorter days in fall and winter. It also provides information on temperature, water, humidity, and nutrient considerations in houseplant care, as well as cleaning houseplants and summer care.

"Caring for Houseplants in Northern Climates" is on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1130.html . Copies printed from the Internet are available at county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Ask for item FS-1130.

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Answers to plant care and gardening questions are also available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

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Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow116

Source: Deb Brown, (612) 624-7491
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 23, 2002

Reconsider the value of Bt corn each year, economist advises

Is the value of Bt corn worth the technology fee? That's the question to consider if you've been planting Bt corn and European corn borer infestations on your farm have been low, a University of Minnesota economist says.

"Corn borer populations in Minnesota and Iowa have been very low since 1998," says Terry Hurley, farm management economist with the U of M Extension Service. The 1997 growing season was the last year when borer populations were close to average (about one borer per plant in Minnesota).

Research by Hurley and co-workers Paul Mitchell at Texas A & M and Marlin Rice at Iowa State University shows an average value of about $16 an acre for planting Bt corn in Minnesota. That's based on historical population trends through 1998. Assuming a technology fee of $10 an acre, that leaves an extra $6 per acre of profits.

"But if there are no corn borers around, there are no benefits to growing Bt corn," Hurley says. "The question that remains unanswered is whether Bt corn has changed these historical trends. If 50 percent of corn is Bt every year, that means 50 percent fewer borers in the next generation. And if you do that for a few years, borer populations become very small in a hurry."

"Some farmers who've been planting Bt corn may be in a situation where it becomes less valuable each year," Hurley concludes.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2, F4, P1

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 23, 2002

Editors: A black-and-white photo of Bruce and Jodi Heim on their farm is available. To obtain a photo call (612) 624-3064 or (612) 625-3168, or e-mail jk@umn.edu.

Children, school activities spur changes on Winona Co. dairy farm

With six children, the motivation for Bruce and Jodi Heim to change their Winona County dairy operation in the mid-1990s was clear. They treasured time together as a family. Heather, their oldest, was heading into junior high, and countless games, concerts and other school activities lay ahead. Bruce and Jodi wanted the opportunity to attend events and support their children without being tied to milking their cows twice a day, seven days a week.

"We wanted to be able to have enough cows to have a full-time hired man so that we could take some time off," says Bruce. "We were really tied down--we missed only two or three milkings per year. And the kids were getting to the age where they were getting involved in activities."

It seemed clear that bringing in full-time help would require upgrading facilities, especially for milking. "Bruce thought it would be easier to have a hired man in a flat-barn parlor, rather than a stanchion barn," Jodi recalls. "Nobody wanted to work in a stanchion barn."

The 400-acre Heim farm is located a short distance south of Interstate 90 just west of Fremont. It's the farm where Bruce grew up and where his father grew up, and has

been in the family since the 1930s. Bruce has been involved in dairying his whole life, and worked with his father, brothers and sisters after graduating from high school in 1979. He and Jodi were married in 1980 and started farming on their own in 1991. They bought the farm from Bruce's mother that year, two years after his father died.

Bruce and Jodi are the parents of Heather, 18; Holly, 16; Christopher, 14; Leah, 13; and ten-year-old identical twins Brooke and Breana.

The Heims were milking 75 cows in 1991, which was the number of stalls in the stanchion barn. They gradually increased cow numbers to 95, which meant the extra work of switching cows in and out of the stanchions for each milking. They also sensed a need to increase cow comfort.

"We tried mattresses in the stalls and other things to make the cows more comfortable, but it wasn't working out," says Bruce. "Too many heifers were getting banged up in the stalls. We started thinking about a freestall barn where cows would have more room to move around."

Working with Brickl Brothers, a construction firm from West Salem, Wis., the Heims began to look at plans for a new freestall barn. They also worked with Duane Hutton of Agra Advisory in Minnesota City. Hutton developed budgets and cash flow projections. When plans were finalized, he contacted lending institutions to obtain bids for the financing.

"At first we looked at building a pit parlor, but the cost was too high," Bruce recalls. "We decided to go with a flat barn step-up parlor."

After almost two years of planning, construction on the new 96 x 170-ft. freestall barn began in November of 1995. The Heims moved their cows into the barn shortly before Christmas that year.

The next step was to put in the new parlor and do other remodeling in the old barn. The Heims hired Amish neighbors to do this work, which began as soon as the cows went into the new barn. They put in a 12-stall parlor with a 16-inch step-up. They also tore out the haymow floor in the barn and put in higher ceilings. The rest of the space was used for a holding area, employee break room and office area, maternity pens, a palpation rail, and pens for cows almost ready to calve. The Heims milked for the first time in the new parlor on New Year's Eve at the end of 1995.

After completing the parlor the Amish workers continued with the other remodeling work. "They were all done by the end of February, and their final bill was less than the estimate," says Bruce.

With the construction work finished and the new parlor operational, the Heims shifted a part-time employee to full-time status early in 1996. Last year that person took a job in another community, and they hired their present full-time employee, Casper Myburgh, in July of 2001.

Another change the Heims made in 1996 was sending their replacement heifers to a heifer grower once the animals reached 300 pounds. The grower is a partially retired former dairy producer who lives a mile and a half away. The Heims have a contract with the grower, who sends the heifers back when they reach breeding age. Bruce says the arrangement has worked well.

The Heims are currently milking 125 Holsteins, and their total herd numbers 150 head. The herd milk production average is about 24,000 pounds per cow, up from 20,000 pounds when the cows were in the stanchion barn. Bruce cites cow comfort as the biggest factor in the production increase.

The changes the Heims have made have eased their workload in terms of both time and physical demands. "The work handling the cows is a lot easier than what we used to do," says Bruce. "We clean the barn with a skid-steer loader rather than by hand. We feed with a TMR mixer wagon rather than a feed cart. The cows are healthier, and production has gone up."

"We have more time off because of full-time hired help," he adds. "We have three evenings a week to go to games or school plays or other things the kids have going on. And we try to take time off or at least slow down every other weekend."

Hutton served as the ag advisor for the Heims throughout the transition process, and continues in that role. "They're great people to work with," he says. "They have a very positive attitude."

Hutton says the changes the Heims have made make the operation more efficient. "The step-up parlor has really helped," he says. "It has eased the tough, physical part of getting up and down to put the milkers on the cows. And the new barn has really helped with cow comfort. They now have a very productive herd."

Neal Broadwater, Winona County educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says the Heims were looking ahead as they planned changes in their operation.

"They are a good example of some things that can be done on the farm to stay in the dairy business," says Broadwater. "Producers have to look at their own situation, what their goals and values are, where they want to be in five or ten years, and decide what's best for them. Making changes usually involves planning, talking to people getting advice and figuring out finances and long-range goals."

Broadwater says the changes the Heims made "have put them in a position to do a good job now, and also into the future."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,D1,90 heim123

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 25, 2002
(First in a series on strategic management for farmers)

Strategic management important for both small, large farms

Strategic management is just as important for a one-family farm as it is for a larger farm with many employees.

"All farms can benefit from strategic thinking and management," says Kent Olson, farm management economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Much is written about strategic management for businesses, but very little is specifically targeted for farmers." Olson has just completed a 47-page paper, "A Strategic Management Primer for Farmers."

He uses a sports metaphor to illustrate: "Good team players read the playing field before deciding what to do during the game," Olson says in his paper. "They know their own strengths and weaknesses and those of their team members. They know where their team members are."

"They see where the ball is relative to the goal. And they see the opportunities and threats and move to the best position to help the team accomplish its goal."

"Former hockey star Wayne Gretzky summed it up very well," says Olson. "Gretzky said, 'I don't skate to where the puck is. I skate to where the puck will be,' in describing his strategy for hockey."

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Within this sports metaphor, Olson says a farmer crafts a strategy by understanding the business environment, seeing where and what is happening, and looking for strengths and weaknesses in both his or her own farm and the competition. Then the farmer moves the farm to the best position to take advantage of opportunities, to protect the farm from threats and to help accomplish goals and objectives.

Crafting a strategy can help the farmer-manager focus on what is truly important when making decisions (even day-to-day decisions) that will affect the success and survival of the business. Olson says short-term opportunities such as a good deal on machinery or threats ("sign now or lose this chance") may create distractions.

"Short-term decisions may also lead to decisions that don't fit the chosen strategy, and may not contribute to long-run goals. However, short-term opportunities and threats should not be ignored completely," Olson says. "They may be a signal that the business environment has changed so a farm's strategy needs to change."

"Paying attention to short-term events is part of scanning the overall farm business environment," Olson says. You can find his paper at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu on the Internet. Or, ask a county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service to download it for you.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2, P1 olson1232

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 25, 2002

Cow-Calf Days set at 9 Minnesota locations in February

Beef producers with cow herds can get new information on calving, nutrition and manure utilization at Cow-Calf Day programs across Minnesota in February. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is sponsoring the events at nine locations.

Cow-Calf Days Feb. 6-9 will be at five northern locations—Staples, Bagley, Warroad, Grand Rapids and Isle. From Feb. 12-14 the events will be at the southern locations of Glenwood, Pipestone, Rushford and Rochester.

Topics and speakers at the various locations will be:

--Vitamin and mineral supplementation, John Arthington, University of Florida beef cattle scientist (all northern locations);

--Preparing calves for market, Alfredo DiCostanzo, U of M Extension beef cattle scientist (all locations);

--Long-term effects of nutrition on reproduction, Cliff Lamb, U of M Extension beef cattle scientist (all locations);

--Manure nutrient utilization, Phil Nesse, U of M Extension educator in manure utilization (Staples, Warroad, Grand Rapids, Isle, Glenwood);

--Improving calf vigor and vitality through proper calving techniques, Bob Mortimer, Colorado State University veterinarian (all southern locations).

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Dates, locations, times and contacts for Cow-Calf Days are:

--Feb. 6, Staples, Central Lakes College, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Jim Carlson, (320) 632-0161.

--Feb. 6, Bagley, American Legion, 6-10 p.m., Terry Nennich, (218) 694-6151.

--Feb. 7, Warroad, City Hall, 1-5 p.m., Gene Krause, (218) 634-1511.

--Feb. 8, Grand Rapids, North Central Research and Outreach Center, 6-10 p.m., Dan Brown, (218) 327-4490.

--Feb. 9, Isle, IREC Center, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Lori Schott, (320) 983-8367.

--Feb. 12, Glenwood, Minnewaska Supper Club, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Kirby Hettver, (320) 589-7423.

--Feb. 13, Pipestone, Minnesota West Technical College, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Philip Berg, (507) 825-6715.

--Feb. 14, Rushford, American Legion, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Jerry Tesmer, (507) 765-3896.

--Feb. 14, Rochester, Elks Club, 6-10 p.m., Steve Drazkowski, (651) 565-2662.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,B1,X1,11,15,23,28,31,33,48,55,60,63,71,82,85 cowcaf02

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 25, 2002

Earthworms damage the soils in hardwood forests

Earthworms may perform magic in compacted garden and farm soils. However, University of Minnesota researchers say the worms harm the soils and ecosystem in hardwood forests.

Earthworms are especially hard on sugar maple forests, says Cindy Hale, a researcher with the U of M Department of Forest Resources. "Worms chomp and churn leaf litter so rapidly that soil life is altered, nutrient cycling is changed and erosion becomes a problem," Hale says.

The worms inhabiting our forests are exotic species—like zebra mussels and purple loosestrife. They arrived in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest in animal feed and vegetation that European immigrants brought with them.

Native earthworms were presumably killed or pushed back during the glacial period 10,000 years ago. The native worms were poor colonizers and never came back. As a result, all earthworms we know of today are of European origin.

The worms advance slowly—five to 10 meters per year. We unknowingly transport them with animal bedding and plant seedlings. "And anglers need to know that dumping unused worms at a boat landing after a fishing trip is no longer appropriate," Hale says. "Earthworm damage radiates out around lakes where unused worms have been released at favorite fishing spots."

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With a seed money grant of $11,750 from the Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership, Hale created the Minnesota Worm Watch program. It's a statewide research effort to determine worm distribution and damage in forests and other natural habitats.

Kids love worms, so Hale is recruiting schools and environmental learning centers to collect the data. "We are pleased to be supporting this project," says Okey Ukaga, executive director of the Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership. "It is an excellent example of an integrated application of research, education and outreach to address an important subject--earthworm invasion of our forest ecosystems."

Ukaga is also an educator with the U of M Extension Service. More information is available at the Minnesota Worm Watch website at www.nrri.umn.edu/worms.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, P1, F8, H8, T2 worms1231

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 29, 2002

Farmland tile drainage issues will be seminar topic in North Mankato

Issues and field applications related to farmland tile drainage will be the subject of a March 6 seminar in North Mankato at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center. The University of Minnesota Extension Service and several other organizations are planning the event.

The seminar is designed for farmers, landowners, local government officials, tile drainage contractors, crop consultants, soil and water resource professionals and other interested persons.

Participants can choose from a number of concurrent sessions. Topics will include drainage research updates by the U of M and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, tile drainage impacts on farm management, alternative land use practices and USDA farm programs. Other topics will be laser calibration and maintenance, tile line assessment and tile plow installation accuracy. There will also be an OSHA-led training session on excavation safety.

Presenters from the MDA and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will lead off the morning and afternoon concurrent sessions with their perspectives on tile drainage impacts on downstream water quality and possible solutions. Several tile manufacturers and equipment suppliers will host display booths.

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Pre-registration is required, and seating is limited. The fee is $60 per person. The seminar will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with registration open at 7:45 a.m. Certified Crop Adviser credits are available. For registration information contact Jean Spohr at the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris at (320) 589-1711 or spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu . Program information is available from Jerry Wright at (320) 589-1711, Gary Sands at (612) 625-0733 or Lowell Busman at (507) 835-3620.

Sponsors are the U of M Extension Service, Iowa State University Extension and the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service in partnership with the Minnesota Land Improvement Contractors Association.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2MN,C4,F4MN,07 wrigh125

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

January 29, 2002

Protein for dairy cows will be 4-state seminar topic in Winona

One of the keys to success in dairying is for cows to efficiently convert protein from feed to protein in milk. "Protein is an expensive nutrient in dairy cow diets," says Jim Linn, dairy nutritionist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Overfeeding protein increases milk production cost and reduces profit."

Linn says feeding cows so that they can use protein more efficiently reduces protein loss by excretion in urine and feces. And protein excreted from cows as nitrogen can be an environmental concern.

"If protein in feed can better match the protein and nitrogen needs of the cow and the microbes in her rumen, milk and milk protein production efficiency will increase," says Linn. "And the cow will excrete less nitrogen into the environment."

Linn will summarize the latest scientific findings on feeding protein to dairy cows and checking protein conversion efficiency at a 4-State Dairy Management Seminar in February. In Minnesota the seminar will be Feb. 21 in Winona at the Riverport Inn, one block from the junction of Highways 61 and 43 at 900 Bruski Drive. It will also be Feb. 19 at Breese, Ill.; Feb. 20 at Sioux Center, Iowa; and Feb. 22 at Arlington, Wis.

The seminar is sponsored by the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin, Iowa State University and the University of

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Illinois. It's designed for dairy producers, feed industry personnel and agribusiness professionals.

The seminar will feature one speaker from each of the four sponsoring universities, with each speaker making two presentations. Along with his presentation on protein, Linn will discuss water quality for dairy cattle. Other topics will be dairy cow longevity, inbreeding and crossbreeding, post-weaning heifer growth, photoperiod management for dairy cattle, maintaining healthy teats, and hemorrhagic bowel syndrome.

The seminar will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. following a half hour for registration. The fee is $45 per person and includes lunch. To register for the Minnesota session, send a check payable to the University of Minnesota to Winona County Extension, Attn: Neil Broadwater, 202 W. 3rd St., Winona, MN 55987. To obtain a registration flyer or further information, call (507) 457-6440.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,D1MN,X3 lynn0125

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 1, 2002

New sheep ID rule affects animals crossing state lines

Sheep producers who move their animals across state lines must now have the animals officially identified with a USDA ear tag. That new regulation is part of the National Scrapie Eradication Program, according to Blue Earth County educator Kent Thiesse of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"The regulation applies to all sheep that are transported across state lines for sale, slaughter or show," says Thiesse. "This will impact any breeding sheep that are sold and any sheep going to livestock shows in other states."

Thiesse says the regulation will also affect slaughter sheep delivered to other states. Most sheep slaughter facilities are outside of Minnesota. Young people with 4-H and FFA sheep projects must comply with the new scrapie regulation.

The USDA ear tags and more information on the scrapie eradication program are available from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at (866) 873-2824. Information on the program is also available from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, or on the website of the National Institute of Animal Agriculture at www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie .

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,S1,X6 thie0129

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 1, 2002

Sudden loss of family income involves more than dollars and cents

There can be a real sense of panic and loss if you lose your job or suffer other losses resulting in a sudden drop in family income.

The challenge is to adjust and gradually move on, but this involves going beyond the dollars loss. We all bring many attitudes, values and feelings about money from our early childhood days. And many of these have become so deeply ingrained in our everyday lives that we don't realize how they affect our money decisions.

Some publications from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Cornell University and other land grant universities can help. "Adjusting to Suddenly Reduced Income" is a U of M Extension Service publication that's available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/family.

Printed copies are available at nominal cost from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Or, call the Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 and ask for item 6499.

In addition, "Getting Through Tough Times" is a series of financial publications from the Cornell University Extension Service. You can find it at www.cce.cornell.edu/issues/cceresponds.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F3 tuftimes212

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 1, 2002

(Second in a series on strategic management for farmers)

Developing a strategy for your farm beats 'getting good deals'

Using a conscious strategy to develop the farm business beats the freewheeling approach of going by gut feelings and "good deals."

"Strategic development provides better guidance on the crucial point of what the farm is trying to do and achieve," says Kent Olson, farm management economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "And you need this guidance whether you run a single owner-operator farm or have many employees. Upper management needs to communicate the vision, mission and objectives to middle management and labor--even if only one person performs all three functions."

Strategic development makes farmers more alert to the winds of change, new opportunities and threatening developments. It also gives managers a rationale to evaluate competing budget requests for investment capital and new staff. Olson says this rationale argues strongly for steering resources into results-producing areas and not towards "good deals."

In addition, strategic management is more proactive and counteracts tendencies for decisions to be reactive and defensive. Olson says strategic planning for the farm involves five elements:

--Identifying stakeholders and their values, philosophy and ethics. Internal stakeholders include the farmer and farm family, partners, employees, other owners or

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stockholders and creditors. External stakeholders may include the farm's customers, suppliers, governments, unions, competitors, local communities and the general public.

--Developing the farm's vision and mission, clarifying values and setting objectives.

--An external analysis of the farm's competitive environment, including the general economy and the industry to which the farm belongs (such as dairy or corn). The goal is to understand the environment in which the farm operates and identify opportunities for and threats to the farm.

--An internal analysis of the farm's operating environment. The goal is to understand how the farm is meeting the current vision and goals and to identify the farm's strengths and weaknesses.

--Crafting strategy for the whole farm and a complementary strategy for each part of the farm (such as corn production or custom work) and each management function (marketing, finance).

"These elements of strategic planning are done with many loops back and forward to other elements of the process," Olson says. "Each element needs to done and sometimes redone many times before the final strategy is determined."

Olson has written a 47-page publication titled "A Strategic Management Primer for Farmers." It's available on the Internet at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2 olson212

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 1, 2002

We can have both cows and contentment in Rice, Steele counties

By Richard A. Levins

You can't live in Rice County for long without seeing the phrase, "cows, colleges, and contentment." Agriculture and a peaceful life—who could ask for more? The University of Minnesota Extension Service has a project called Farm Business Retention and Enhancement (BR&E) that is working to preserve this image for both Rice and Steele counties. The project is well underway and has drawn over 100 people in planning and project development.

The Extension Service does these projects around the state, usually in rural areas far from the Twin Cities where declining populations are a hot topic. But as we all know, this is hardly a problem in Rice and Steele counties. Here, you have the task of deciding how farming should fit into your region's growth.

That's why I wish more non-farmers would get involved in the Farm BR&E project. Over the years, I've heard plenty from non-farmers about the kind of farming they don't want. But I've heard virtually nothing about the kind of farming they do want. Without a positive vision of agriculture, we cannot make the most of a great opportunity to show the country how to have cows *and* contentment. We will remain stuck in a lose-lose world of cows *or* contentment.

The Farm BR&E project surveyed farmers in both Rice and Steele counties. It found that farmers are trying to remain traditional in an area that is becoming anything but traditional, at least by farm standards. The farmers see growth as a threat, not an opportunity. Such a position is certainly understandable, but it leads to a "line in the sand" mentality that helps no one. We say things like "development here, but no farther" and "this part of the county is for agriculture only."

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Last fall I traveled to Holland and Belgium on a farm study tour. There, I saw small farms nestled among the towns, and even in the towns. The effect was idyllic, and images of productive green space (and yes, contentment) were everywhere. Why can't Rice and Steele counties show our country how this should be done? Can you imagine a better place to showcase a shared vision of "cows and contentment"?

The possibilities are endless. Cows grazing on a hillside is the immediate image many of us have. But we should also be thinking about the health and economic advantages of eating locally grown food. We should be thinking about how our environment can be protected by certain farming practices. And we should think about how well-managed green space adds to our quality of life.

None of this is likely to happen without help from citizens on both sides of the farm fence. I hope Rice and Steele county residents will help build on the work already done on the Farm BR&E project. Brad Carlson in the Rice County Extension Office and Tim Arlt in the Steele County Extension Office are providing solid leadership. Let them know you would like to help. Tell them you want cows *and* contentment.

# # #

(Richard A. Levins is professor and Extension agricultural economist, University of Minnesota, St. Paul. He was the research leader for the Rice/Steele Farm BR&E project).

Web, A2, V2, 69, 79 levins1292

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February 4, 2002

Women's Marketing Program is March 10 at Willmar

Pre-harvest marketing is a key component of marketing success, and a unique workshop for women will spell it all out.

The 2003 Women's Marketing Program will be at the Holiday Inn in Willmar, Minn., Monday, March 10, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sponsors include the Risk Management Agency, the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Farm Financial Management.

Program topics include:

- Avoiding the five common mistakes in grain marketing.
- Exploring the key elements of a pre-harvest marketing plan.
- Reviewing grain-pricing tools.
- Understanding the role of crop insurance in your marketing plan.
- Writing your personalized marketing plan.
- Practicing your marketing plan using a simulation game with daily prices.
- Fine-tuning your plan and playing the game with a different marketing year.

"This program provides a great opportunity for hands-on learning. By the end of the session, each participant will have a personalized marketing plan based on solid

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marketing concepts," says Kevin Klair, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Practicing your marketing plan with a simulation game is fun and provides a realistic test of your plan with daily prices," Klair says. "Many participants immediately fine-tune their plan and play the game again with a different marketing year."

Program presenters Edward Usset and Robert Craven from the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota received enthusiastic reviews last year when they presented a similar program to over 300 producers in seven cities.

The registration fee of $25 includes lunch. For more information or to register, contact the Center for Farm Financial Management at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964. A flyer with registration information is available at http://www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/MNWomensflyer.pdf.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2MN craven233

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 8, 2002

La Crosse will host rural energy conference

Energy issues in the design of swine and poultry buildings will be one of the topics at the 40th Annual Rural Energy Conference Feb. 28-March 1 in La Crosse, Wis. The conference at the Radisson Hotel is sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin and the Midwest Rural Energy Council.

The conference is designed for electric utility officials, electricians, educators, rural electric cooperative board members and others interested in rural energy.

Program topics will center on energy-related issues and technology in rural areas. Larry Jacobson, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will cover swine and poultry building energy issues. Biosecurity on livestock farms will be the topic of Scott Wells, U of M veterinarian.

There will be a session on distributed energy generation by small generation units such as windmills and anaerobic digesters spread over the countryside and located near where the energy is used. Other sessions will be on measuring earth current, changes in the National Electric Code and power quality in rural areas. A training session on using oscilloscopes is also on the agenda.

For registration information, contact the Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Conference Office at (608) 263-1672. A conference flyer is on the Internet at www.mrec.org/confer.html .

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The Midwest Rural Energy Council is a non-profit organization of investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Members include utilities in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin; representatives from the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin; government officials; educators; equipment dealers and individuals. Engineer Vance Morey is the U of M representative to MREC.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A4,E3 jann0201

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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February 8, 2002

Transportation in global economy is topic of March 21 forum

Transportation needs have changed since the booming agricultural export days of the mid-1990s and 1970s. We have more production, specialty crops and value-added processing.

Whether transportation is efficient and competitive in meeting today's needs will be the topic of a March 21, 2002 forum titled "Transportation Needs in Today's Global Economy: What Do We Need." The all-day policy forum begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Earle Brown Center on the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus.

An overview of production and distribution of commodities and semi-processed products will be given by Jerry Fruin, marketing and transportation specialist with the U of M Extension Service. Over 20 other speakers will discuss topics such as GMO crops, identity-preserved grain, trace-back, NAFTA and WTO. Presenters will be carriers, shippers, political leaders, consultants and academic researchers.

The U of M Department of Applied Economics and the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council are sponsoring the forum. Registration is $85, and may be sent to the Agri-Growth Council, 408 St. Peter St. #209, St. Paul, MN 55102. More information is available from Agri-Growth at agrigrowth@sprynet.com, or by fax at (651) 905-8902.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2MN fruin272

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February 8, 2002

Information from Dairy Days programs available from U of M

Making it easier to milk their cows is a goal of many Minnesota dairy producers as they plan for the future. An updated milking center is usually a key to reaching this goal, according to dairy scientist Jeff Reneau of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Reneau outlined a step-by-step process for planning a modern milking center at recent Minnesota Dairy Days programs at eight locations across the state. "A well-designed milking center enhances cow flow, comfort and health for the animals," said Reneau. "It also makes milking easier, more convenient and more comfortable for the people doing the work."

Details of Reneau's suggestions for planning a milking center are included in Minnesota Dairy Days proceedings booklets. The booklets also have information from U of M Extension engineer Kevin Janni's Dairy Days presentation on upgrading dairy facilities and manure handling. The economics of dairy facility modernization is covered in a proceedings article by U of M Extension economist Bill Lazarus.

Management topics that relate to modernization were also part of the Dairy Days programs and are included in the proceedings. Some of these are transition cow management, cow culling, using lighting to increase milk production and using a TMR mixer effectively.

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Minnesota Dairy Days proceedings in printed form are available for $15 per copy, which includes shipping and handling. Also available for $25 is a CD-ROM with the proceedings and Power Point presentations from the Dairy Days. To order the printed proceedings or the CD-ROM, contact Bonnie Rae at (612) 624-4995 or brae@umn.edu .

More than 300 people participated in the eight Dairy Days programs. Among them was producer Bill Rowenkamp of Lewiston. Rowenkamp said the presentations showed that expansion can be workable for producers who don't plan to milk hundreds of cows in brand new facilities. The presentations showed options for "using some existing building for low-cost parlors and building an economical freestall barn," said Rowenkamp.

Bruce Stone, a dairy producer from Henning and a director of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association, said he liked the interaction between producers that the Dairy Days provided. "We built a six-row freestall barn in 1994 for 300 cows," said Stone. "We put the freestall loops down at the middle of the recommendations at that time. After hearing the presentations at Dairy Days we decided to raise a couple of rows to 50 inches, which raised ours about one foot. We are impressed with the stall usage and how the stalls stay just as clean."

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,D1,X3 endr205

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

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February 8, 2002

Tax credits available for Minnesota working families

Federal and state tax credits are available to help Minnesota working families make ends meet.

Last year about 200,000 Minnesota families received the federal Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Minnesota Working Family Credit (WFC). And the credits are certainly worth applying for--the average credit for each family was about $1,900.

Here's who's eligible for the 2001 tax year:

- Workers who made less than $28,281 and had one child at home.
- Workers with less than $32,121 of income with two or more children at home.
- Workers without children who made less than $10,710 and are 25-64 years old.

You may qualify for the EIC and WFC if you don't earn enough to file an income tax return. However, to get this extra money you must file federal and state tax forms.

From now until April 15, trained volunteer tax assistants will be available throughout Minnesota to help people complete tax forms—and the service is free. To find a site near you, call the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Line at (651) 297-3724 or (800) 657-3989.

# # #

Web, A1, A3, F3, V2MN, V4MN taxcredtrs242

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February 8, 2002

Be a good listener to someone who's lost a job

All of us know someone who has lost a job or is sweating a layoff. And although it's human nature to avoid talking to them about it, many people going through painful situations such as a layoff welcome support from others.

If you're close to the person, approach the matter directly. Express regret, offer support and then be a good listener, advises Pat Stumme, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Listen without offering advice unless you're asked.

However, it's okay to intrude if the person is withdrawing, is isolating himself or herself or is looking sad or hurt.

Some publications from the U of M Extension Service, Cornell University and other land grant universities can help you and your friend sort through the shock and pain of a layoff and move on. "Adjusting to Suddenly Reduced Income" is a U of M Extension Service publication that's available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/family.

Printed copies are available at nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item 6499.

In addition, "Getting Through Tough Times" is a series of financial publications from the Cornell University Extension Service. You can find it at www.cce.cornell.edu/issues/cceresponds.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F3 tuftimes252

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February 12, 2002

(Third and last in a series of articles on strategic management for farmers)

Using scenarios can help with farm management planning

Today's farm managers face drastic changes in agriculture. But having a strategy can help a manager make reasoned, cohesive and consistent choices in an uncertain world, says Kent Olson, farm management economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

And strategic planning is just as important for a one-family business as it is for a larger farm with many employees. Regardless of farm size, Olson says, "Using only one view of the future to plan major directions and investments could be a mistake with devastating results."

Scenarios are one tool that you can use to help forecast the future. Olson says scenarios can help identify which forces will be important, focus on marketplace forces and see the future even with imperfect information. Formulating scenarios can also help "avoid blindly accepting one view of the future."

To illustrate development of scenarios, Olson uses a case example of a farm couple producing hogs in southern Minnesota. Their farm has the capacity to farrow and finish about 4,000 hogs. The couple also farms about 480 acres with the help of both full and part-time employees.

They've done well in earlier years, but have endured extremely low prices and disease problems that required them to depopulate and rebuild the herd. The bank is

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threatening to not renew their operating loan unless they can show a high likelihood that the bank will be repaid and their financial position will improve.

They are considering three broad options:

--Continue to raise both hogs and crops.

--Since hogs are the biggest financial drain, rent out their buildings, raise only crops and take an off-farm job.

--Since hogs are also the biggest potential income source, focus on the hogs and rent the land out.

"But they're unsure of what the future looks like," Olson says. They don't know what the prices may be or whether disease may hit again. So they develop a set of scenarios to help evaluate their situation and the potential of alternative strategies.

First, they identify the uncertainties and divide them into independent and dependent uncertainties. For example, hog prices are uncertain and dependent on hog supplies in the market and pork demand. Disease level is uncertain and independent (even after following sanitation procedures). The weather is uncertain and independent.

The farm business then identifies causal factors for the uncertainties. For example, the causal factors for disease level are infected visitors, wind and failed safety procedures.

The last step is to develop logical, consistent scenarios. Several scenarios could be developed, but Olson describes five in a new publication he's written on strategic management for farmers:

Scenario A—growth with stable prices. The business decides this is their most likely scenario. Other producers continue to expand faster than producers exit. So

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there's a net increase in production, but it balances with increases in pork demand and hog prices remain at current levels. Diseases are controlled so farrowing productivity and production efficiencies are good. Weather and yields are normal; crop and feed prices are at normal levels. "But time and conditions change, so this may not be the most likely scenario tomorrow," Olson says.

Scenario B--lower prices. "This is also very likely, perhaps as likely as scenario A," Olson says. The net increase in hog production is greater than the increase in pork demand so there's downward pressure on prices. Diseases are controlled, and weather is normal as are crop and feed prices.

Scenario C--disease hits. Despite management's efforts, disease pushes productivity and efficiency down. Hog prices remain at current levels; weather is normal.

Scenario D--widespread drought. Crop production is down and crop and feed prices are sharply higher.

Scenario E--good times. The net increase in hog production is not as great as the increase in pork demand, so hog prices rise from current levels. Management is able to control diseases and weather is normal.

You can find more detailed information on developing scenarios in a 47-page publication that Olson has written titled "A Strategic Management Primer for Farmers." It's available on the Internet at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, A2, V2, V4 olson282

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 12, 2002

Editors: For a photo of Susanne Fisher call (612) 625-4248, or e-mail brene001@umn.edu

Fisher named interim executive director of Minnesota 4-H Foundation

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation has named Susanne G. Fisher as interim executive director. In making the announcement to the foundation's Board of Trustees, Board Chair Dean Ascheman said, "Sue brings such wonderful experience and tremendous enthusiasm to this role. We are delighted to welcome her to our staff."

Sue is returning to her Minnesota 4-H roots. Although she was a Wisconsin 4-H club member as a youngster, her family made annual visits to the Minnesota State Fair, including the 4-H exhibits. She is a three-time graduate of the University of Minnesota.

Sue began her University of Minnesota Extension Service career in 1964, when State 4-H Leader Leonard Harkness hired her to provide leadership for communication arts, home economics, expressive arts and programs for younger children. Sue's 37-year 4-H youth development career has included statewide 4-H program leader roles at the University of Florida and Cornell University. She also served one year at USDA as interim deputy administrator for the nationwide 4-H program. Fund development has always been an integral part of her work.

Under the terms of her contract, Fisher will serve as interim executive director for one year or until a new executive director is employed. The search for an executive director is now in its initial stages, with members of the Minnesota 4-H Foundation's search committee meeting to determine the position description and search timeline.

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Minnesota 4-H youth development reaches more than 300,000 young people throughout Minnesota — from rural areas to inner-city neighborhoods. Through 4-H, young people learn practical life skills, serve their communities and develop leadership abilities. Today's 4-H programs address such varied issues as multicultural relations, use of technology and wetlands conservation, along with traditional programs such as livestock management and nutrition education.

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation exists to provide all young people in Minnesota with access to 4-H youth development programs, and to be the undisputed leader in promoting and achieving philanthropy in support of youth development. For more information or to make a contribution, call the Minnesota 4-H Foundation at (800) 444-4238. You can also check their website at http://www.fourh.umn.edu/foundation.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 fishr2112

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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February 12, 2002

Minnesota 4-H Campaign reaches 75 percent of goal

With 18 months remaining, the Minnesota 4-H Campaign has raised more than 75 percent of its $8 million goal.

More than $6 million has been contributed from private and corporate donors--large and small--throughout Minnesota. These funds are already being used to establish a 4-H Dairy Endowment for support of dairy science educational experiences and a 4-H Human Ecology/Family and Consumer Sciences Endowment. The latter is a partnership with the University of Minnesota College of Human Ecology and will support a variety of programs, including food science and financial management.

Progress toward the goal is very good, says Elaine Christiansen, campaign co-chair and trustee emeritus of the Minnesota 4-H Foundation. "But considerable work remains during the next 18 months so we reach this ambitious goal," she adds.

The 2002 year represents the 100th anniversary of the founding of 4-H in the U.S. Christiansen says, "The 4-H centennial year celebrates the many 'opportunities that last a lifetime' for thousands of youth in Minnesota and millions across the nation. This is an opportunity to 'give back' through the Minnesota 4-H Foundation Campaign."

Minnesota 4-H Foundation interim executive director Sue Fisher praised those who have contributed to the campaign and urged additional contributions during 2002.

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"This year, Minnesota 4-H celebrates 100 years of quality programming for young people," she says. "4-H has touched so many lives through the years; we encourage alumni to give back to this great organization by making a contribution to the Minnesota 4-H Campaign during our centennial year."

Minnesota 4-H Youth Development reaches more than 300,000 young people throughout Minnesota. Through 4-H, young people learn practical life skills, serve their communities and develop leadership abilities. The Minnesota 4-H Foundation exists to provide all young people in Minnesota with access to 4-H youth development programs, and to be the undisputed leader in promoting and achieving philanthropy in support of youth development.

For more information or to make a contribution, call the Minnesota 4-H Foundation at (800) 444-4238. You can also check their website at http://www.fourh.umn.edu/foundation.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 4h2112

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February 12, 2002

Horse Care and Feeding Conference will be March 9 at Medina

High-quality pasture and hay for horses will receive attention at a program for horse owners March 9 at Medina. The Horse Care and Feeding Conference will be at the Medina Entertainment Center on Highway 55, four miles west of Highway 494. The University of Minnesota Extension Service, College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences are sponsors.

The program will run from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. following a 15-minute registration period. Morning topics and speakers will be:

--Poisonous plants in pasture and hay, Mike Murphy, U of M veterinarian;

--Viral encephalomyelitis, Julie Wilson, U of M veterinarian;

--Pasture establishment and maintenance, Lisa Behnken, Olmsted County Extension educator.

The afternoon will begin with two sets of concurrent breakout session. Topics and speakers will be:

--Hay purchasing, Lori Schott, Mille Lacs County Extension educator;

--Weed identification and control, Krishona Martinson, Wright County Extension educator;

--Horse nutrition, Wilson;

--Horse grazing habits, Maribel Fernandez, Wright County Extension educator.

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Paul Peterson, U of M Extension forage agronomist, will wrap up the conference with a presentation on hay test interpretation.

A free hay test is included with the conference fee, which is $60 per person before March 1 and $70 after March 1. Information on preparing a hay sample for testing is included in the conference flyer. To register or obtain a flyer, call (800) 380-8636 or (612) 624-3434 or e-mail vop@umn.edu . The flyer and on-line registration are also available from the conference website at www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach/02HCF.htm .

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Web,V2MN,V7,H6,46,47,75,76,91 horse204

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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February 15, 2002

Change is everywhere today, but don't let it overwhelm you

Some of us like change more than others. But like it or not, change is all around us in our work and personal lives.

To manage change effectively, we need to see it as an opportunity instead of just a danger, says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "At the very least, it's critical to develop five characteristics to keep our energy level up," says Danes, who's currently a visiting professor at Cornell University.

The five characteristics include being positive, focused, flexible, organized and proactive.

--Positive people develop the ability to view life as challenging, dynamic and filled with opportunities. "They appreciate the dangers and threats in change, but are not overwhelmed by them," Danes says. They "compartmentalize" the stress caused by disruptions to prevent it from affecting other areas of their lives.

--Focused people determine where they 're headed and stick to that goal so barriers along the way don't become insurmountable. Blocks or obstacles are given the appropriate attention.

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--Flexible people are open to different options when faced with uncertainty. They recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses and know when to accept internal or external limits.

--Organized people develop structured approaches to managing ambiguity, Danes says. They set priorities, but when necessary renegotiate them during change. They recognize when to ask others for help.

-- Proactive people work with change rather than defend against it, Danes says. They draw important lessons from change-related experiences to apply to similar situations. They also use resources to creatively reframe a changing situation.

More detailed information is available in a publication that Danes has written titled "Change: Loss, Opportunity, and Resilience." Look it up on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/family. It's also available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service for a small charge. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area and ask for publication number 7421.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F1 danes2152

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

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February 19, 2002

Timing is critical when moving piglets from their mother to another sow

(Second of two articles on crossfostering piglets from their mother to another sow.)

Timing is everything when transferring baby pigs from their mother to another sow. Crossfostering piglets can boost the number of piglets weaned from a given number of sows. However, this benefit is likely only with proper timing, according to Lee Johnston, swine scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

For crossfostering to be successful, several sows must farrow within 24 hours of each other, says Johnston. This enables the pigs and the mammary glands of the sows to be in proper condition for the transfer.

"Piglets must not be fostered until about four to six hours after farrowing, so that they can receive a large dose of colostrum from their mother," says Johnston. "After the initial period of colostrum consumption, it seems that the sooner pigs are transferred the better."

Johnston cites Australian research indicating that a significantly higher proportion of piglets fostered within nine hours after birth are successful at nursing and nurse faster than piglets fostered two days after birth.

"Fostering piglets within the first 24 hours after farrowing greatly increases the chance of success," says Johnston. "Certainly as a general practice, transfer should take place within 48 hours after farrowing."

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He says the physiology of milk production in the sow that receives piglets is critical. If a teat is left unsuckled and milk is not removed, milk production begins to shut down. The longer the teat is left unsuckled, the more likely the milk synthesizing tissue of the mammary glad will reduce its activity and begin to shut down.

Johnston says routinely crossfostering piglets later in lactation can hurt the performance of litters. Crossfostering piglets continuously throughout lactation can increase pig weaning weight uniformity. However, research shows it reduces the total weight gain of piglets during lactation. The weight gain decrease is apparently due to the transferred piglet's inability to adjust to life with a new sow and littermates, aggression from the sow toward the new piglet and competition among new piglets and the resident piglets for milk.

"The decreased weight gain is most notable in the transferred piglet, but also shows up in the resident piglets," says Johnston. "Problems are worse when the transferred piglet has established a teat preference on its natural mother and that same teat position on the new sow is occupied by a resident piglet."

# # #

Web,V2,S2 john0212

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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February 19, 2002

Plan carefully when crossfostering piglets to avoid pitfalls

(First of two articles on crossfostering piglets from their mother to another sow.)

Transferring some young piglets from their mother onto another sow can boost the total number of pigs weaned from a given number of sows. But this practice, called crossfostering, also has potential pitfalls. Lee Johnston, swine scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says producers need to plan carefully to make crossfostering successful.

"The general strategy should be to wean as many pigs as possible," says Johnston. "However the number of piglets to foster onto a gilt as compared with a sow is a consideration. Some would argue that gilts should nurse smaller litters than older sows so the gilts won't get too thin during lactation. Others would argue that young sows should nurse large litters to test their genetic potential for sow productivity."

Johnston recommends that each producer evaluate this issue independently. "Try nursing large litters on gilts," he says. "If these young females become too thin and postweaning reproduction suffers, then give first-litter sows one or two fewer pigs to nurse than mature sows."

When deciding which piglets to move to a different sow, Johnston advises choosing a "competitive" pig. This may be a high birth weight pig if it's moving into a

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litter of heavy pigs. It might be a smaller pig it it's going into a litter of lower birth weight pigs. A piglet that hasn't established a teat preference on its natural mother is a good candidate for transfer. Research indicates piglets with above average vigor have a better chance to survive as fostered pigs.

Johnston discourages transferring piglets from one farrowing room to another. Pigs in different rooms are generally different in age, increasing the chance of disease transmission. "Moving smaller pigs back to the most recently farrowed room may provide some advantages for the transferred piglets," he says. "However, it puts all the other piglets in the room at risk. There is a good chance the transferred pigs are smaller because of some chronic infection that can be transferred to the younger, more susceptible pigs."

Transferring piglets may not be a good idea at all in some situations where the spread of disease is a concern. "Crossfostering decisions are related to the herd's health status and need to be made in consultation with your herd's veterinarian," says Johnston.

He also points out that in herds used to generate replacement gilts, record-keeping is easier if gilts stay in their birth litter.

# # #

Web,V2,S2

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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February 19, 2002

Peas can serve as grain substitute, protein source for dairy cows

Dairy producers in northwest Minnesota and other areas can use field peas as a grain substitute or protein source for their cows. Peas are highly palatable for ruminants such as dairy cows, according to George Marx, dairy scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"In many situations, cull peas, downgrades, weather-damaged peas or those in excess of market needs are available economically," says Marx, who is stationed at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center at Crookston. "And a number of dairy producers in northwest Minnesota are growing field peas as a 'grow your own protein' crop. They are using the newer, higher-yielding varieties that are adapted to northern climates."

When the price of peas is competitive, they can be substituted for both grain and protein supplements in dairy rations, with minor restrictions. "Conservative recommendations are that peas can make up 20 percent of the concentrate portion of a dairy ration or up to 12 percent of the total ration dry matter," says Marx.

On a dry matter basis peas contain 25-26 percent crude protein, says Marx. They are not deficient in any of the major amino acids, but are somewhat low in the sulfur-containing amino acids such as methionine.

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Marx says peas are high in starch, and have an energy content similar to corn and wheat. They are low in fat, low in calcium and fair in phosphorus, and their vitamin A content is equal to that of yellow corn. The nutrient content of green, yellow and black peas is similar, according to Marx.

"In general, field peas should be considered as a source of degradable protein for lactating dairy cow rations," says Marx. "The amount of peas to include in a ration should be governed by the cost of competing protein sources and the cost of providing higher bypass protein supplements. Heat processing through extrusion or roasting can improve the bypass protein value."

Marx says peas are a safe feed with no known anti-nutritional components. Because of their large seed size, he recommends feeding them in coarse ground or rolled form, especially for lactating dairy cows.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,D1,Z1 marx0215

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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February 22, 2002

A good plan can help reduce severity of manure leaks and spills

A well-designed action plan can help reduce the severity of manure leaks and spills.

And while emergency action plans aren't required, it's a good idea to have one where it can be quickly located by you, family members or employees. Gene Tinker, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says an emergency action plan should have four items:

--A plan of action to prevent the release of manure or prevent environmental contamination.

--A detailed map of the site and application fields.

--A list of contact names and numbers included with the plan and posted near the phone.

--A clean-up plan.

A plan of action should be developed for each livestock facility, Tinker says. Then review it every six months and make sure that everyone involved with the livestock facility is familiar with the plan.

If there's a manure spill or leak, make every effort possible to prevent the manure from moving off-site. If necessary, contact neighbors or nearby contractors with earth-moving equipment to assist with containment.

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If you have tile intakes, have devices on hand to prevent manure from entering the tile lines. And be prepared to contact neighbors with manure holding equipment to apply the manure to land.

Prevent manure from entering bodies of water or other environmentally sensitive areas, such as sinkholes and ag drainage wells. For assistance, contact your local sheriff or other emergency response personnel in your county.

State law requires that manure spills or leaks be reported immediately to the Minnesota Duty Officer at (800) 422-0798. A new publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service has more details. It's titled "Manure Leaks and Spills: Emergency Plans for Minnesota." It has telephone numbers for Minnesota Pollution Control Agency permitting/compliance field staff in 10 areas of the state.

You can find more details in the publication by going to www.extension.umn.edu/farm on the Internet. It's also available for a small charge from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for publication number 07700.

The publication was adapted from one developed by the Iowa Manure Management Action Group and Iowa State University Extension.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, B1, D1, S2 tinker2212

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 22, 2002

U of M Extension publication on pruning trees and shrubs available

Late winter is the best time for most pruning of trees and shrubs. Proper pruning can prevent many problems during the formative years of a tree or shrub, according to horticulturist Deb Brown of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"When you prune just before spring growth starts, fresh wounds are exposed for only a short time before new growth begins to seal the wounds," says Brown. "Pruning when the plant is dormant also make pruning decisions easier, since there are no leaves to obscure the plant branch structure. And pruning at the proper time will avoid exposing trees and shrubs to potential disease problems."

A University of Minnesota Extension publication entitled "Pruning Trees and Shrubs" has details on a variety of issues related to pruning. Brown and U of M Extension horticulturist Mike Zins are the authors. The publication covers reasons for pruning, pruning at planting time, pruning large trees, proper branch pruning and timing of pruning. It also has information on pruning hedges, renewal pruning for older or overgrown shrubs, pruning evergreens and tools for pruning.

"Pruning Trees and Shrubs" is on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG0628.html. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item FO-00628.

Answers to plant care and gardening questions are also available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 brow0220

Source: Deb Brown, (612) 624-7491
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 26, 2002

U of M publication has crop fertilizer recommendations

Applying needed fertilizer nutrients in the right amounts is a key aspect of successful and profitable crop production. Failing to provide enough of the right fertilizer can limit crop yields and reduce the benefits from other crop inputs such as seed, labor and fuel. However, applying unneeded fertilizer is a waste of money and time and may be an environmental concern.

A newly-revised publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service can help in making good fertilizer decisions. Its title is "Fertilizer Recommendations for Agronomic Crops in Minnesota." The authors are U of M soil scientists George Rehm, Mike Schmitt, John Lamb and Roger Eliason.

The publication has fertilizer recommendations for most of the crops commonly grown on Minnesota farms. Included are row crops such as corn and soybeans, small grains such as wheat and barley, legumes such as alfalfa and clover, and several kinds of grasses. There are also recommendations for canola, sunflowers, sugar beets, wild rice and several other crops.

Fertilizer recommendations are based on the results of soil sampling and analysis of soil samples. The publication includes a section explaining soil sample analytical reports.

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"Fertilizer Recommendations for Agronomic Crops in Minnesota" is on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC6240.html. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item BU-06240.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4 rehm0222

Source: George Rehm, (612) 625-6210
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 26, 2002

University of Minnesota releases three new soybean varieties

Three new soybean varieties have been released by the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Experiment Station.

MN0302 is an early Group 0 variety that has excellent yield potential and is extremely tolerant to iron chlorosis. It also has the Rps1K gene for resistance to Phytopthora root rot. MN0302 has excellent yield potential and is very competitive with other early group 0 conventional varieties. For iron chlorosis tolerance it scored in the top five of all varieties tested in 2001 by the U of M, and was the highest scoring variety in the North Dakota State University iron chlorosis screening trials.

MN0201 is an early group 0 variety with outstanding iron chlorosis tolerance. Its yellow hylum and high protein content give this soybean excellent potential as a food grade variety. It has the Rps1 gene for Phytopthora root rot resistance. Its yields are very competitive with other early group 0 conventional varieties. It also is an excellent standing variety.

MN1302 is an early group 1 conventional variety with the Rps1K gene for Phytopthora resistance. It also has very good tolerance to iron chlorosis, but is not resistant to the soybean cyst nematode. It is competitive in yield with other early group 1 conventional varieties.

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U of M soybean breeder James Orf and research plot coordinator Phil Schaus headed the team that developed the new varieties.

For a certified seed directory with information on where to obtain seed of the new varieties, contact the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association at (800) 510-6242. The MCIA website is at www.mncia.org . The U of M soybean website at www.soybeans.umn.edu has current soybean variety performance data.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,F4,X2 naev0219

Source: Seth Naeve, (612) 625-4298.
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 26, 2002

Don't wait until it's too late to prune oak trees

Time is running short if you have oak trees that need pruning before the spring growing season starts.

Oak trees should be pruned when they're dormant, says Gary Johnson, urban and community forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Johnson says fresh pruning wounds leave oak trees susceptible to oak wilt in spring or early summer.

"Many valuable oak trees have been lost only because they were pruned too late in the dormant season," Johnson says. "The oak pruning season has ended as early as April 1 in recent years."

"It's important to find a professional you can trust," Johnson says. He suggests using a contractor who employs arborists certified by ISA, the International Society of Arboriculture. You can find more information on pruning oak trees, including a list of certified arborists, by going to the Forest Resources Extension home page at www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension on the Internet.

You can also contact the Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 jonson2252

Source: Gary Johnson (612) 625-3765, johns054@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 26, 2002

It's maple syrup time in Minnesota

Maple syrup and maple sugar are among the oldest agricultural products produced in the United States. And you can start a family hobby and produce your own maple syrup if you have access to a few maple trees in your yard or woodland.

It's already time to tap maple trees if you live in southern or central Minnesota, says Carl Vogt, forester with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. For the earliest runs of sap, Vogt says tapping should be completed by mid-February in central and southern Minnesota and by the second week of March in northern Minnesota.

Four species of maple can be used for tap production in Minnesota: sugar (or hard) maple, red maple, silver maple and boxelder. Commercial producers generally prefer sugar maple due to its higher sugar content (about two percent). Vogt says sap from other maple species is usually lower in sugar content and you'll need about twice as much sap for the same amount of syrup.

For more information on producing maple syrup as a family hobby or business, go to www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension on the Internet. You'll find details on identifying maple trees for syrup production, equipment needed, tapping the tree, collecting the sap and boiling the sap to make syrup.

You can also contact the Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 vogt2252

Source: Carl Vogt (612) 624-3639, cvogt@forestry.umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

February 26, 2002

Uncertainty, low crop prices make farm cash flow planning difficult

Many Minnesota farmers are having a hard time projecting a profit from growing crops in 2002. The unfavorable financial picture is making it hard for some farmers to get loans to buy crop inputs such as seed and fertilizer. And uncertainty regarding federal farm legislation is adding to the difficulty, according to Blue Earth County educator Kent Thiesse of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Thiesse says 2001 was not a very good year financially for crop producers in much of the state. Poor growing weather resulted in below-average yields in corn and soybeans. Crop prices remained very low throughout the year, especially for soybeans. Crop payments from most federal government programs were lower than in the previous two years. Meanwhile, crop production expenses increased in 2001, especially for fuel, fertilizer and seed.

"Because of all these factors, many growers fell well short of their 2001 cash flow projections," Thiesse points out. "In some cases, they could not fully repay their 2001 operating loans to lenders."

As the 2002 growing season nears, crop prices are still very low. And there's a lot of uncertainty regarding the "safety net" level of crop income protection the federal government may provide.

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"Congress is still debating a new Farm Bill and still hopes to implement it for the 2002 crop year," Thiesse points out. "This new legislation will affect government support payments and loan rates for corn and soybeans. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has delayed announcing 2002 loan rates until the status of the new Farm Bill becomes more certain. This uncertainty makes it extremely difficult for producers to plan a positive cash flow for 2002."

So far, the House and Senate have passed separate versions of a new Farm Bill. "Both versions provide an improved 'safety net' for crop producers compared with the current farm legislation," says Thiesse. "Once a new Farm Bill is passed, it should eliminate the need to rely on Congress passing emergency farm legislation each year to give farmers enough crop income to meet cash flow needs. Hopefully Congress will reach a compromise on a new Farm Bill soon. That would make 2002 cash flow planning easier for farmers and alleviate some of the current financial stress on farm families and ag lenders."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,F4 thie0225

Source: Kent Thiesse, (507) 389-8141
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 1, 2002

U of M website lists resources to help with community emergencies

An emergency in our community is something we hope will never happen. But we also know that emergencies can and do happen. And we know the trauma that comes with an emergency is likely to be less severe if we have procedures in place and resources available to deal with it.

"Most communities have emergency plans," says John Shutske, farm safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "However, most of these plans have been designed to deal with natural disasters such as tornadoes and floods. Many other kinds of emergencies—including terrorism, school shootings and major transportation incidents—need to be planned for proactively. The planning needs to consider the needs and resources of the community, the environment, business, agriculture, families and individuals."

Shutske and several of his colleagues in the U of M Extension Service have developed a website with an organized list of resources to help communities and individuals prepare for and respond to emergencies. This website, entitled "Ready to Respond," is at www.extension.umn.edu/administrative/disasterresponse/terror2.html. The site has separate sections on protecting the land, food and environment; preparing community response; and supporting families and children.

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Resources for dealing with bioterrorism and agroterrorism are included in the section on protecting the land, food and environment. "The events of last September 11 and the subsequent U.S. illnesses and deaths from anthrax exposure have heightened awareness and concern regarding several forms of potential terrorism," says Shutske.

The section has links to information on security of pesticides and agrochemicals, biosecurity, food safety, and many other topics. Numerous federal and state agencies and the U of M developed the information.

The section on preparing community response has links to resources for getting citizens involved in emergency response. It also has links to a disaster handbook, the Minnesota Office of Homeland Security, the American Red Cross and many other resources.

The website section on supporting families and children has links to information on talking with children about terrorism, coping with tragedy, restoring hope in the wake of terrorism and many other topics.

Those without Internet access at home or work can check the website at a local library or a county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,E1,E4 shut0214

Source: John Shutske, (612) 625-9733
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 1, 2002

Get a head start on spring: Late winter is ideal for pruning trees

Got cabin fever? Late winter is the best time to get out of the house, dust off those gardening gloves and prune most trees. March and early April are ideal for this because the bare branches make it easier to decide where to make pruning cuts, according to Master Gardener Esther Filson with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. She adds that exposed wounds on the trees will seal quickly when spring warmth arrives.

March is also a good time to prune because it avoids some disease problems. Filson adds that homeowners should avoid pruning oaks from April through mid-July because oak wilt is easily transmitted during those months. Some trees with free-flowing sap in late winter may lose sap through the pruning cuts, but that doesn't hurt the trees. Maple, birch, walnut, butternut, ironwood and blue beech are among the trees that will lose sap but not be harmed by March pruning. They can also be pruned after their leaves are fully expanded in late spring.

Early blooming trees should be pruned after they finish blooming. These include apricot, chokecherry, flowering plum, cherry and magnolia. Filson adds that honey locust, apple, crab apple, mountain ash and hawthorn trees shouldn't be pruned in summer because of the risk of disease invading the trees through the pruning cuts.

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Pruning is easier with good tools. Filson recommends a good pair of pruning shears for small branches and long-handled lopping shears for cutting branches up to one and one-half inches in diameter. Hand saws will tackle branches that are more than an inch thick. Hedge shears are intended for hedges only. To reach tall branches, a pole saw is useful. Small chain saws are handy for large branches, but Filson warns against using a chain saw while on a ladder or while reaching above your shoulders. Call a certified professional tree care service or arborist to handle large projects.

Healthy trees will continue to grow for many years if they are pruned properly when they're young. Prune young trees to remove broken or diseased branches and suckers that grow at the base of the tree or next to the trunk. Rubbing branches and branches that grow back toward the center of the tree, known as water sprouts, should also be pruned. Closely spaced branches and branches with weak, narrow crotch angles should be removed.

When pruning, make cuts back to a side branch or to about one-quarter inch above the bud. Cut at a 45-degree angle, Filson advises. Make the cut above a bud facing the outside of the tree so that new branches will grow in that direction. When removing large branches, make three or four cuts to avoid tearing the bark. Make the first on the underside of the branch about 18 inches from the trunk. Cut about half way through the branch. Make your second cut about an inch farther out on the top of the branch. Cut until the branch breaks free. Make the final cut carefully beyond the branch collar, which is the enlarged stem tissue around the base of a branch, but avoid leaving a stub. Filson says that wounds will seal more quickly if a flush cut is made into

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the branch collar. Wound painting generally is not necessary. Never attempt pruning near electrical or utility wires. Contact your utility company to do the work.

2002 marks the 25th anniversary of the Master Gardener program through the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Master Gardeners are professionally trained volunteers who provide gardening information and education to their communities through classes, booths at fairs and garden centers, telephone answer lines, e-mail responses and electronic bulletin boards, school gardening projects and work with hospitals and nursing homes.

For answers to your gardening questions, contact a Master Gardener through the University of Minnesota Extension Service in your county. Tree Care Advisors are trained to focus on urban and community forestry topics. Additional information sources include the Yard & Garden Line at (612) 624-4771 or (888) 624-4771, or Info-U, a free 24-hour tape and faxed-back information service, at (800) 525-8636. The University of Minnesota Extension Service web site (www.extension.umn.edu) also provides gardening information. For more information on the Tree Care Advisors program, visit their web site at www.mntca.org.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 nagy0228

Source: Esther Filson, Washington County Master Gardener
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 1, 2002

Spending habits must change when family income is reduced

A sudden income drop may leave you deciding which bills to pay first. But regardless of how bad your situation is, don't ignore your bills and creditors.

It's important to take charge of the situation promptly and let your creditors know that you're having trouble. Contact creditors before you miss payments and the situation becomes worse. You also need to focus on cutting spending until your situation improves.

If you're having family financial problems, some publications from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Cornell University and other land grant universities can help. "Adjusting to Suddenly Reduced Income" is a U of M Extension Service publication that's available at www.extension.umn.edu/family.

Printed copies are available at nominal cost from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Or, call the Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item 6499.

In addition, "Getting Through Tough Times" is a series of financial publications from the Cornell University Extension Service. There's a detailed fact sheet titled "Deciding Which Bills to Pay First." You can find it at www.cce.cornell.edu/issues/cceresponds.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F3 tuftimes2252

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 5, 2002

Minnesota's irrigated crop acreage continues upward

Minnesota's irrigated crop acreage continues on the upswing. Over 6,000 new irrigated acres went into crop production in the state last year, according to engineer Jerry Wright of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Wright bases the acreage figure on a survey of Minnesota irrigation suppliers. Most of the new acreage was irrigated with center pivots.

For detailed irrigated crop acreage figures, Wright cites information from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources annual pumping reports from irrigators. The most recent figures, from the year 2000, show 432,888 acres irrigated in Minnesota in the summer of 2000. That's up from 425,000 irrigated acres in 1999. The irrigated acreage for 2000 was registered under 4,150 DNR irrigation permits.

According to the 2000 DNR pumping reports, Minnesota growers irrigated at least 183,000 acres of corn, 96,000 acres of soybeans, 48,000 acres of potatoes, 31,000 acres of dry beans, 24,000 acres of alfalfa, 6,000 acres of sugar beets and 15,000 acres of canning crops.

The irrigated soybean acreage was up at least 13,000 acres from 1999, according to Wright. The dry bean acreage was down about 8,000 acres.

Growers reported using center pivots on over 367,000 acres in 2,000, and traveling guns on only about 16,000 acres.

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The top 10 Minnesota counties in reported irrigated acreage for 2000 were, in order, Otter Tail, Pope, Dakota, Stearns, Sherburne, Swift, Wadena, Hubbard, Morrison and Todd.

A detailed summary of permitted and irrigated acres by county is available from Jerry Wright, c/o West Central Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota, PO Box 471, Morris, MN 56267. Wright can be reached by e-mail at jwright@tc.umn.edu or by phone at (320) 589-1711.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4,19,29,49,56,63,76,78,81,82,85 wrig0301

Source: Jerry Wright, (320) 589-1711
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

March 5, 2002

Editors, broadcasters: To arrange an interview or photograph of a Master Gardener in your county, call your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Master Gardeners have been keeping Minnesota green for 25 years

For 25 years, Minnesota's lawns and gardens have been healthier and more productive thanks to thousands of hours of teaching and training offered each year by Master Gardeners, volunteers with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Since the program began in 1977, about 4,800 Master Gardeners from every part of the state have taken horticulture training from University of Minnesota faculty and have used that training to answer consumers' questions and organize community gardening efforts, according to Mary Meyer, state Master Gardener program coordinator.

Meyer says Master Gardeners receive 48 hours of training and are expected to volunteer 50 hours of time during their first year in the program. In subsequent years, they receive 25 hours of continuing education and volunteer 25 hours of community service. In a typical year, Master Gardeners statewide contribute more than 75,000 hours to their communities, often answering consumer questions at gardening centers, over the phone or through e-mail and web sites. Other Master Gardener projects include teaching gardening at schools, community centers and nursing homes. Some Master Gardeners host radio and TV programs, write newspaper columns and work at information booths at garden shows, county fairs and the Minnesota State Fair.

Minnesota's program is one of the oldest Master Gardener efforts in the country, according to Meyer. Among the environmentally friendly gardening techniques that Master Gardeners study and teach are mulching, composting, erosion control and chemical runoff control. They study lawn care, tree and shrub care, pest and weed control, soil science, plant nutrition, fruit and vegetable cultivation and related topics.

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In addition to classroom training for Master Gardeners, Minnesota was the first state to use the Internet to train Master Gardeners. The demand for the Internet Master Gardener class far exceeds the number of spaces available, according to Meyer. Currently, Minnesota has more than 2,000 active Master Gardeners in 86 counties.

In 1998, the University of Minnesota Extension Service's Yard and Garden phone line began. During the first year, Master Gardeners answered more than 8,000 consumer questions. The "Ask a Master Gardener" feature on the Extension Service's Yard and Garden web site (www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/askmg.html) allows consumers to post questions and receive e-mail responses from Master Gardeners.

"The Master Gardener program benefits the volunteers, the communities in which they live and teach and the people to whom they provide information and gardening advice," Meyer says. "The volunteers gain self-esteem and become connected to their communities and the people they help. Communities benefit from the Master Gardeners through planting projects that involve community groups and promote local pride."

For answers to your gardening questions, contact a Master Gardener through the University of Minnesota Extension Service in your county. Additional information sources include the Yard and Garden Line at (612) 624-4771 or (888) 624-4771; and Info-U, a free 24-hour tape and faxed-back information service at (800) 525-8636. The U of M Extension Service web site at www.extension.umn.edu also provides gardening information and links to county web sites and the Master Gardener web site.

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 nagy0305

Sources: Melanie Pamp, Lyon Co. Master Gardener; Mary Meyer, (952) 443-1447
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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March 5, 2002

Do we need a milk marketing board in Minnesota?

By Richard A. Levins and William F. Lazarus

Minnesota has lost a quarter of its dairy farms in the past five years. Much of this loss is due to milk prices that are too low to support family-sized dairy operations.

Why are milk prices so low? One cause is the familiar refrain that supply and demand are out of balance--too much milk chasing too little demand. In addition, there is the question of whether an imbalance of market power between retailers and processors versus farmers also plays a role in low milk prices.

A milk marketing board is primarily intended to address this second pricing problem, that of fairness. A marketing board might act something like the agencies the state already has to regulate public utilities. The board would collect economic information to insure that everyone, especially farmers, is treated fairly.

Perhaps the board would find that milk prices at any given time are fair to all. On the other hand, the board could find that farmers are operating at a loss and being forced out, while processors could pay more for certain grades of milk and still earn sufficient profits to allow them to operate and stay in Minnesota.

Under those circumstances, the board would rule in favor of higher prices being paid to dairy farmers by the processors.

Market power

The National Farmers Union released a report on concentration in the U. S. dairy and retail industries in 2000. The report raised concerns about rapid consolidation in the retail sector and retailers' vertical integration back through processing and production. This makes it hard for smaller entities in all parts of the chain to compete.

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Farmers and consumers are especially vulnerable. The threat to consumers was underscored by a recent study from the Food Marketing Policy Center at the University of Connecticut. Their analysis of the New England fluid milk market concluded that consumers lost $49 million between September 1998 and July 2000 because of prices distorted by market power.

We are not aware of any similar studies of the Minnesota milk market. As you *might* imagine, measuring whether a given price is lower than it should be can be tricky. Minnesota's milk price has recently been on a par with the rest of the country.

But this does not necessarily mean that either Minnesota or U.S. prices are where they would be under a perfectly competitive market with buyers and sellers having equal levels of market power. Milk prices at the farm could be depressed to some degree if the market operates more in line with that part of economic theory known as "imperfect competition." Here, some actors in an economic system become so large and powerful relative to others that they can bargain for prices that favor the growth of so-called "excess profits."

The processor perspective

A principal argument against raising the farm price of milk is that dairy products are relatively inexpensive to transport across state lines. Any increase in the farm-level milk price could make it more costly to process milk in Minnesota, which would in turn lead processors to close plants in Minnesota and build new ones in other states.

The threat of plants leaving Minnesota is real--with or without a milk marketing board. For example, the older Land O'Lakes plant in Faribault was recently scheduled for closing.

The threat of plants closing, however, is not in itself a reason to reject a milk marketing board. If a board were to be implemented, it would be important to include safeguards such that it does not drive processors out of the state. A responsible board would become sufficiently familiar with processors' costs and returns so as to balance their needs with those of farmers.

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The bottom line

In several surveys Minnesota farmers have said they believe that lack of competition among buyers of their products is causing them to receive lower prices. There are almost 7,000 dairy farmers in the state, a relative handful of processors, and even fewer retail chains to sell the final products of dairy farms. It is therefore not out of the question that farmers' concern for fair prices could be justified in some cases.

With or without a marketing board, Minnesota's dairy farmers and processors will need to remain competitive if we are to maintain a strong dairy industry. But our commitment to family farms, and the importance of family-sized dairies to our rural economy, demand that those with low economic power be treated fairly.

# # #

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March 5, 2002

'Gentle Logging' satellite conference set for March 20

"Gentle" logging to reduce negative environmental impacts on moisture-sensitive soils will be the topic of a satellite conference March 20 at eight Minnesota locations.

The conference will include a panel discussion and a video of a field demonstration and equipment evaluation that took place in May 2001 on a northern hardwood site near Minising, Mich. The field day featured new technology harvest systems designed to minimize environmental damage on high moisture soils, says Charlie Blinn, forest resources specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The conference is scheduled from 8:30-10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 20. It will be beamed to about 40 sites in 14 states. You can submit your questions through a toll-free phone number.

Locations and contact information for each site are as follows:

Brainerd, Social Services Center, 322 Laurel St., Kent Montgomery (218) 824-1065, kmontgom@umn.edu.

Aitkin, Aitkin County Courthouse, 209 2nd St., Dennis Thompson, (218) 927-6565, dennis.thompson@mn.usda.gov.

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McGregor, McGregor School Library, Lynn Mizner, (218) 927-7511, lynn.mizner@dnr.state.mn.us.

Mora, Knabec County Public Service Building, 905 E. Forest Ave., Steve Vongroven, (320) 679-5860, steve.vongroven@dnr.state.mn.us.

Cambridge, Isanti County Government Center, 555 18th Ave. SW, Mike Mueller, (763) 689-7105, mike.mueller@dnr.state.mn.us.

Bemidji State University, Hagg-Sauer Hall 248-B, Jeff Edmonds, (218) 755-2894, jeff.edmonds@dnr.state.mn.us.

Grand Rapids, North Central Research and Outreach Center, 1861 Hwy. 169E, Julie Miedtke, (218) 327-4177, miedt001@umn.edu.

Roseau, Roseau County Courthouse, 606 5th Ave. SW., Curt Nyegaard, (218) 463-1052, nyega001@umn.edu.

# # #

Web, F8, Z2 blinn3402

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 8, 2002

New futures and options contracts available for corn, soybeans

Corn and soybean producers can now buy and sell futures and options contracts on their crops through the Minneapolis Grain Exchange. These new contracts may provide opportunities for new corn and soybean marketing strategies, according to Paul Carr, Faribault County educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The new futures and options contracts are known as the National Corn Index (NCI) and the National Soybean Index (NSI). The contracts are "cash settled" to the average cash corn and soybean prices in the U.S. as reported by DTN, a company that reports commodity price information. "Cash settled" means there is no delivery of the physical commodity.

NCI is made up of the simple average of daily bids from about 1,630 locations across the U.S. NSI is comprised of about 1,500 daily bids. Carr says the bids represent over 90 percent of U.S. grain elevators.

"Many people believe these new contracts have the potential to offer producers more and better hedging opportunities by enabling them to hedge cash values instead of just futures values," says Carr. "Although the NCI and NSI prices are an average of many locations, they should move closer to local cash prices than today's Chicago Board of Trade futures prices."

Carr says the contracts might offer producers an opportunity to lock in higher loan deficiency payments (LDPs) through the federal farm program.

"In the last five years of low prices and high LDPs, some of the highest LDPs have been offered just before farmers could harvest and take the LDP," says Carr.

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"Since both the LDP system and the new NCI and NSI contracts reflect cash prices, a producer may be able to buy a NCI or NSI futures contract and lock in that LDP, although not perfectly, in a closer way than simply buying futures.

"If the producer buys NCI or NSI futures and cash prices rise, the producer would be more likely to gain from the rising market to offset a shrinking LDP. If cash prices drop, the LDP payment would rise to offset a loss on the futures contract."

The new contracts also have the potential to allow farmers to capture basis and futures price gains after selling their crops on the cash market, according to Carr. This could be particularly beneficial for growers with limited storage.

"By reowning the grain with a NCI contract, the grower can participate in a rise in the cash price, which includes both futures and basis, at a time when cash prices tend to rise from their seasonal low," says Carr. "On the flip side, the producer is exposed to both basis and futures risk by reowning NCI futures."

Carr says trading in NCI and NSI contracts began in February of this year. He says several factors will determine whether they realize their potential, including the volume of trading they generate.

Further information on trading NCI and NSI contracts is available on the Minneapolis Grain Exchange website at www.mgex.com.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,F4 carr0306

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 8, 2002

Products from seaweed, dead fish not likely to bring bountiful crops

Watch out for seaweed and be wary of dead fish—they probably don't contain anything that will help you grow bountiful crops this year. Caution is in order when you hear sales claims for non-traditional or unconventional crop products. Crop producers are the target of such sales claims every year as spring planting approaches, says soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Although some non-traditional products have been shown to have a positive effect on crop production, others are questionable, says Rehm. The challenge is to separate those that are beneficial from those that have no value.

"If you're approached to buy a non-traditional product, there are some comments that should raise a 'red flag' and trigger caution," says Rehm. He advises potential buyers to be wary if they are told:

--A product will supply all micronutrients necessary for crop production; you won't get top yields unless you use the product.

--The product contains some growth promoting substance extracted from seaweed, or dead fish.

--The product will stimulate root growth—growth you can't see.

--The product will create a "balance" of nutrients in the soil.

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--Using the product makes it possible to use lower fertilizer and herbicide rates.

--The product is so new that universities and county Extension offices don't know about it.

"When someone asks you to spend your money on a non-traditional or non-conventional product, it's important to use common sense," says Rehm. "It's always best to ask questions. Local crop consultants, fertilizer dealers and Extension offices are good sources of information. Over the years, many crop produces have lost substantial amounts of money because they didn't ask questions."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2MN,F4 rehm0305

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 12, 2002

Could a global farming network bring economic power to farmers?

A network of farmers from throughout the world working together to build economic power is an interesting alternative to the rivalry and competitiveness we now see among farmers of different counties.

Farmers around the world have at least one thing in common: they must deal with multinational firms to sell their products and buy many of their inputs. "Growth and competition in agribusiness are not restricted to any one country," says Dick Levins, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "We continue to think of large grain companies and other large multinational corporations as U.S. corporations, but their home base is the world, not any single country."

"Farmers continue to identify themselves as being from one country or another, and to see their principal competition as coming from other countries," Levins says in a recent paper presented at Grain World 2002 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. "I am especially saddened to see the animosity between farmers in my own country and in Canada.

"And the rivalry between farmers in the U.S. and those in South America over soybean exports is another example of a process that will eventually destroy both. Farmers, in my view, should see themselves primarily as farmers when they are conducting business matters and find other ways to honor their countries of origin."

"We might write off the prospect of a global farmer network that builds economic power rather than global competition that reduces power as a dream," says Levins. "But I'm encouraged that my recent articles on collective bargaining have found a wide audience among farmers. And the alternative of an agriculture serving nothing more than being efficient and cheap has failed to support rural economies."

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Rural policies that rely on agriculture as an economic and social foundation must be realistic about how many farmers it will take to provide a healthy environment, create a solid economic foundation for rural economies and produce the food we all need, Levins says. "We must recognize that our experiment in having relatively few farmers producing relatively cheap commodities cannot be judged a success if measured by the health and prosperity of our rural areas," he adds.

In looking for a new vision for rural development, Levins says he found himself looking back. "The old vision, one in which agriculture provides the primary source of wealth in rural areas, is one I still find appealing. But for it to work, that wealth must remain in rural areas and not be drained off by distant enterprises that have superior market power," Levins says.

"The rural development that I envision will be led by farmers, many more than we have now, and acting together in ways that allow them to protect the rural areas in which they live. We must put less emphasis on the 'hook them up to the Internet' school of rural prosperity, and more on capturing the value generated from the vast agricultural resources of our countryside."

# # #

Web, A2, V2, V4

levins382

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 12, 2002

25th Anniversary of Master Gardeners

U of M research, Master Gardeners mark years of improved landscapes

Midwestern gardens and landscapes are richer and more productive because of the research done on the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus and the University's Horticulture Research Center. And for 25 years, Master Gardeners trained by the University of Minnesota Extension Service have answered questions and helped the state's gardeners with the latest information and techniques on yard, garden and landscape care.

For about a century, the University of Minnesota's fruit breeding program has sought to develop plant varieties that can thrive in the state's subzero winters and hot summers. As a result, today's home garden may include selections from more than 80 varieties of fruit trees ranging from apples and apricots to blueberries and strawberries. Similarly, University researchers have developed ornamental tree and shrubs that withstand the worst of Minnesota winters and look attractive during the short growing season.

Minnesota's apple breeding program has helped establish a commercial industry throughout the Midwest at the same time that it provided productive varieties for the home gardener. Haralson, an 80-year-old apple variety, is a Minnesota favorite along with newer University of Minnesota varieties Honeycrisp and Zestar. Northstar and

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Meteor cherries introduced in the 1950s and Sungold and Moongold apricots in 1960 were breakthroughs in cold hardy fruits that are enjoyed for both their spring flowers and their fruits. Polaris and Chippewa blueberries and Mesabi and Winona strawberries are other popular varieties introduced through University of Minnesota research.

The chrysanthemum breeding program at the University of Minnesota has introduced seven florist varieties and more than 75 garden varieties. A new series of zone 3 and 4 plants that grow to shrub size are now available, including Snowscape, Inca, Sesquicentennial Sun and Peach Centerpiece. Sesquicentennial Sun was named to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the University of Minnesota. Also developed from the U are new shrub-like mums marketed as "My Favorite." These large free-flowering plants can become three feet tall and three feet wide.

Six University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Centers throughout the state represent the wide range of moisture, soil and temperature conditions found here. Among the ornamental tree and shrub introductions that were tested at these six research sites are Northland maple, Princess Kay plum, Northern Sun forsythia and a number of Northern Lights azaleas.

A 16-page illustrated catalog of the almost 300 varieties of horticultural plants released by the U of M Agricultural Experiment Station has been compiled. It's entitled "150 Years of Hardy Plants" and includes brief descriptions of the varieties, the year they were introduced and if they are currently available. General research highlights are given along with basic growing information about each variety.

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"150 Years of Hardy Plants" is on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG7564.html. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item BU-07564.

2002 marks the 25th anniversary of the Master Gardener program through the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Master Gardeners are professionally trained volunteers who provide gardening information and education to their communities through classes, booth at fairs and garden centers, telephone answer lines, e-mail responses and electronic bulletin boards, school gardening projects and work with hospitals and nursing homes.

For answers to your gardening or tree care questions, contact a Master Gardener through the University of Minnesota Extension Service in your county. Additional information sources include the Yard & Garden Line at (612) 624-4771 or (888) 624-4771 and Info-U, a free 24-hour tape and faxed-back information service at (800) 525-8636. The University of Minnesota Extension Service web site at www.extension.umn.edu also provides helpful lawn and garden information.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 nagy0307

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 15, 2002

New economic stimulus package:

You may be eligible for a 30 percent bonus depreciation

If you had a high income in 2001 and purchased machinery or equipment after Sept. 11, 2001, you may be able to reduce your tax bill with bonus depreciation. The new economic stimulus package just signed by President Bush allows 30 percent bonus depreciation on property having a recovery period of less than 20 years.

The provision is retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001, says Erlin Weness, farm management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Details are very sketchy at this time," Weness says. "But if you bought a new piece of machinery, equipment or a single purpose agricultural structure after Sept. 11, 2001 you may be eligible for the 30 percent bonus depreciation. If you had a high income year in 2001, check with your tax accountant about the feasibility of filing an amended return to lessen your tax bill."

"It appears the 30 percent bonus provision applies to any unclaimed basis after the $24,000 Section 179 depreciation has been deducted," Weness says. For example, assume you purchased a $50,000 asset in October 2001. You could first deduct the $24,000 of Section 179 depreciation and the remaining balance of $26,000 would be multiplied by the 30 percent bonus for an additional $7,800 depreciation.

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The remaining $18,200 would be depreciated with regular depreciation over the ascribed lifetime of the asset. The provision applies only to new machinery and equipment, not used property.

This provision will be in place for three years. It's in effect for assets purchased before Sept. 11, 2004. It will allow for additional depreciation, if desired, in years 2002-2004. Weness says your tax accountant should have more details as they become available.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2 weness3122

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March 15, 2002

U of M will host conference on horseshoeing, preventing horse lameness

Shoeing horses to prevent or remedy lameness will be the subject of a conference for veterinarians and farriers April 5-6 in St. Paul. The "Equine Veterinarian and Farrier Conference" will be at the University of Minnesota on the St. Paul campus.

Lectures on therapeutic shoeing for lameness in horses will make up the April 5 program. Some of the lecture topics will be examining horses for lameness, diagnostic imaging, anatomy of the horse's foot, trimming techniques and various types of shoes. The program April 6 will be a three-hour morning laboratory session on shoeing.

Veterinarians Tracy Turner and Janice Young will be the featured speakers. Turner is a U of M faculty member who specializes in equine medicine and surgery. He began his career as a professional farrier. He has been director of sports medicine at the Rochester Equine Clinic in New Hampshire, chief of large animal surgery at the University of Florida and a faculty member at the University of Illinois.

Young has a private veterinary practice in Phoenix, Ariz. She focuses on lameness, therapeutic shoeing, chiropractic work and saddle fitting. She is also a certified farrier. She has given presentations for veterinarians, farriers and horse owners throughout the U.S. and at numerous veterinary schools. She has lectured in Australia, England, Canada, Venezuela and Switzerland.

The conference has a registration fee discount through March 29. To obtain a conference brochure, to register or for more information, call (800) 380-8636 or (612) 624-3434 or email vop@umn.edu. To register on-line, go to www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach.

# # #

Web,V2MN,A4,H6 horse313

Source: Sarah Summerbell, (612) 624-3434
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 15, 2002

You can take 'Tree Planting 101' on the Internet

Along with spring comes the chance to plant trees and shrubs in your yard. And to help your chances of success, you can take "Tree Planting 101" on the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Forest Resources web page.

There's no cost. Just go to www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension/ on the Internet. You'll find information and pictures illustrating how to select, plant and care for trees and shrubs.

There's a section on "transplant shock," the period of adjustment every newly planted tree experiences while adjusting to its new environment. Proper site selection will help minimize transplant shock. Consider soil type and drainage, amount of water and light available and surrounding plants.

Once the tree is in the ground, you can do several easy things to help the tree adjust. Long-term care requirements include regular watering, mulching around the tree and fertilizing and pruning when appropriate.

In the past it was thought best to fertilize right after planting to give the tree an extra boost of energy to help it adapt to its new environment. This practice has been changed, and foresters with the U of M Extension Service say it's usually best to wait and fertilize at two or more years after planting.

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By fertilizing the tree, you're forcing it to grow beyond what the root system may be capable of supporting. This will increase the amount of time the tree experiences transplant shock and the amount of time needed for it to adjust to the new environment. Fertilize a year after planting only when there's a known nutrient deficiency at the planting site.

If you're concerned about whether your tree may be experiencing transplant shock or if you have other questions, call a local tree care company with a certified arborist on staff. Or, call the U of M Forest Resources Extension Office at (612) 624-3020, or e-mail extfor@forestry.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 treeplant

Source: Forest Resources Extension, (612) 624-3020, extfor@forestry.umn.edu
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 19, 2002

Share your 'know-how' when transferring farm to your successor

Transferring the farm business to future generations keeps getting more challenging. But transferring the crops, machinery or livestock is only part of the transfer formula, says Erlin Weness, farm management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Passing on your farm 'know-how' is just as important," Weness says. "The younger generations need sound managerial skills to make the farm business successful. Nurturing and broadening management skills of your successors may be critical to their success."

Spend some quality teaching time during the transition years. Much of this time should be devoted to the transfer of farm and business skills, Weness says. He suggests these specifics when working with your successor or successors:

-- Teach the importance of handling the management side of the business. Share how you make decisions, whom you listen to for advice and how you make the best use of your resources. Pay particular attention to your successes and failures in financial matters.

--Pass your wisdom on. Share your "rules of thumb," "things that went bad," and "what has always worked" philosophy.

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--Get your successors involved through "hands on" experience with farm business decision-making. Let them make some decisions or jointly make decisions. Stand back occasionally and let them try their wings with management issues and decisions.

--Get them acquainted and involved with the people who are important to your business. This includes the lender, management consultant, accountant, attorney, Farm Service Agency and Soil and Water Conservation people and others.

--Encourage them to get more education in business management, finance and marketing. Some of their competitors have excellent business management skills and deep pockets. "Getting into farming with little or no money is tough enough, but not having the business skills to compete can bring certain disaster," Weness says.

--Show them your financial record books, and get them involved in decision-making based on good production and financial business records. Another approach is to get your successors involved in actually keeping the farm books and records.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2 weness3152

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 19, 2002

U of M website helps local governments put services, information online

When you want to check property records, review city council minutes or apply for a job with your county, you probably expect to make a trip to your local courthouse or government center. But more and more local governments are making it possible to do such tasks from the comfort of home over the Internet. Citizens are using e-government to transact business and get information from their local governments online.

A well-designed e-government website can make local government agencies more business-like, customer-focused and efficient. It can provide citizens with access to government services and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, the capability of local governments to design and maintain effective and useful websites is often lacking.

A new University of Minnesota Extension Service online guide called "Access eGovernment" can help local governments develop or improve their website. The guide is at www.egov.umn.edu.

Rae Montgomery is one of the project leaders for Access eGovernment. "Businesses use the power of the Internet to reach their customers," says Montgomery. "Local governments can do the same thing. However, most of the 90,000 local

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governments in the U.S. are small. Many lack local resources to design and maintain a website. Access eGovernment shows local governments how to find those resources, and how to plan information-rich websites to transact business and communicate with their citizens."

Access eGovernment builds on the established U of M e-commerce program, Access Minnesota Main Street. Through an on-line tutorial, Access eGovernment explains the content, services, technology, politics and issues specific to e-government. It provides examples of government websites nationwide, criteria for evaluating websites and suggestions for website content. It has links to services that support disseminating public information, suggestions for website design and discussions of privacy and disability issues. The site also offers presentation materials to help introduce the program to local groups.

The U of M Extension Service created Access eGovernment and is implementing it in partnership with the Association of Minnesota Counties. For further information, contact egov@extension.umn.edu .

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,E1 egov0315

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 19, 2002

25th Anniversary of Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners' advice: Prevent weeds before they emerge

This spring marks an important milestone for University of Minnesota Master Gardeners -- 25 years of helping Minnesotans with their garden, lawn and landscape questions. Through that quarter-century of volunteer service, one of the most often asked questions at this time of year is how to control weeds in the lawn.

Master Gardeners agree that it's best to prevent weeds rather than to try to eliminate them once they take hold in your garden. Pre-emergent herbicides are among the useful tools to keep lawns and gardens as weed-free as possible.

As people become more interested in using "natural" products, many are willing to pay more to use lawn herbicides made of corn gluten rather than petroleum-based ingredients. Corn gluten is a byproduct of corn milling that's about 60 percent protein and is often included in cattle feed and dog food. It also contains 10 percent nitrogen, so it feeds the lawn as it prevents seeds from sprouting. That means you can use it to prevent crabgrass and other annual weeds in your lawn, but don't use if it you also plan to sow grass seed. Corn gluten meal products can't distinguish between "good" and "bad" seeds.

Apply corn gluten meal herbicide two to four weeks before you expect weed seeds to sprout -- mid-April through early May. Spread 20 pounds of corn gluten meal

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per thousand square feet of lawn. Then water it lightly into the soil to activate it. Around mid- to late August, apply it a second time using the same amount.

Don't expect excellent results instantly with corn gluten meal. Results range from about 60 percent control the first year to 90 percent control by the third year. You must apply it twice each year, however.

Master Gardeners also remind people that herbicides are just one part of growing a healthy lawn that's not overrun by weeds. Mowing at the proper height and watering thoroughly in hot, dry weather help keep grass from thinning and allowing weed seeds the space and light they need to sprout.

For answers to your gardening questions, contact a Master Gardener through the University of Minnesota Extension Service in your county or call the Yard and Garden Line at (612) 624-4771 or (888) 624-4771. Additional information sources include Info-U, a free 24-hour tape and faxed-back information service at (800) 525-8636. The University of Minnesota Extension Service website at www.extension.umn.edu also provides helpful yard and garden information.

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 nagy0318

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 19, 2002

Most tree damage from storms can be prevented

There's little doubt that a monster ice storm will damage trees and shrubs. However, most damage to trees during mild and moderate storms is preventable, says Gary Johnson, urban and community forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Johnson says choosing good nursery stock and maintaining it throughout its life will lead to a structurally sound tree. Stem girdling roots, planting method, tree structure, pruning method used, physical damage and construction damage all are tree soundness factors. Here are the top three things you can do to substantially reduce storm damage to trees:

--Avoid unnecessary wounds because wounds lead to decay.

--Plant trees with their main roots at ground line to prevent formation of stem girdling roots. These abnormal roots grow around the tree's trunk rather than away from it, eventually strangling the tree.

--Prune trees when they are young to maintain a single stem and leader and remove weakly attached branches.

You can find more information on preventing storm damage to trees by going to the Forest Resources Extension home page at www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension on the

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Internet. Then click on "How to Prevent Storm Damage," which has over 60 colored slides illustrating proper planting, care after planting, proper pruning, tree structure and root systems, and how to minimize construction damage.

For example, there's a picture of a fallen, 15-inch tree that failed below ground due to a "stem girdling" or abnormal root during a windstorm. Girdling roots may be caused by planting a tree too deep or adding fill over the root system.

In addition to the website, you can also contact the Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020 or by e-mail at extfor@forestry.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 jonson3122

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 26, 2002

New strawberry varieties developed by U of M are available to growers

The University of Minnesota has developed two new strawberry varieties that will be available to growers this year. The varieties have been named Winona and Mesabi. Both are available through garden centers and catalogs this year, according Beth Jarvis, Yard and Garden Line coordinator with the U of M Extension Service.

"It can take 12 years to produce a new strawberry cultivar," says Jarvis. "The average cultivar's lifespan seems to be about 20 years. The older ones fall from favor with the introduction of more disease-resistant, hardier, better-tasting or bigger-fruited varieties."

Winona is a large-fruited late-season strawberry. It's the first variety developed by a cooperative breeding program between the U of M Agricultural Experiment Station and the USDA's Agricultural Research Service. It's a cross of Earliglow and MNUS52.

Jarvis says Winona is a late-season junebearing strawberry. It ripens later than Kent, Jewel or Glooscap and about the same time as Lateglow. The fruit from Winona is very large with a bright orange-red color. The flavor is moderately intense and the flesh is very firm.

Winona is resistant to five common eastern U.S. races of the pathogen causing red stele. It also has shown good tolerance to black root rot in Minnesota. The foliage has been clean with respect to leaf spot, leaf scorch, leaf blight and powdery mildew.

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The winter-hardy Winona will likely be most suitable for u-pick and pre-picked on-farm sales.

Mesabi is a mid-season junebearing strawberry. It ripens about the same time as Glooscap, Cavendish and Kent. Mesabi's fruit is medium to large in size with a glossy scarlet skin and a uniform bright red interior color. The flavor is well-balanced between sugars and acids with a characteristic strawberry aroma.

Mesabi is resistant to five eastern North American races of red stele root rot. It's moderately resistant to leaf spot and powdery mildew, and has moderate to high resistance to leaf scorch.

Mesabi has been among the most winter hardy and most productive varieties tested in Minnesota. It's adapted to areas with cool summers and cold winters, and will likely be most suitable for on-farm sales.

U of M horticulturists Jim Luby and David Wildung, along with Gene Galletta of the USDA, headed the effort to develop the new varieties.

More information on the new varieties and the U of M strawberry breeding program is in the Yard and Garden Line News online newsletter for March at www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/YGLNews/YGLNews.html.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1,H7 jarv0318

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 29, 2002

You can learn about pet care at this U of M website

If you're puzzled by your cat's behavior or thinking of getting a dog and wondering which breed best matches your lifestyle, the PetCARE website can help.

PetCARE (Companion Animal Resource Education) is a website of the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine that's designed to bring you the latest accurate information. You can find PetCARE at www.petcare.umn.edu on the Internet.

You can submit non-emergency questions via e-mail and get a response in three working days. You'll also find some entertaining on-line activities for both children and adults.

A "Kids Corner" has pictures of dogs and cats that can be printed out and colored. There's also a "Junior Scientists" section that's a good resource for young students with school projects.

A "Fun and Games" section has articles on dog and cat humor and fun stuff to do with your dog. You can even nominate your pet for the "Pet of the Month" feature!

# # #

Web, V2, V4, C2

petcare3282

Source: PetCARE, www.petcare.umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

March 29, 2002

Publication can help you calculate costs of raising children

If you have children you already know it costs "a bundle" to raise them. And if you want to be more precise and have good family spending records you can easily estimate your out-of-pocket costs for raising children.

A newly-revised publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service can also help. It walks you through national figures that estimate the cost of raising children of several ages in both two-parent and one-parent families. Monthly cost tables have estimates for seven categories: housing, food, transportation, clothing, health care, child care and education, and miscellaneous expenses.

Families may wish to estimate child-raising expenses to help plan for future costs, prepare for family emergencies, determine support needs at the time of a divorce or to purchase adequate life insurance to provide support if a parent should die. The estimates are based on the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures, says Kathryn Rettig, family social science professor at the University of Minnesota. You can find the publication at www.extension.umn.edu/family on the Internet.

Copies are available at nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (612) 624-4900 or (800) 876-8636 and ask for publication number 5899.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F1 childcosts

Source: Kathryn Rettig (612) 625-7745, krettig@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 2, 2002

Raking lawn lightly in early spring can make mowing safer

Some early spring work in your yard can help get your lawn off to a good start in 2002. It can also make mowing your lawn safer, says horticulturist Deb Brown of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"As soon as the ground feels firm under foot, rake the lawn lightly," says Brown. "This should remove any leaves from last fall, as well as annual weeds that died at the end of last year."

Brown says raking will also pick up debris that has accumulated over winter, such as twigs, dog bones and tiny toys. Any of these items can become a dangerous projectile if picked up and spit out by a power lawnmower.

While you may be eager to fertilize before the grass has grown enough to mow, Brown says that's too soon. "Wait until it's growing actively and you've mowed it once or twice before you fertilize," she advises. "If you fertilized last fall, chances are good that fertilizing in early spring isn't even necessary."

Brown says almost all crabgrass preventers are combined with fertilizer. Even corn gluten meal, a "natural" crabgrass preventer, is ten percent nitrogen. "If you plan to apply a crabgrass preventer in late April or early May, that should be sufficient to take care of your lawn's nutrient needs for spring," says Brown.

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The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on lawn and plant care and gardening between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow0401

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April 2, 2002

Chronic Wasting Disease of deer does not cause illness in people

The good news about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) of deer and elk is that it doesn't cause illness in people. It's affected deer in neighboring Wisconsin. However, no CWD cases have been found in Minnesota to date, says Will Hueston, director of the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota.

CWD is a progressive, debilitating and invariably fatal disease of deer and elk that was first recognized in 1967. Clinical signs include progressive weight loss, behavior changes and listlessness.

The disease has been found in greatest numbers among free-ranging deer and elk in north central Colorado and southeastern Wyoming, Hueston says. Fewer cases have been found in Nebraska, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Health and wildlife officials have developed these recommendations for hunters:

--Do not consume meat from any deer or elk that looks or acts sick.

--Wear gloves when field dressing carcasses and wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing.

--Do not consumer the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes.

More information is available in a fact sheet from the U of M Center for Animal Health and Food Safety website at www.cvm.umn.edu/anhlth.html.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, T2 hueston412

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A2-1p

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April 2, 2002

FINPACK Business Plan can help you communicate with lenders

The new FINPACK Business Plan can help you describe your farm business to lenders, partners, family members and employees.

"It's designed to develop a top-notch farm business plan for any audience," says Bob Craven, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM).

The FINPACK business plan can be especially helpful if you're considering an expansion, financial reorganization, new enterprises, entering partnerships or incorporating, or transferring the farm or ranch. Included are a comprehensive outline and detailed tips on what to include in your business plan.

The FINPACK Business Plan is available from the U of M Center for Farm Financial Management, 249 Classroom Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Check it out on the Internet at www.cffm.umn.edu. You can also call (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964, or send an e-mail to cffm@cffm.agecon.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2 craven422

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April 2, 2002

25th Anniversary of Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners choose top 25 ornamental plants for Minnesota

Want to get a great easy-care look for the yard this year? Plants that say no! to pests and shrug off disease? Doesn't everybody? To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Master Gardening program in Minnesota these professionally trained volunteers have assembled a list of their top 25 suggestions for an ornamental garden.

These plants are resistant to pests and disease and require little in the way of pruning and no staking. They are the workhorses of the garden with features such as continual bloom, great foliage, winter interest, or fall color that earn them their place on the list. Here are the top picks of some of the top gardeners in Minnesota.

Top Trees

Long lasting good looks in a garden start with the big stuff, the shade and flowering trees around which the rest of the garden can be built. The following suggestions have worked for Master Gardeners throughout the state and can be successful for average gardeners with a minimum of fuss. The first two are the big guys, trees that aren't likely to quit 15 years into planting because they are native to our state. The remainder are great choices for a smaller area or to accent existing treed yards, with three-season interest.

1. Bur oak (Quercus macrocarpa)
2. Pagoda dogwood (Cornus alternifolia)
3. Japanese tree lilac "Ivory Silk" (Syringa reticulata "Ivory Silk")
4. Flowering crab "Prairie Fire" (Malus "Prairie Fire")
5. White pine (Pinus strobus)

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Top Flowering Shrubs

Shrubs as specimens, groupings or hedges are a big part of a good landscape plan. These suggestions are hard workers featuring a variety of shapes and bloom times for three seasons of interest They have been chosen by Master Gardeners throughout the state and can be successful for the average gardener with little fuss.

6. Serviceberry (Amelanchior)
7. Rhododendron "Northern Lights" azalea series
8. Forsythia "Meadowlark" (Forsythia ovata)
9. Compact viburnum (Viburnum trilobum "Compactum")
10. Hydrangea "PeeGee" (Hydrangea paniculata "Grandiflora")
11. Korean lilac "Miss Kim" (Syringa patula "Miss Kim")

Top Shrub Roses

The varieties of shrub roses newly available today as well as old favorites boast a long season of bloom with good flower shape and color as well as colorful rose hips in the fall. They make roses within the reach of even beginning gardeners. To make them even more irresistible they are very disease resistant. Like all roses they prefer rich soil, at least six hours of sun, and plenty of moisture; consistent rebloom is achieved if they are fertilized and watered regularly after their initial flush of bloom in early summer. Be sure to purchase plants that are grown on their own roots, not grafted, and they will be hardy throughout Minnesota with little winter protection. Not needing the winter care of the hybrid teas, they can be included with other perennials in the border. These suggestions include varied colors and choices that will work for the entire state.

12. "William Baffin"
13. "Winnipeg Parks"
14. Morden "Sunrise"
15. "Therese Bugnet"

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Top Perennials

Continual bloom is that elusive goal of most ornamental gardeners. There are many wonderful perennials that have a good display for ten days or so, and there are many that bloom longer but have disease problems or are invasive. The suggestions below were chosen by the Master Gardeners with this goal in mind as well as for ease in cultivation for a novice gardener, disease and drought resistance, and availability.

16. Perennial salvia
17. Daylily
18. Rudbeckia
19. Upright sedum
20. Calamagrostis "Karl Foerster"
21. Hosta
22. Heuchera

Top Annuals / Container Plants

Gardening in containers whether large or small has become popular because they offer versatility and a chance to be creative. Think of them as a mini-garden in terms of design; vary colors and textures and alternate trailers with plants that give height. Don't forget to include plants with interesting foliage; even though they do not bloom they provide consistent color appeal.

As in a regular garden the growing medium is important. It should be light so the pots don't get too heavy, and drain well, but should also be moisture-retentive. As a person gains experience with container gardening all kinds of experimentation is possible in concocting sure-fire planting mixes. In the beginning a good commercial mix specific for containers is the easiest way to ensure success. Enhance it with a slow-release fertilizer for season-long benefits. Why not keep the plants going into fall?

Refresh the containers in mid-August by cutting back the plants and giving then a new dose of fertilizer. Here are some suggestions of proven performers from area Master Gardeners.

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23. "Wave" petunias

24. "Profusion" zinnias

25. Impatiens ("Dazzler" and "Fiesta" series)

To enliven your containers use foliage plants to weave consistent color and shape throughout the planter. Some favorites are "helichrysum" or Licorice plant, Sweet Potato Vine Margarita and Blackie, "strobilanthes" or Persian Shield, both the silver and variegated forms of "plectranthus" or Swedish Ivy, and all true ivies. They provide the back drop for the colorful plants listed above, whether in the container or out of it.

More information about the plants on the "top 25" list is on the Master Gardener website at www.mg.umn.edu . Click on the link headed "Master Gardeners Select 25 Best Plants."

These suggestions and many other hints to help area gardeners are available from the Master Gardeners. Ask a Master Gardener at your county Extension office or call the Yard and Garden Hotline at (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 in greater Minnesota for assistance.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1,V9 top25mg

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 5, 2002

Don't prune oak trees this spring

April through June is the high risk period for oak wilt disease. And that means you should avoid pruning oak trees until at least this July, say forestry specialists with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and USDA Forest Service.

If oak trees are accidentally wounded or pruning is unavoidable, cover the tree wounds immediately—within minutes. Use water-based paint or shellac.

Oak wilt is caused by a fungus, which is spread by both root grafts and insects. It kills large numbers of oak trees every year in Minnesota. In contrast to Dutch elm disease, which has been very difficult to control, oak wilt can be more readily controlled.

November through March is the safe time for pruning oaks, since the fungal pathogen and insect vectors are inactive. July through October is the low-risk period.

A publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service titled "Oak Wilt in Minnesota" gives you more details. You can view it on the Internet at http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension. It's also available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. And for a nominal charge, you can order it by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for item 3174.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V8, G1 oakwilt452

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 5, 2002

New Farm Bill provisions would affect nearly everyone, not just farmers

The health of our children, the quality of our food and the cleanliness of our water all may be impacted by the new Farm Bill pending in Congress. Farm Bill provisions reach far beyond crop producers and dairy farmers, according to Blue Earth County educator Kent Thiesse of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Food and Nutrition and other social-type programs make up a big part of U.S. Department of Agriculture funding," says Thiesse. "In 2000, $36.5 billion, or approximately 40 percent of USDA funding, was for programs in this category."

The federal Government Budget Office has set $73.5 billion as the targeted amount for new spending by a new Farm Bill over a ten-year period, Thiesse points out. This is in addition to current baseline funding for current federal programs covered by the Farm Bill. Both the Senate and House have passed versions of a new Farm Bill allocating the $73.5 billion.

"In late March, the House and Senate Conference Committee agreed on 10-year spending allocations for the various 'titles' or segments covered in Farm Bill provisions," says Thiesse. "The committee allocated $46 billion in new spending to the 'commodity title' and associated programs."

Commodity title programs include "fixed payments" and new "counter-cyclical payments" on crops, Thiesse points out. The programs also include prices supports through the Commodity Credit Corporation loan program and loan deficiency payments for all "program crops" the Farm Bill covers. The new legislation adds soybeans and other oilseed crops as program crops. It also adds $2.6 billion in new spending for dairy, sugar and peanut programs that aren't covered by other commodity provisions.

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"In 2000, spending on farm-related programs accounted for approximately 30 percent of total USDA spending," Thiesse says.

The next largest chunk of new spending in the Farm Bill proposals is $17.1 billion over 10 years for the "conservation title," says Thiesse. That's about $1.7 billion per year in new spending, more than double the dollar amount the USDA spent on conservation programs as recently as 2000. The added conservation funding would enhance popular programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Improvement Program and wetlands programs. It could also provide funding for some potential new conservation initiatives.

The funding agreement for the new farm bill allocates an additional $6.4 billion over the next 10 years for the "nutrition title." This includes additional funding for food stamps and a variety of other food and nutrition assistance and education programs.

Thiesse says the Conference Committee funding agreement also allocates an additional $3.3 billion for the other "titles" covered by the new Farm Bill. These cover rural development, research and education, food safety and many other programs.

The Senate version of the new Farm Bill would fund a comprehensive technology and communications system and infrastructure upgrades for rural communities. Both the House and Senate versions would fund "value-added" agricultural initiatives and other rural economic development programs. The Senate version also includes a new and separate "energy title" for development of renewable energy sources such as ethanol and bio-diesel.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A2,A4 thie0403

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 9, 2002

Horticulturist cites procedures to repair dog spots on lawns

As spring weather arrives and your yard greens up, you may find portions of your lawn scarred by dog spots. These are places where dog droppings have accumulated during the winter, along with repeated "applications" of urine. The resulting areas of "fertilizer burn" stay brown as the rest of the lawn turns green.

Deb Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says the first step in "fixing" such spots is to soak them thoroughly with water. This dilutes the material remaining in the soil, driving it deeper and spreading it harmlessly over a wider area.

"Sometimes that's all that's needed, provided the roots haven't been destroyed," says Brown. "However, if you don't see new blades of grass emerging from these spots within a week or so, you can assume the roots are dead. It that case, it will be necessary to replace the grass."

Brown says spots smaller than your fist should fill in by themselves as surrounding grasses spread. That's assuming the lawn is healthy and growing vigorously. It will take much longer for this to happen in a heavily shaded area or in a lawn where grass is thin and weak.

Larger spots will fill with weeds before surrounding grasses have a chance to take over, says Brown. Therefore, they require more aggressive repairs if you want your lawn to look good.

"Dig these spots out, then add some soil from your garden to bring them level with the surrounding grass," says Brown. "Mix a very small amount of starter fertilizer into the soil, then sprinkle grass seeds on top and water the areas frequently. You can

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also use products meant specifically for patching the lawn. They contain grass seed and starter fertilizer in a brightly dyed mulch. Simply spread the material and keep it moist, following label directions."

To repair the front yard, you might even want to make your own sod patches, says Brown. Dig out the dead spots and replace them with chunks of sod you have dug from a less conspicuous part of your lawn. Then seed the areas where you removed the sod, and water both the newly seeded and the newly repaired areas frequently. Continue watering frequently until the sod takes and the new grass is growing where you took out the original chunks.

The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on lawn and plant care and gardening between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow0409

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 9, 2002

Poor water quality can jeopardize dairy cow health, limit milk production

An average dairy cow drinks about 25 gallons of water each day. But she'll drink less if water quality is poor. And that will limit her milk production and jeopardize her health, according to Jim Linn, dairy scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Linn recommends getting livestock drinking water analyzed for coliform bacteria and other microorganisms to determine its microbial quality. "Highly contaminated water exposes cattle to disease-causing organisms," says Linn. "Microorganisms can contaminate water in wells. However, bacterial contamination is much more likely to occur in the drinking vessel, so keeping water troughs clean is a must."

Treating water to remove or reduce contaminants can be expensive and may require significant equipment maintenance. Therefore, Linn recommends laboratory analysis of the drinking water before making a decision to treat. He says treatment needs to be cost effective and bring about known health or production benefits for the cattle.

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Ray Hozalski, water treatment expert in the U of M Department of Civil Engineering, says the best treatment option for livestock drinking water depends on the target contaminant. Eliminating disease-causing microorganisms involves disinfecting the water. The most common chemical disinfectant used is chlorine, a powerful oxidizing agent that's inexpensive and effective at low concentrations. A sufficient dose of chlorine provides a residual that can continue to destroy bacteria after the treatment process. The effectiveness of chlorine disinfection is determined by the product of the chlorine concentration and the contact time. Therefore, chlorine usage typically requires a contact tank that allows the chlorine time to disinfect the water prior to consumption.

A non-chemical disinfection process uses ultraviolet light. Hozalski says the effectiveness of UV irradiation as a disinfectant depends on the ability of the UV light to pass through the water and contact microorganisms. Therefore, UV irradiation may be ineffective for cloudy or colored water. Also, UV light doesn't provide residual disinfection.

Distillation, reverse osmosis and ion exchange are treatment methods for removing or reducing nitrate, sulfate and minerals in water.

Distillation and reverse osmosis remove water contaminants and essentially demineralize the water, says Hozalski. During distillation, water is boiled to form steam. The steam is captured, cooled and condensed to re-form liquid water. Nitrate, sulfate and all other minerals are removed, as they remain in the boiling tank. Distillation is not commonly used for water treatment because of the high cost of heating water.

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Reverse osmosis removes nitrate, sulfate and other minerals by forcing the water through a semi-permeable membrane at high pressure. The dissolved minerals remain behind on the feed side of the membrane, creating a concentrated brine solution. Treated water is often blended with bypassed or untreated water to achieve the desired mineral composition.

Ion exchange systems can decrease nitrate, sulfate, water hardness and total dissolved solids. The systems have an exchange column filled with ion exchange resin, a waste storage tank and a regeneration solution tank.

Two concerns that are common to reverse osmosis, ion exchange and distillation are the high cost of setup and operation of these systems and the disposal of the concentrated waste stream. Thus, the decision to install such a treatment system should consider both the economics and the brine disposal issues.

A U of M publication entitled "Water Quality for Livestock and Poultry" has additional information. It's available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Ask for item AG-FO-01864. It can also be ordered from the Extension Distribution Center with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900.

# # #

Web,V2,A4,D1 linn0325

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 9, 2002

Spring fertilizer application can help reduce stress on trees

Many trees—especially in the cities and suburbs—are stressed due to low moisture, compacted soil and competition from grass and nearby trees and shrubs. Physical damage and nearby construction also cause stress on trees.

Fertilizer can reduce this stress, but won't eliminate it, says Jeff Gillman, nursery management specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Gillman says you also need to keep newly planted trees watered and pruned, and keep weeds away from their bases.

The best time to fertilize trees is in spring, up until the trees start growing in early May. Gillman says most trees have a single "flush" of growth in spring, and they need to have soil nutrients available as this growth occurs. A publication from the U of M Extension Service gives you the details. You can find it on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG7410.html. It's called "Tree Fertilization: A Guide for Fertilizing New and Established Trees in the Landscape."

It's also available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. And for a nominal charge, you can order it by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for item 7410.

Gillman and soil scientist Carl Rosen wrote the publication. Topics include the need for nutrients, determining the need for fertilization, when to fertilize, what to apply, and application methods and rates.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V8, G1 gilman452

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 9, 2002

Taxpayers pay $12.5 million to preserve Twin Cities area farmland

You could be paying anywhere from a few dollars to hundreds of dollars to preserve farmland in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. And chances are this comes as a surprise since you don't get a bill or see the figures in a tax statement or municipal budget.

The net reduction in 2001 taxes was $12.5 million for landowners participating in either the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Green Acres (GA) program or the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves (MAP) program.

"These tax breaks aren't free—someone has to pay," says Steve Taff, public policy economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Taff has just published a new paper titled "Community-Wide Financial Impacts of Preferential Assessments for Farmland Properties."

The tax breaks are matched by tax increases for all property owners, Taff says. However, the pattern of tax "shifts" or increases doesn't match the pattern of tax breaks. Some of the tax shifts are borne by people close to the preserved farmland, while others are paid by those far away. "There's not necessarily a local benefit involved," Taff says.

At one extreme, the average taxpayer in Ramsey County pays only an extra 45 cents per $1,000 of property taxes to fund the tax reduction programs in the county.

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There are only about 200 acres of urban Maplewood farmland in the preservation programs, although the subsidy averages about $900 per acre. "There are very few acres in the programs," Taff says. "And although the per-acre tax reduction is high, there's a large tax base in Ramsey County to spread the shift around."

An example of the opposite extreme is Hampton Township in Dakota County, where many people are enrolled in the programs. The average tax reduction for participating landowners is about $9 per acre, but the other taxpayers in the township pay an extra $97 per $1,000 of property tax.

Most of the residents of Hampton Township have operating-size farms and are enrolled in the land preservation programs. There are about 18,000 acres enrolled out of a total acreage of roughly 22,000 acres.

"A critical question is whether these programs work by 'saving' land or whether we're just rewarding owners for doing what they would be doing anyway," Taff says.

"And if you assume the programs do work, the second question is whether the programs are cost effective," Taff says. "In other words, would other farmland preservation tools such as purchasing development rights yield more public benefits for the same amount of money? Both questions need more research attention and debate."

His paper includes maps and figures for all local taxing units and is available on the Internet at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/cgi-bin/detailview.pl?paperid=4220.

# # #

Web, A2, V2MN, V4MN, V7 taff482

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 12, 2002

Teenage years should be a 'good time' for both parents and teens

Solid relationships with parents and other adults are the most important factor in helping teens develop successfully and avoid risky behaviors. And although friends are extremely important, research shows that teens come back to the values and actions of their parents and other positive adults as they mature.

"The teenage years should be a good time for both parents and teens," says Rose Allen, Ramsey County educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Results of interviews with teens and parents give us a lot of hope. The teen years are good years and teens are good people."

A 20-page handbook called "Thriving with Your Teen" can help parents and other caring adults develop positive relationships with teens. It gives 10 ideas:

1. Love them no matter what and let them know it. Teens need to know that you are someone who always loves them—even if you don't love their behavior.

2. When teens mess up, teach them how to do better next time. Instead of losing your cool, take a deep breath and use the incident to help your teen learn something.

3. Tell teens what's good about them and tell them often.

4. Show respect. Teens and adults who show respect to one another will spend more time working together and less time struggling with each other.

5. Build trust. One of the hardest and most important things for parents to do is to recognize the increasing independence of teens, but know they still need you.

6. Listen. When teens say "I want to tell you something," give them your undivided attention and wait until they finish before you respond.

7. Help teens belong. Those who know they have a community of friends, teachers, parents, family and other caring adults have more fun and success.

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8. You don't have to do it alone. Talk with friends, family and other parents to get support for the everyday stuff. And talk with professionals such as counselors, health care providers and clergy to problem-solve tough situations.

9. Don't give up when the going gets tough. This is a tough, important job and it takes time to build solid relationships with teens.

10. Teach joy. Every teen deserves to be included, encouraged and to look forward to a good day.

The handbook is the result of interviews with teenagers and parents to learn what they would like each other to understand, know and do. It was written by the Initiative for Violence-Free Families and Communities in Ramsey County.

Karen Burke, a parent of two teenagers, says she's found the handbook so helpful she keeps re-reading it. "Now when my kids rail at my husband and me saying their lives are 'ruined' and it's all our fault, I have some new responses: 'You deserve to look forward to a good day. I hope it gets better for you.' 'I know we feel like the enemy right now, but we still love you.'"

"Thriving With Your Teen" is available for $3.10 (which includes shipping and tax) from the Distribution Center, U of M Extension Service. You can call either (612) 624-4900 or (800) 876-8636 and ask for item 07752.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5MN, V7, C1, F1 allen492

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 12, 2002

U of M researcher says:

We should triple our consumption of whole grains

Americans average less than one serving a day of whole grains such as whole grain breads, cereals and pasta. But we should be consuming three daily servings, says Joanne Slavin, a food science and nutrition professor at the University of Minnesota.

"Whole grain consumption has been linked to less cancer incidence as well as protection against heart disease and diabetes," Slavin says. "We usually think of whole grains as an important source of dietary fiber, which they are. But whole grains also have physiological properties beyond those traditionally associated with dietary fiber, such as improved antioxidant status.

"This response is similar to that seen with other high antioxidant foods, including green tea and berries."

In addition to whole grain breads, cereals and pasta, Slavin says using oatmeal in cooking, barley in soups and any grains in casseroles or salads is also recommended.

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Web, V2, V4, H2 slavin482

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April 16, 2002

Oak wilt fungus can spread within minutes in warmer weather

A low-hanging oak limb in your yard may cry out to be pruned this spring. But cutting it off now would be a very bad idea, says Jennifer Juzwik, a plant pathologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service in St. Paul.

"The beetle that spreads the oak wilt fungus can come to a fresh wound on an oak tree within 15 minutes. Once temperatures get above 50 to 60 degrees in spring, the beetles are flying and are attracted to the sap on fresh wounds."

Don't wound or prune trees from April through June. This is the highest risk period for overland spread by insects, Juzwik says. "If trees are accidentally wounded or pruning is unavoidable, cover the wounds immediately—within minutes. Use a water-based paint or shellac."

The low-risk period for pruning oaks is July through October. Infections may occur only on rare occasions, depending on weather conditions and insect populations. Covering wounds is optional. Juzwik says it's safest to prune oak trees from November through March when the fungal pathogen and insect vectors are inactive.

"Oak wilt is responsible for killing large numbers of oaks every year in Minnesota," Juzwik says. "Oaks are the most valuable and plentiful shade trees we have. In contrast to Dutch elm disease, which has been very difficult to control, oak wilt can be more readily controlled and we can save this valuable resource."

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Juzwik is the co-author of a publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service titled "Oak Wilt in Minnesota. " You can view it on the Internet at http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension. It's also available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. And for a nominal charge, you can order it by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for item 3174.

Another publication from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service gives you even more details. It's called "How to Identify, Prevent and Control Oak Wilt." You can find it at www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/oakwilt/index.htm on the Internet.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V8, G1 oakwlt4152

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 16, 2002

Lawn disease diagnosis available from U of M Yard and Garden Clinic

Perhaps your lawn hasn't taken on the green, healthy look you anticipated when spring arrived. Perhaps there are dead patches or strange rings and spots in the lawn. If it's early spring, there could be a problem with snow mold. If it's June, the problem could be necrotic ring spot. In August, it could be rust.

Diseases that affect grass are many and varied. How can you determine what the problem is with your grass? One way to get a diagnosis is to send a turf sample and photos to the University of Minnesota's Yard and Garden Clinic.

Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the U of M Extension Service, provides the following guidelines for submitting a turf sample:

--Cut the sample from a portion of the lawn containing both healthy and diseased areas of grass.

--The sample should be shoebox-sized, approximately five by ten inches. It should be deep enough to show the thatch layer and roots, or about four inches below the soil line. It's not necessary to send a lot of the soil from beneath the roots. Wrap the sample in newspaper. Do not add water and do not wrap in plastic.

--Two photos must accompany the sample—one of the overall pattern of the disease in the lawn and another close-up photo of the problem. Due to the difficulty of

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diagnosing turf diseases, the pathologists at the Yard and Garden Clinic cannot accurately diagnose a turf problem without these photographs.

--Along with the sample, the sender should include as much information as possible about the care of the lawn. The information should cover the lawn fertilization and watering schedule, herbicide use (including "weed and feed"), the shade and sun situation, weather prior to symptom development, and any history the sender can recall about the progress of the problem.

This information can be written on a Yard and Garden Clinic Information Request Form. The form is available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. It can also be downloaded from the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/yardandgarden/ .

--The fee for diagnosing a turf sample is $10. Checks should be payable to the University of Minnesota.

Mail the sample to the Yard and Garden Clinic, University of Minnesota, 155 Alderman Hall, 1970 Folwell Ave., Saint Paul MN 55108.

People sometimes confuse turf and soil, Beckerman points out. The Yard and Garden Clinic cannot perform soil tests. For more information about soil sampling and testing, call the U of M Soil Testing Lab at (612) 625-3101.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bkrm0410

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 16, 2002

By Richard A. Levins

A new "commodity agriculture" could be profitable for farmers

Have you ever heard a farmer say, "You can't make money growing corn. It's only a commodity?" Likewise, milk, soybeans and wheat are "only commodities."

I guess I'm getting old, because I can remember farmers laboring under the old-fashioned notion that they should make their living producing the food we all need to live. Now all that seems to have gone out the window in favor of new-age strategies intended to "add value." What's going on here?

A "commodity" is usually thought of as a common farm product that is in plentiful supply. In other words, it's what the majority of farmers produce. So if we allow ourselves to think that commodities can't make money, then we have a big problem. We are saying that most farmers can't make money from farming. I don't like the sound of that.

The idea that most farmers can't make money from farming is certainly out there these days. It's why we plan farm program payments years in advance. That same way of thinking has farmers across the country dreaming up ways to make money from non-farm businesses that add value to their farm products. It's as if airline pilots had suddenly given up on making money flying planes, and started selling peanuts to the passengers.

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Airline pilots, of course, don't sell peanuts. They don't say they "only fly planes." And they don't compete with each other to see who can work the cheapest. Instead, they work together as a union to make sure that a fair share of airline profits comes their way.

Farmers, on the other hand, seek prosperity by competing with each other. As long as farmers do this, the results are predictable. If dairy farmers produce milk, it is "only a commodity." If they process that milk into cheese, it's still "only a commodity." If corn farmers produce ethanol, that, like the corn it was made from, remains "only a commodity." And if soybean farmers get more involved in the biodiesel business, it is only a matter of time before that, too, is "only a commodity."

What's the problem? Mergers and acquisitions have led to less competition, more market power and more profits in many non-farm sectors of the food system. As this happens, farmers question whether they can ever make money farming, and so they naturally look elsewhere in the food system to make money. But when they do that, two things happen.

First, they run head-on into some of the world's largest corporations and try to beat them at their own game. Second, they don't focus on what they are the best in the world at: farming.

When farmers move into other businesses, they take their competitive attitude with them. That attitude, not what they were producing, caused their farming problems. It will just as surely cause problems in their value-added ventures. Without market power, farmers can add value, but they cannot keep that value for themselves.

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Here's my definition of a present-day commodity: It is any product produced by large numbers of farmers competing with each other. The way to restore value to those products, and income to those who produce them, is by ending that competition.

What will a post-commodity agriculture look like? My guess is that it will still feature plenty of milk, corn, wheat and soybeans. But those vital food products won't be produced by farmers desperately trying to undercut each other. Instead, they will be produced by farmers working together to build the market power so essential for maintaining profits in today's food system.

# # #

From a speech at a recent meeting in Henning, Minn. sponsored by the National Farmers Organization. Levins is an agricultural economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He can be reached at dlevins@apec.umn.edu or by phone at (612) 625-5238.

Web, A2, V2, V4 levins4112

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April 19, 2002

Nine native Minnesotans included in National 4-H Hall of Fame

Nine people from Minnesota are included in the first 100 inductees into the National 4-H Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony was April 11, 2002 at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md. during National 4-H Conference.

The Hall of Fame is a 4-H Centennial project and exists exclusively in cyberspace. For more on the 100 VIPs, including the nine Minnesotans who helped create, expand and promote the nation's largest youth development program, visit www.nae4ha.org/hof on the Internet.

The University of Minnesota Center for 4-H Youth Development nominated T.A. "Dad" Erickson and Leonard Harkness. The other seven native Minnesotans were nominated by other states or by the National 4-H Council. Inductees are:

T. A. "Dad" Erickson (deceased) was born near Alexandria. In 1904 Erickson started the first Minnesota corn club by sending one pound of corn seed to any student who agreed to exhibit 10 of their best ears at their school fair. From 1914-1940 he served as the first Minnesota State 4-H Club Leader.

Leonard Harkness was born on a farm near Waterford and currently resides in Shoreview, Minn. He was director of Minnesota 4-H for 31 years, from 1949-80. Those who worked with Harkness said he "knew the kids, knew their farms, and knew about their projects." He encouraged leadership and many of his staff members moved on to national 4-H and international programs.

Ed Aiton (deceased) from Itasca County proposed the idea of international exchanges that became the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) program. He helped raise funds to build the National 4-H Center and served as its first director.

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Lawrence Biever (deceased) from Lincoln County led the first nationally sponsored urban 4-H venture in Chicago, Ill. The programs for low-income families and minorities were unique to the segregated 4-H programs of the 1950s.

Elsie Carper, St. Louis County, worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Extension Service in 4-H from 1944-1983. She planned National 4-H Camp and the National 4-H Conference. She is now a 4-H historian in the Washington, D.C. area.

Norman Mindrum (deceased) from Rushford was executive director of the National 4-H Service Committee and the National 4-H Foundation. He led the merger of the two organizations to create the National 4-H Council in 1977 and retired as its CEO and president in 1982.

Kathleen Flom, Belview, spent 20 years in program and administrative positions at the National 4-H Center, National 4-H Foundation, USDA and the government of Uganda. She resides in Chevy Chase, Md.

Clara Oberg (deceased) of Ramsey County was a 4-H club agent instructor in Ramsey County from 1938 to 1953. In 1952 she became the first female president of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

Dick Sauer, Walker, was president and CEO of the National 4-H Council from 1989 to 2000. Previously he was at the University of Minnesota as director of the Agricultural Experiment Station; vice president for Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics; and interim president.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 4h4152

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 19, 2002

More mold, insects likely in stored grain due to warm winter weather

The relatively warm weather of the past winter was a plus for homeowners paying heating bills. However, it was bad news for stored grain, according to an engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Grain molds grow faster at warm temperatures," says Bill Wilcke. "So do stored grain insects. Last winter's mild weather will no doubt lead to an increase in stored grain mold and insect problems this spring and summer."

Wilcke encourages farmers and elevator managers to check stored grain as soon as possible for signs of mold and insects. "During the grain inspection, measure grain temperature and moisture at several locations in the bin," he says. "If you find warm or wet grain, musty or sour odors or evidence of mold or insect problems, take action soon—well before summer weather arrives."

Depending on the kind and severity of grain storage problems you find, Wilcke suggests one or more of the following actions:

--If mold and insects are causing the grain to heat, run aeration fans during the coolest weather available to lower the grain temperature. Consider running fans just at night when air is cooler. Try to keep the temperature of grain you plan to hold into summer at less than 50 degrees F.

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--If grain moisture content is too high, consider drying to a safe moisture level. The moisture level for safe summer storage should not be higher than 14 percent for corn, 13 percent for small grains and 12 percent for soybeans.

--If grain storage problems are confined to an isolated area in the bin, try to remove just the problem grain without disturbing the good quality grain surrounding the problem area.

--If the bin contains a lot of broken grain and foreign material (fines), and/or the grain is infested with insects, consider running the grain through a grain cleaner. This can remove the fines and perhaps a few of the insects.

--If it's feasible, use the grain as soon as possible. For any grain that developed mold and insect problems during the winter, the problems are only going to get worse during warm weather.

"If you are experiencing grain storage problems this year, try to determine how they could have been prevented," says Wilcke. "Then make plans to upgrade your drying and storage facilities or change management strategies to reduce future problems."

For more information on managing stored grain and on planning grain-handling facilities, check the U of M Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering website. It's at www.bae.umn.edu/extens/postharvest .

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A4,F4 wilck0418

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 19, 2002

Healthy eating habits can reduce high blood pressure problems

Research shows that a healthy eating plan can reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure. Healthy eating can also lower blood pressure that's already high.

A large clinical study called "DASH" (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) tested the effects of nutrients in food on blood pressure. The study showed that elevated blood pressure can be reduced by an eating plan that emphasizes fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy foods and is low in saturated fat, total fat and cholesterol.

The DASH diet includes whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts. It also has reduced amounts of fats, reds meats, sweets and sugared beverages, says Craig Hassel, nutrition specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Other healthy lifestyle habits also help prevent high blood pressure, Hassel says. These include maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, choosing and preparing foods with less salt and sodium, and if you drink alcoholic beverages, doing so in moderation.

"Losing even 10 pounds can lower blood pressure," Hassel says, "and it often has the greatest effect for those who are overweight and already have hypertension."

Being physically active is one of the most important steps you can take to prevent or control high blood pressure. It also helps reduce your risk of heart disease.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, H2 hasel4172

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 23, 2002

Soil scientist: little fall-applied N has been lost in southern Minnesota

A University of Minnesota soil scientist at Waseca is not recommending supplemental nitrogen applications this spring in southern Minnesota fields that received fall nitrogen. Gyles Randall says precipitation to cause nitrogen loss has not been excessive either late last fall or so far this spring.

Randall says the very warm November and early December temperatures caused farmers to be concerned about losing fall-applied N this winter and spring.

In previous years Randall and his colleagues have monitored nitrification of fall-applied anhydrous ammonia bands and soil temperatures at the U of M Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca. They checked soil heat units (SHUs) based on daily average soil temperature at the six-inch depth until soil freeze-up.

Randall says long-term soil temperature data have indicated a cumulative total of about 400 SHUs between Nov. 1 and freeze-up. When N-Serve nitrification inhibitor was not used, about half of the ammonium was converted to nitrate when 400 SHUs had accumulated.

In 2001 at Waseca, SHUs totaled 550 between November and freeze-up and 700 between October 20 and freeze-up. Randall says these warm soil temperatures suggest there was significant nitrification of fall-applied ammonia.

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Analysis of soil samples taken through the ammonia bands on Dec. 10 after ammonia application on Nov. 2 showed a similar picture. The analysis indicated that most of the ammonia was already converted to nitrate on Dec. 10 when N-Serve had *not* been used. Conversion to nitrate was delayed considerably when N-Serve was used.

"Thus, depending on how early ammonia application occurred and whether N-Serve was used, most of the ammonia applied in October and early November was likely converted to nitrate before freeze-up in southern Minnesota," says Randall. "Because nitrate is highly mobile, this increases the potential for loss. But we believe little loss has occurred so far because precipitation hasn't been excessive."

Although Randall is not recommending supplemental N for fields that received fall N, the situation could change. "Greater-than-normal rainfall between now and late June may change this recommendation if N losses seem likely," he concludes.

# # #

Web,V2,F4MN,Z5 rand0422

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 23, 2002

Exercise can lower your cancer risk

Physical exercise can lower risks for several types of cancer—especially colon cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends several lifestyle choices that can help prevent cancer. These include being physically active and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

How often you need to exercise to reduce cancer risk depends on the intensity level you choose: light exercise (gardening, slower walking), daily; moderate exercise (brisk walking, step aerobics), five times weekly; vigorous exercise (running, biking at over 12 miles per hour), three times weekly.

Many recommendations are intentionally vague to make it clear that any activity is better than no activity. You can find more details from the University of Minnesota Cancer Center at http://www.cancer.umn.edu/page/patients/riskred4.html.

In addition, you'll find loads of research-based health and nutrition information from the "Nutrinet" newsletter located on the website of the U of M Extension Service at http://fscn.che.umn.edu/nutrinet.

# # #

Web, H2, V4

nut4232

Source: U of M Cancer Center (888) 226-2376, info@cancer.umn.edu
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 23, 2002

Farmers can change accounting methods for CCC loans

Farmers can now change their method of accounting regarding Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans, according to a new Revenue Procedure issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in January.

Farmers have two methods of treating CCC loans, says Erlin Weness, farm management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. One is to treat the CCC grain loan as a loan—and it's treated like any other bank loan. Generally, no income is recognized until the grain is sold.

The other and most commonly used method is to report the loan as a sale in the year the loan is received (income method or Section 77 election). It has always been allowable to switch from the loan method to the income method at any time. However it's been harder to switch from the income to the loan method without IRS permission.

"This new IRS directive allows farmers to switch from the income method to the loan method with relative ease," Weness says. The new procedure is effective for tax years ending on or after Dec. 31, 2001.

"The new treatment allows a farmer more flexibility regarding CCC loans," Weness says. With current low grain prices, farmers can use the government loan program earlier in the year without incurring a tax liability.

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Farmers can increase their cash flow in the fall by receiving a full CCC loan rather than taking a much smaller Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). "This could reduce the interest cost on borrowed money," Weness says.

Switching to the loan method also allows farmers to generate fall cash flows without generating an income tax liability. Weness says it will also cut down tax planning errors caused by the mistaken impression by some "income method" taxpayers that they can buy back the corn before year's end and deduct it.

Other advantages of the loan method: It allows farmers to get a second chance at establishing the PCP loan repayment price. In addition, farm-stored grain under loan has virtually no downside price risk and no interest on the loan as long as the PCP is less than the loan rate.

The biggest disadvantage of the loan method is that if several years of grain are placed in storage and held for a price increase, there may be a huge tax liability in the year of sale. Weness says another disadvantage may be that grain delivered to an elevator may require significant prepaid storage in advance to get a needed warehouse receipt.

More details are available in an article by Weness and co-worker Bob Anderson at http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu/ on the Internet. Tax professionals should also have more information.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2 weness4182

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April 26, 2002

Have a hard time growing trees and shrubs?

It's frustrating to spend the time and effort planting trees or shrubs, only to see them die or do poorly. Part of the problem could be the site--soils that are poorly drained, subject to drought, alkaline, compacted or affected by de-icing salts.

But you can select trees or shrubs that are more tolerant of these conditions and a publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service called "Tough Trees and Shrubs for Tough Sites" can help.

It recommends specific woody trees and shrubs for six regions in the state. It tells you how to do a simple percolation test to determine how well your soil drains.

There's also a simple test to help tell if your soil is compacted: If you can easily penetrate the soil with a spade down two spade blades (about 18 inches), it's not compacted. But if you need to use a pickaxe, it is compacted.

You can view the publication on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/DD7502.html, or check with a county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. For a small charge, you can purchase a copy by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for item number 07502.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 jonson4242

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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April 26, 2002

U of M has "Risk Management Toolbox" for specialty crop growers

Growers of strawberries, sweet corn, wild rice and other specialty crops face risks similar to those faced by growers of high-acreage crops. Problems with weather and other production factors, as well as marketing and financial challenges, are part of specialty crop enterprises. However, specialty crop growers have sometimes had limited access to crop insurance and other risk management tools.

That situation is changing, with more risk management tools becoming available for specialty crop growers. Key information on these tools has been assembled in a University of Minnesota Extension Service publication entitled "Risk Management Toolbox for Specialty Crop Growers."

The publication is in the form of a pocket folder containing a variety of printed materials. One of the key items in the folder is a booklet from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency entitled "Introduction to Risk Management." This booklet covers agricultural risks related to production, marketing and finances. It also has information on legal issues and human resources issues associated with agriculture.

A detailed fact sheet on USDA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is also part of the folder. In addition, there are fact sheets and printed

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information on how to keep reliable and verifiable records, understanding and determining Actual Production History (APH) and how to file a notice of loss. Real life examples are used to illustrate concepts and processes.

U of M Extension educators Terry Nennich and Rod Elmstrand worked with Glen Schafer of the USDA's Farm Service Agency and Laurie Fredricks of the Risk Management Agency to develop and compile materials for the folder.

The "Risk Management Toolbox for Specialty Crop Growers" is available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. It's also available by credit card from the U of M Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item MI-07721.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,H7,P1 nennich

Sources: Terry Nennich, (218) 694-6151; Rod Elmstrand, (651) 674-4417
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 26, 2002

Horticulturist says zoysiagrass is not a good choice for Minnesota lawns

Although it may look good in magazine ads, zoysiagrass is not a good choice for Minnesota lawns. Planting zoysiagrass in Minnesota is a waste of money, time and effort, according to horticulturist Deb Brown of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"The ads tell us that with zoysiagrass we won't have to worry about watering or weed control," notes Brown. "All this sounds too good to be true, and guess what? It is!"

Brown says zoysia is considered a warm-season grass. It performs best in climates that are hot and dry rather than cool and relatively moist.

"It's true that zoysia requires less moisture in hot, dry conditions and stays nice and green while Kentucky bluegrass goes into heat- or drought-induced summer dormancy," says Brown. "However, zoysia is still a poor choice for Minnesota. It only does well in warm or hot weather, and we have plenty of cool weather on either side of our short, hot summers."

Zoysia grass doesn't turn green until temperatures remain consistently above freezing, says Brown. Most years that's not until the latter part of May in the Twin Cities area. Then the zoysia turns brown again as soon as freezing temperatures return in the fall. Meanwhile, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and fine-leaved fescues

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green up early in the spring and are usually still green in November or December when it begins to snow.

While zoysia is noted for its ability to spread aggressively and choke out other grasses and weeds, that's less likely to happen here. In colder climates it spreads slowly. Brown says people often consider zoysiagrass patches to be weeds, particularly in spring and fall when the surrounding lawn is green.

"Zoysia also sticks out in a typical bluegrass yard because of its stiff, wiry stems and coarse, broad blades," she adds. "It's not very nice to walk on if you're barefoot."

When it comes to choosing grass seed, you tend to get what you pay for, Brown points out. She recommends buying seed locally from a supplier who's both reputable and knowledgeable. Be skeptical any time you see claims that seem improbable.

"Zoysiagrass isn't the only inappropriate grass you'll see advertised as the season progresses," says Brown. "Several questionable companies have jumped on the lawn seed bandwagon, offering 'miraculous' grass seed mixes through the mail at exorbitant prices. Be a savvy shopper; don't be taken in by their exaggerated claims."

Answers to lawn care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1MN brow0418

Source: Deb Brown, (612) 624-7491
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 26, 2002

Minnesota House honors 4-H with Centennial resolution

The Minnesota House of Representatives recently honored Minnesota 4-H with a supportive resolution marking its 100-year anniversary. The resolution, signed by 55 representatives, was authored by Representatives Steve Sviggum, Tim Pawlenty and Margaret Anderson Kelliher.

Representative Anderson Kelliher is a 4-H alum and the 1985 State 4-H Federation president. The resolution is dated April 8, 2002 and reads as follows:

"Whereas, at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a growing sentiment for practical education in agriculture, manual arts, and homemaking, thus the introduction of boys' and girls' club work, as it was first called; and

Whereas, in 1902 T.A. Erickson began the first school fair in Minnesota for students where boys exhibited crops and girls exhibited baking and sewing items, in 1918 the phrase"4-H Club" is first used, and by 1999 6.4 million youth nationwide are involved in 4-H and nearly one out of every four youth in Minnesota are involved in 4-H; and

Whereas, the four-leaf clover, the symbol of 4-H, represents members' heads, hearts, hands, and health, but the Minnesota version includes the home, even though the official pledge does not; and

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Whereas, 4-H offers youth the education of "learning by doing" for both boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 19; and

Whereas, adult volunteers not only help educate youth, but also increase their knowledge on a wide variety of topics, and 8,800 4-H volunteers contributed over 800,000 hours of service to Minnesota youth; now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration for the House of Representatives of the State of Minnesota that it celebrates 100 years of 4-H success in Minnesota and the positive developmental influence it has for our youth."

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 4h4232

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

April 30, 2002

Dividing horse pastures into small paddocks boosts productivity

Dividing the pasture area for your horse into several small paddocks is one of the best ways to make the pasture more productive. Small paddocks can also contribute to better weed control and manure management, according to Wright County educator Maribel Fernandez of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Fernandez will give a presentation on horse grazing habits and pasture improvement at an upcoming Horse Clinic on May 21 in Wright County. The clinic will be hosted by Kevin and Karen Erickson at their Forelock Meadows Ranch north of Cokato. Directions to the ranch are available by calling the Ericksons at (320) 286-6782. Clinic participants are encouraged to bring cookies or bars to share.

Fernandez says horses tend to have strong individual preferences regarding what type of forage plants they prefer to graze. "When a horse finds an area in the pasture that has the type of forage it prefers, it will usually keep on grazing this area and disregard the rest of the pasture," she says. "Because of the continuous grazing, the preferred plants are always in the initial phase of the growing stage. This young stage is when the plants have the highest digestible fiber, sugar and protein content and are most palatable.

"The problem is that these preferred plants become weak and can't compete with less desirable plants such as other grasses and weeds. The weeds can end up taking over the pasture."

Allowing appropriate rest periods for the forage and mowing after moving the horse to a new paddock can help counter spot grazing problems, says Fernandez.

It is common for a horse to choose an area of the pasture to defecate and not graze that area at all, says Fernandez. This concentrates all nutrients from the whole

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pasture in one manure-overloaded spot. The spot becomes a source of flies and pollution, and soil nutrients from the rest of the pasture are depleted.

"Dividing a pasture into several smaller paddocks ameliorates this problem," says Fernandez. "Instead of one or two big dropping areas, you have several smaller ones. Smaller manure piles dry and break up faster, reducing fly numbers and odor. Horses are more willing to eat the forage growing there. You can also drag the paddock, which helps break up the piles and dry the manure, as well as distribute nutrients back to the rest of the grazing area."

While spot grazing weakens a horse's favorite forage plants, it allows other plants--including weeds--to thrive and develop to the seed stage, says Fernandez. This means that dividing the pasture into smaller paddocks helps control weeds.

"Of course a few plants will escape being grazed no matter how small a paddock is," says Fernandez. "Mowing weeds at or before flower stage prevents a new crop of weeds."

She suggests applying herbicides selectively and carefully if absolutely necessary. "Applying chemicals in the spring or summer will have a long-term impact only on annual and biennial weeds," she points out. "For effective perennial weed control you have to keep on cutting or mowing until fall to prevent new seeds from forming, and apply the herbicide at the beginning of fall before plants go dormant."

# # #

Web,V2,H6,10,27,46,47,76,78,91 fernd429

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April 30, 2002

What can we learn about our health from ancient perspectives?

By Craig Hassel and Christopher Hafner

Many of us are willing to change our diets, try new products and exercise more to achieve better health. But just what do we mean by the term "health?" Defining health may not be as simple as it first appears, perhaps because health is more than just a physical condition.

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Thus, a complete understanding of health encompasses all aspects of a person's well-being, including his or her mental, social, and even spiritual condition. When approached from this point of view, many factors might contribute to a person's overall health, including time of day, month or year; one's location or sense of place; presence of friends and family and a sense of community.

The culture we live in not only has a direct influence on our health, but also influences our ideas of what we mean by this term. Because most of us were educated in the United States, we tend to defer to views of health as seen from our culture and its system of health care. We have come to depend on biomedical science to explain many things about nature, including issues related to health. Consider that our modern

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health care system involves training physicians (including psychiatrists) to identify disease or pathology and then to formulate an appropriate treatment.

In other words, the primary focus of biomedical health care is to treat disease. Only recently has health care begun to embrace the idea of disease prevention as opposed to treatment. But the focus is still on avoiding disease, rather than enhancing well-being. Consequently, the definition of health in Western societies tends to be based on the absence or presence of disease. According to this perspective we could say one is in "good health" if one is free of any disease or symptoms that can be identified by the trained biomedical physician.

Over time, more and more people have found this definition of good health to be inadequate. This is because many people can sense changes in their well-being in the absence of disease or symptoms as defined by biomedical science. To expand our ideas of health and well-being, we may look at health from other worldviews and the ideas of health care systems that arise from these diverse worldviews.

Some societies have employed ancient systems of medicine with fundamentally different perspectives of health and nutrition. For example, Ayurveda is a way of life in India and has been practiced for more than 4,000 years. Chinese medicine is a system of health care dating back some 2,500 years. Both Ayurveda and Chinese medicine recognize well-being as something unique for each individual, and may be able to detect subtle states of imbalance within the individual well before these imbalances manifest themselves as clinically measurable indicators of disease.

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Unlike the disease-oriented tradition of biomedicine, these ancient systems of health care reserve a central role for the use of diet to maintain wellness and well-being. The most ancient texts of Ayurveda, the Charaka Samhita, states in translation that "the difference between health and disease arises as the result of the difference between wholesome and unwholesome diet.... disease is the result of faulty nutrition."

In Chinese medicine, it is said, "When a person is sick, the doctor should first regulate the patient's diet and lifestyle. In most cases, these changes alone are enough to affect a cure over time.... Only if changes in diet and lifestyle are not enough should the doctor administer other interventions."

One very important concept of Chinese medicine is the theory of yin and yang. So integral is the theory of yin and yang to Chinese medicine that it is considered to be the defining, most fundamental principle of this system of medicine.

Yin represents the side of the hill that is cast in shadow while yang represents the side of the hill that is bathed in light. By extension, yin represents all that is relatively dark, cool, moist, receding, passive, quiet, heavy and descending; while yang represents all that is relatively bright, warm, dry, advancing, active, restless, light and ascending.

Inherent in the relationship between yin and yang is the potential for both harmony and disharmony. When there is harmony between yin and yang and an appropriate balance between the opposite forces and qualities at play within any system, (whether it is an ecosystem, a community or society of human beings, or the anatomy and physiology of an individual human being), then there is peace,

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contentment, health and sustainability. But when there is disharmony between yin and yang, then there is conflict and discord, illness, disease, suffering and disintegrating.

Chinese medicine does not rely upon chemical composition of food or herbs to understand medicinal efficacy, safety or quality. In Chinese dietary and herbal therapies the yin/yang qualities inherent in foods and medicinal herbs are identified and classified through the sensory attributes that naturally occur in these substances. In Chinese medicine these sensory attributes are called "property" and "flavor." Some 5700 different plant, mineral and animal-derived substances are used medically and categorized according to "property" and "flavor."

References to physiologic or metabolic effects of flavor within the biomedical literature are lacking. Highly individualized, "optimized" diets are not forthcoming from "credible" nutrition scientists because the underlying assumptions of the biomedical perspective do not allow for a "research-based" diet that is considered optimal for a given individual at a given point in time.

When compared to population-based dietary recommendations, an individually "optimized" diet may seem somewhat radical by comparison. Is such a diet "wrong" because it is not supported by biomedical research? Is biomedical research the only "real" measure of validity?

It is fascinating to note that in discussing ancient systems of health, we have begun to lay bare some underlying assumptions of the biomedical understanding of nutrition and health:

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--Living systems and food are understood through a mechanistic worldview; if you understand the components, you can understand better understand the whole.

--Reality is divided into the objective world of fact, matter, experiments, and physical reality on one hand; and the subjective world of mind, consciousness, personal experience and value on the other.

--Health is associated largely with the absence of objectively diagnosed disease, or "risk factors" for pathology.

These basic assumptions are not a part of the framework of understanding for Chinese medicine. For example, health is understood in much more subtle or "subjective" terms, and is diagnosed within a highly individualized context. It is described in terms of an optimal state of balance in which there is a sense of well-being, harmony and resistance to pathogens or disease.

Pointing to the limitations of scientific research can seem a little uncomfortable at first. But it is important to remember that there are limitations to any perspective or mode of inquiry. Recognizing its limitations should in no way detract from the vital role of biomedical science in helping us understand how the body functions. It has allowed us to understand diet and disease relationships in ways that no other approach can provide.

We have learned from biomedical science that we must consume certain essential nutrients to prevent deficiency diseases. Discovery of the vitamins in the early part of the twentieth century helped establish the concept of "essential nutrient" and thus helped eliminate many deficiency diseases among entire populations. And in recent

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years, scientific research has contributed to our understanding of how diet influences chronic diseases. We have also learned that certain dietary substances can influence chronic diseases, although the latter is much more difficult to study because of the many non-dietary factors that also contribute to chronic diseases.

However, growing interest in health and well-being may be moving us to a level of inquiry that scientific research may not be able to address. The notion of well-being may be so individualized that we are required to re-examine some of the assumptions that lie beneath our mode of inquiry.

Perhaps the ancient knowledge can at least remind us that despite our tremendous progress in understanding food and health, we need to be cautious of what we dismiss out of hand as "invalid" nutrition advice. Let us offer our perspective in a constructive way, and remember we are offering a perspective, not authoritative judgments.

# # #

(Hassel has a Ph.D. and is a nutrition specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Hafner is a licensed and accredited practitioner of Oriental medicine)

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May 3, 2002

You can increase fiber in your diet without buying fiber supplements

Most experts agree that we should double the amount of fiber we eat—from the present U.S. average of 15 grams to 30 grams daily.

But you don't need to buy fiber supplements to do it, says Joanne Slavin, a food science and nutrition professor at the University of Minnesota. "You can plan a diet with 30 grams of dietary fiber using foods normally present in our food supply," she says.

High-fiber diets cause increased stool size and may help prevent or cure constipation. Slavin says cereal fiber—especially bran—is most effective.

Dietary fiber also has been used effectively to treat diverticular disease—manifested by "outpouchings" that develop on weak areas in the bowel wall. "Rural Africans consume high-fiber diets and have a lower incidence of diverticular disease, cardiovascular disease and colon cancer than Americans or other populations with low fiber intake," Slavin says.

"The incidence of these diseases has increased over the last century in the U.S. at the same time that fiber intake has been decreasing," Slavin says. And because of this, many scientists, physicians, food faddists and others are advising more fiber in the diet.

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However, the role of fiber in disease is hard to define. "As the fiber content of the diet increases, the fat and protein in the diet decrease," Slavin says. "Low fat or low protein diets may be more important in preventing colon cancer than high fiber."

Dietary fiber is found only in plant foods. Foods that naturally contain fiber include fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains. Refining processes decrease the fiber in foods. For example, whole wheat bread contains more fiber than white bread and apples have more fiber than apple juice.

Dietary guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture emphasize fiber sources. They encourage six servings of a variety of grains every day, including several servings of whole grains. Two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables are also recommended, as well as frequent use of cooked dried peas or beans (a low-fat alternative). Due to high water content, fruits and vegetables provide less dietary fiber than the drier grains and cereals.

More information, including a listing of the fiber content of about 30 foods and examples of high-fiber diets, is included in a publication authored by Slavin and former Extension nutritionist Mary Darling. Titled "Fiber in the Diet," it's available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/living.

You can also purchase hard copies for a nominal price from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for publication number 00423.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, H2 slavin522

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May 3, 2002

Children more apt to be obese when parents are 'too controlling'

Parents who keep too tight a rein on what their children eat can increase chances their children will be overweight. And children's eating behavior may have a lifelong impact on how they regulate their appetites and therefore their weight, says Marla Reicks, nutritionist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Parent-child interactions can shape a child's eating behavior related to feeding and eating, Reicks says. Most often this is the mother, and several studies have shown that child-feeding practices of mothers can affect which foods children like, how much they eat, their ability to regulate how much they eat and their body weight.

"As Mother's Day and Father's Day approach, this is another reminder of how important parents are," Reicks says. There are now twice as many overweight children in this country compared to 20 years ago and the increasing prevalence of overweight Americans is one of the most pressing new health challenges we face today.

Basic guidelines for feeding young children include providing a wide variety of nutritious foods at regular time intervals, then allowing the child to be responsible for deciding how much of each food to eat.

More information on nutrition is available from the USDA Food and Nutrition Information website at http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/consumersite. Another good source of information on feeding young children is the New Mexico State University website: http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/pubs/_e/e-134.html.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, H2

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May 3, 2002

New Farm Bill should help stabilize income safety net for crop producers

A compromise agreement in Congress on a new Farm Bill should help stabilize the income "safety net" for crop producers, says an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Blue Earth County educator Kent Thiesse says the new legislation will govern U.S. Department of Agriculture farm programs for the next six years, from 2002 through 2007.

"As is usual with compromises, not everyone is totally satisfied," says Thiesse. "However, there does seem to be widespread, bi-partisan support for most commodity aspects of the new Farm Bill."

The USDA will now begin the difficult task of writing rules and procedures to implement the legislation, so that commodity provisions of the Farm Bill can take effect yet in 2002 through the Farm Service Agency. Thiesse says developing the rules and procedures is likely to take several months. No commodity payments to producers under the new legislation are scheduled until fall of this year.

The new Farm Bill is likely to provide producers of major crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat an enhanced income support safety net, says Thiesse. Commodity Credit Corporation marketing loans with posted county prices, as well as loan deficiency payments (LDPs), will continue.

The bill increases national crop loan rates for corn by nine cents per bushel, to $1.98. It lowers the national soybean rate from $5.26 to $5.00 per bushel. However, soybeans and other oilseed crops were added as "program crops." Producers of program crops are eligible for a fixed, direct payment each of the six years of the Farm

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Bill. The direct payment rates per bushel are 28 cents for corn, 44 cents for soybeans and 52 cents for wheat. The direct payments replace the current annual Agricultural Market Transition Act (AMTA) payments.

The new Farm Bill re-introduces the concept of target prices and establishes new counter-cyclical payments for all crops, says Thiesse. The new counter-cyclical payments are intended to eliminate the need for Congress to pass emergency farm legislation each year to supplement income for crop producers due to very low commodity prices. Any time the national average price for a commodity plus the direct payment is lower than the target price, there will be a counter-cyclical payment, says Thiesse. Maximum levels of counter-cyclical payments per bushel are 34 cents for corn, 36 cents for soybeans and 54 cents for wheat.

"Most crop producers are satisfied that almost total planting flexibility has been maintained in the new Farm Bill," says Thiesse. He adds that producers will have the option to keep current farm program base acres and yields, or to update base acres and yields based on 1998-2001 planted acres and harvested yields. Provisions will be made to add soybean base acres and yields. Both direct and counter-cyclical payments will be made on 85 percent of base acres for a given crop.

Thiesse has written an information sheet on commodity program provisions of the new Farm Bill, as well a Conference Committee summary of the bill. They are on the Blue Earth County Extension website, under "Farm Management," at www3.extension.umn.edu/county/blueearth/.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,A4,F4 thie0502

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 7, 2002

Collective bargaining is 'good business' for farmers, economist says

Farmers are now more interested in learning about collective bargaining than they've been in the past several decades, according to an economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

And economist Richard A. Levins says he's not surprised by the renewed interest and possibilities. "Now there are fewer farmers (to organize), but they're better educated and more connected with information technology," Levins says.

"And most important is that today's farmers live in a world of economic giants. The market power of non-farm corporations is now so great that farmers will have to consider alternatives to small-scale competition. It's simply good business."

His optimism may be justified by requests for some of his publications. A paper he wrote on collective bargaining titled, "An Essay on Farm Income" was downloaded 1,144 times from his department's website, according to Louise Letnes, librarian for the U of M Department of Applied Economics.

The 40-page publication, "An Essay on Farm Income," is available at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu or (612) 625-1705. Or, contact the Waite Library, Department of Applied Economics, 232 COB, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

"Choices" magazine (Winter 2001-2002, published by the American Association of Agricultural Economics) also featured an article he wrote on farmers acting together.

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In that article, Levins addressed the question he gets most often: will farmers act together, and if so, how?

"This isn't a question for college professors like myself to answer on behalf of farmers," he says. "Only solutions that come from farmers themselves will have the acceptance and wisdom to sustain a prolonged change in how farmers do business."

"Collective action requires a new way of thinking, a great deal of organizing to gain economic power and economic analysis to learn how to use that power effectively," he wrote in the Choices paper. "But success will mean renewed hope for farmers, a greater feeling of working toward a common purpose and a larger share of the profits now reserved for the more powerful guests at the food system table."

Levins has taught farm management as an Extension economist for more than 20 years. He says he's seen the limits of farmers acting alone, contrasted with the possibilities if they act collectively.

"With a growing number of farmers and agricultural economists reacting to agribusiness mergers," Levins says, "a new way toward farm prosperity could take shape much more quickly than anyone has imagined possible."

The article Levins wrote for Choices is available by contacting him at (612) 625-5238 or dlevins@apec.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, A2, A4, V2, V4, F2, P1 levins562

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May 10, 2002

Southwest Minnesota survey shows wide variation in farm wages

The average monthly cash wage paid to full-time farm workers was $1,924, according to a survey of Southwest Minnesota Farm Business Management Association members conducted in April 2002.

Wage rates varied considerably, says Erlin Weness, farm management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, who conducted the survey. The lowest monthly cash rate was $1,617 per month; the highest was $2,300.

Hourly rates for unskilled workers went from a low of $5 to a high of $10.50, while rates for highly skilled farm workers varied from $8 to $16. In addition to cash wages, Weness says most of the 35 members who responded to the survey provided other fringe benefits for both full or part-time employees. Year-end bonus payments ranged from $50 to over $2,200 with the most common figure from $500 to $1,000.

Incentive plan payments ranged from $100 to over $4,000 with typical payments in the $2,000 range. And paid vacation time was one or two weeks for most of the full-time and some part-time employees, Weness says. Several farmers reported giving up to a two-week vacation and as many as six paid holidays.

More details are available at http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu/ on the Internet.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A2

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May 14, 2002

Websites have daily information for irrigators

Minnesota irrigators and crop consultants needing daily crop evapotranspiration (ET) information for irrigation scheduling can access this information on the Internet. Color contoured state maps show daily ET potential, according to Jerry Wright, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Maps for Minnesota and Wisconsin are on the web at www.soils.wisc.edu/wimnext/water.html . Maps for North Dakota and the Red River Valley are at www.ext.nodak.edu/weather/cropwater/ . The maps for Minnesota and Wisconsin show potential, or reference, ETs only, while those for the Red River Valley show estimated daily ETs for several crops.

The Minnesota and Wisconsin daily ET maps are available between mid-April and the end of September. The ET values are based on the weather conditions for the day. Daily ET values can also be sent to users directly by e-mail upon request.

"Potential ET is very similar to the daily crop water use (ET) from an alfalfa crop 6-10 inches tall or a closed-canopy corn field," says Wright. For crops with less than full canopy a crop correction factor needs to be applied to estimate the actual ET.

"Keeping track of a crop's daily ET use, along with regular in-field soil moisture checks, can go a long way toward helping you optimize a crop's growth," says Wright.

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"Doing these things will also reduce the potential for leaching of inputs such as nitrogen into the groundwater."

Wright recommends keeping a calendar log such as an irrigation checkbook worksheet or computer spreadsheet for quick reference when making irrigation decisions. He suggests assigning the updating task to a younger family member.

For more information on how to use daily crop ET information, contact Wright at (320) 589-1711 or jwright @umn.edu, or contact your county office of the U of M Extension Service or Soil and Water Conservation District.

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Web,V2MN,F4MN,X8 wrigh513

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 14, 2002

Mississippi River still the most important outlet for Minnesota grain

You've probably seen a unit train with 100 cars—then think of 2,500 of them filled with grain. That's roughly equal to the 25 million tons of Minnesota grain and oilseeds that must be transported long distances every year.

About half of the state's production is shipped to national and international markets, according to a new study. "All modes of transportation remain important for Minnesota's grain movement," says Jerry Fruin, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service who conducted the study.

Fruin developed an "Agricultural Transportation Database" in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Grain and Feed Association. Here are some highlights from the study:

--Truck transportation dominates movement from elevators to processors and plays a major role in moving grain to Mississippi River ports and Duluth/Superior.

--Unit and shuttle trains of 50 and 100 cars dominate the long-distance movements to the Pacific Northwest, Mexico and selected feed markets. However, 18 percent of all Minnesota elevator shipments move by rail in one- to 26-car lots.

--The Mississippi River is not as important in a relative sense as it was in the mid-1980s. However, it moves even more grain in a typical year and remains the most important transportation artery for Minnesota's surplus grain.

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--In the long run, growth or decline in Minnesota's grain exports will depend on its livestock industry and the demand for locally processed soybean meal and feed by-products of corn processing.

--Since the implementation of NAFTA, Mexico has become an important growing market for Minnesota corn and soybeans. "Like any international market, growth will be sporadic due to trade disputes and general economic conditions," Fruin says. "But the die is cast for more growth as U.S. and Mexican economies become more integrated."

--The Twin Ports of Duluth/Superior have become an important outlet for soybeans due to expansion of soybean production into the Red River Valley and North Dakota.

--Planned expansion of corn and soybean processing will reduce quantities of unprocessed commodities to be shipped out of state. However, more distiller's grain, ethanol, soybean meal and soy oil from Minnesota will be entering the national market.

More information on the study is available from Fruin at (612) 625-8720 or fruin001@umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2MN fruin4252

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 14, 2002

Make informed decisions about diet supplements

It's important to get sound, balanced information if you're considering diet supplements. And this includes potential risks as well as benefits, says Craig Hassel, nutrition specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Hassel says the American Dietetic Association and the American Pharmaceutical Association have developed some key questions for consumers to ask themselves and discuss with a health care professional. The questions are divided into three categories: need, safety and effectiveness.

Need: Why do I think I need this supplement? Does my healthcare provider know I am taking this supplement? What do I expect to gain from taking this supplement?

Safety: Do I know what is in this supplement I'm taking? What are the possible side effects of taking this supplement?

Effectiveness: How can I tell if this product is working for me or making a difference in my health? Does the way I eat affect how this supplement will work? Has this supplement been shown to be effective in research studies, particularly with humans?

"These questions are useful for us as we try to work through the ambiguities of supplement usage," Hassel says. "The questions on user perceptions of need and

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expectations are very useful. It may not be possible to answer the questions on safety, but they are good questions to ask nonetheless."

Hassel says another question could be asked: What is the system of understanding that will guide my use of this product? Is it biomedicine? Traditional Chinese medicine? Ayurvedic medicine? Because herbs can be used in different ways under different health care paradigms, Hassel says this question will help you understand the basis for appropriate use.

Hassel says these questions on diet supplements are also appropriate (and arguably more important) for prescription pharmaceuticals.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consumer magazine can also help you make informed choices. The magazine's March-April 2002 issue features diet supplements and you can find it on the Internet at www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2002/202_supp.html.

If you have adverse effects from diet supplements, you can report them to the FDA by calling (800) FDA-1088, or online at www.fda.gov/medwatch/how.htm.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, H2 hassel5132

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May 17, 2002

Teacher workshop will provide strategies to enhance ag literacy

Teachers and other educators who would like to enhance agricultural literacy in classrooms can take part in an interactive hands-on workshop this summer in Redwood Falls. The workshop will be July 8-10 in conjunction with the Minnesota Cattlemen's Summer Tour in Redwood County.

The workshop is designed for elementary and middle school teachers, Extension educators and others who wish to enhance agricultural literacy in the classroom and learn more about the beef industry. It will provide strategies for incorporating agricultural concepts in the classroom and using Minnesota education standards. The University of Minnesota Animal Science Department, the Minnesota CattleWomen and Minnesota Ag in the Classroom are sponsors.

The workshop will cover (1) Reasons for teaching agriculture, and new directions in agricultural literacy; (2) The beef industry, including production basics, economics, nutrition and food safety; (3) Beef enterprises today, including visits to seven beef businesses in Redwood County; (4) Teaching and classroom resources about agriculture; and (5) Implementation designs for integrating agriculture in the curriculum.

Workshop instructors include Alfredo DiCostanzo, U of M associate professor and Extension animal scientist; Susan Anderson, Ag in the Classroom educational

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specialist; and Juanita Reed-Boniface, educational consultant with JRB Associates, Inc. and Minnesota CattleWomen education chair.

Workshop classes will take place July 8 and July 10 at the Redwood Falls Elementary School media center. On July 9, class members will participate in the Minnesota Cattlemen's Summer Tour .

The workshop registration fee is $250. Participants will receive 25 clock hours of continuing education credits from the U of M College of Education. For more information or to receive registration materials, contact Juanita Reed-Boniface, Minnesota CattleWomen Education Chair, 2462 Lake George Dr. NW, Cedar, MN 55011; e-mail AgriFolks@aol.com; call (763) 753-4636; or go to www.ansci.umn.edu on the Internet.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,B1 aglitr

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 17, 2002

Here are some tips to help make teen parties safe and fun

High school graduation parties—and other teen parties—can strike fear in the hearts of parents.

Indeed, there are social host liability issues for parents. In Minnesota, anyone over 21 who knowingly serves alcohol to someone under 21 may be held civilly liable for damages caused by the underage person.

But with planning and forethought, teen parties can be safe and fun, says Colleen Gengler, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Slayton.

Here are some suggestions for when your teen gives a party:

--Have your teen draw up a list of people invited. Remember that large parties can easily get out of hand. Also, consider where to host the party. A large outdoor party might be difficult to control.

--Help your teen decide how to issue invitations. They should state the party is not an "open house." Work out a plan for "gate crashers;" greet kids as they arrive.

--Talk about food, beverages and activities. Lock up any liquor or valuables.

--Specify no alcohol or other drugs. Have guests check "backpacks" at the door. Tell your teen ahead of time that parents will be called if anyone is caught with illegal substances, including alcohol. Never let them drive--an accident could leave you liable.

--Settle on the ending time of the party beforehand.

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And if your teen is invited to a party away from home, you'll want to ask where the party is (including the address), how your teen is getting there and back, who will be there, what they'll be doing and the hours of the party.

Other ideas when your teen is partying away from home:

--Call the parents to make sure they will be home--even though your teen won't want you to.

--Stress to your teen that if plans change, they need to let you know. Give them a phone number where you can be reached.

--Rehearse what to do if they want to leave. Encourage them to call you for a ride if needed.

--Remind your teen never to ride with anyone who has been drinking alcohol or using drugs.

--Stay up until your teen comes home or tell them to wake you when they arrive.

--Be suspicious if your teen frequently sleeps elsewhere after a party.

If there's no party "planned" and you're going to be away from home, consider what could happen. "You may want to reconsider your plans if there's potential for a party," Gengler advises. "Ask a close relative or neighbor to keep an eye on things. Have your teen stay with another trusted family while you're gone."

# # #

(Sources for this article include the Children's Defense Fund and the Minnesota Prevention Resource Center of the Minnesota Institute of Public Health)

Web, V2MN, V4, F1 gengler5162

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

May 17, 2002

Stressed trees are more apt to be attacked by insects and diseases

There's no foolproof way to keep insects and diseases away from your trees, but keeping trees healthy and free of stress will help. Forestry resource specialists with the University of Minnesota Extension Service have these tips:

--Keep trees watered when there's not enough rainfall.

--Put mulch under your trees. Mulch helps retain moisture around trees during dry periods. It also helps prevent other plants from growing around the tree and protects it from lawnmowers and weed-whackers.

--Try to keep construction and heavy traffic away from tree roots. Root loss is the most damaging type of construction damage, says Gary Johnson, urban and community forestry specialist with the U of M Extension Service.

--Don't remove too much foliage when pruning. Remove no more than one-third of the living crown in one year. If you need to do more than that, spread pruning over a couple of years. But don't remove foliage from newly planted trees unless limbs are broken. And don't prune oaks until at least July 1 to reduce chances of oak wilt disease.

--Don't "top" your trees. It looks bad and the large open wounds may attract diseases and insects. "Often the new growth is weakly attached," Johnson says. "But most important, topping trees encourages decay in the stems, which is the number one cause for tree failures in wind storms."

For more detailed information, go to http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension/ on the Internet. You can also contact the U of M Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020 or by e-mail at treeinfo@umn.edu.

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

May 21, 2002

New Minnesota tax bill addresses 30 percent bonus depreciation

The Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 signed by President Bush in March has a 30 percent bonus depreciation deduction that's especially important for farmers.

The deduction is for new property purchased after Sept. 10, 2001 and before Sept. 11, 2004, says Robert Anderson, farm management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Farm items covered under this provision include breeding stock, machinery, drainage tile and single or multi-purpose farm buildings. The 30 percent bonus depreciation will be calculated by first deducting any Section 179 claimed on the property.

Taxpayers must elect out of this provision by attaching a statement to their income tax returns, Anderson says. Tax returns filed before June 1, 2002, need not have the attachment to refuse the deduction. However, returns filed after that date will need the attachment to do so.

Recently, the Minnesota State Legislature passed legislation as part of a tax bill that addresses how Minnesota will treat this tax issue. The Minnesota Department of Revenue will require 80 percent of the bonus depreciation claimed on the federal return

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to be added back to calculate Minnesota taxable income. The amount added back can then be claimed as a deduction for purposes of calculating Minnesota taxable income over the following five tax years.

The Internal Revenue Service released the procedures implementing this provision in early April 2002, so most farmers filed their tax returns without taking advantage of this benefit. Taxpayers who have already filed 2001 tax returns who purchased qualifying property in 2001 may wish to consult with their tax adviser about amending their 2001 returns to claim the bonus depreciation.

More information is available at http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu.

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

May 21, 2002

Home landscape improvements can enhance outdoor living

Improving the landscape around your home can make your outdoor time more comfortable and enjoyable.

"Adding plants and other features makes the landscape more attractive," says Deb Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "But there are also other reasons to make improvements."

Landscaping can provide privacy from passing cars or nearby neighbors. "Adding appropriate small trees or shrubs can increase your privacy and enhance both the value and usefulness of your property," says Brown.

If your lifestyle has changed through the years, you may want to change your outdoor space accordingly. If your children are grown and you don't need play space, you can reduce the size of your lawn. You might want to expand hobby gardens and shrub beds or add a large deck or patio for entertaining. If it's getting harder to bend over to garden in the ground, think about installing raised beds, Brown suggests.

If you've been in your home 10-15 years, your trees have probably grown considerably. They may be shading parts of the yard, causing grass and other sun-loving plants to deteriorate. "Replace those struggling plants with shade-tolerant

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specimens," suggests Brown. "You might also hire a qualified tree service to trim and thin your larger trees to allow more light to reach nearby plants." She also suggests removing trees and shrubs that were poorly placed originally.

Your local nursery or garden center can provide help in improving your landscape. You may also want to spend an afternoon at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen. And you can get ideas for plant selection from Extension's sustainable landscape web page at www.sustland.umn.edu/ .

Answers to landscape, plant care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V9,G1,H5 brow0520

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

May 24, 2002

Pocket Spanish dictionary is designed for dairy farm use

A pocket dictionary designed to improve communication between English speakers and Spanish speakers on dairy farms is available from the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The "Dairyman's Pocket Spanish Dictionary" contains words and phrases commonly used on dairy farms. The 31-page pocket-sized booklet can help managers and workers quickly and easily locate Spanish and English phrases and their translations. Its front and back covers are laminated for durability.

The booklet has sections on words and sentences for general use and for personal issues, needs and terms. It also has sections on words and sentences relating to breeding, young stock, milking procedures, the milking room, feeds, safety, barn maintenance, farm machinery and weather.

The "Dairyman's Pocket Spanish Dictionary" is available for purchase from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. It's also available by credit card from the U of M Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item 07753.

# # #

Web,V2,D1,H3 gross523

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 24, 2002

Take a positive approach if your child's grades aren't the best

Report card time always finds some parents who are disappointed with the grades their son or daughter brings home.

Even though you may be disappointed, it's important to begin with a positive attitude. Joan Sprain, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Stillwater, says most report cards have a mixture of good and bad news. Recognize the good news—especially if your child showed improvement or met a challenge.

By all means, don't shame or demean your son or daughter. It only reinforces poor self-esteem and underachieving behavior.

You might start by asking if you have a reason to be disappointed. Letter grades may not be the best way to judge performance. In some cases, a "C" or worse may be cause for celebration if the subject was challenging and your student tried hard.

If you do have a legitimate reason to be disappointed, plan how to respond. Don't ignore the problem—sit down and talk it over with your son or daughter. Here are some additional ideas to help make that next report card better:

--Explain why you're unhappy. Let your child know what you expect.

--Determine the real cause of the problem. Is it general study habits or a more specific problem?

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--Come up with a plan with your child. Make it as specific as possible, and include yourself. Don't hesitate to call the teacher, especially for ideas on what you can do.

--Implement the plan, then monitor it. That way the next report card is apt to be an improvement instead of a surprise.

More information is available at the U of M Extension Service parenting website at www.parenting.umn.edu. There you can click on the "All Parents Are Teachers" brochure for more detailed information.

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 29, 2002

Book on sprinkler irrigation available from U of M

"Sprinkler Irrigation Systems," a book with detailed information on irrigation technology, is now available through the University of Minnesota. It was developed by MidWest Plan Service, a cooperative organization representing 12 Midwest land grant universities.

The book is designed for agricultural and horticultural crop producers and consultants, engineers, equipment dealers, government agency employees, educators, students and others interested in irrigation technology. It can serve as a planning tool, reference guide and manual on the design, development and management of sprinkler irrigation systems.

The book includes information to help determine water needs and to establish a minimum recommended system capacity. There is also a discussion on water supply evaluation and fitting types of sprinklers to specific needs.

One of the book's chapters is devoted to understanding and using water sources properly. It has sections on planning, drilling, developing, pumping and maintaining irrigation wells. Separate chapters cover sprinkler performance characteristics, sprinkler selection and frost control. There is a chapter on selecting pumps, piping and power units. Chemigation, the application of fertilizers and pesticides through irrigation systems, is also covered.

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The book's final chapter provides examples of step-by-step planning and design for different sprinkler irrigation systems. It includes designs for a center-pivot system with a well, a traveler system for irrigated pasture and a system for a small acreage producing horticultural crops.

The book contains over 110 photographs and illustrations and approximately 70 tables that help organize technical data.

"Sprinkler Irrigation Systems" is designated as MWPS-30. It costs $20 per single copy plus sales tax and shipping and handling. For ordering information, call (612) 625-9733, e-mail mwps@gaia.bae.umn.edu or go to www.bae.umn.edu/extens/mwps on the Internet.

For more information on the book's content, contact Jerry Wright at the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center at (320) 589-1711 or jwright@umn.edu , or go to www.bae.umn.edu/extens/mwps/swa.html on the Internet.

# # #

Web,V2,F4,X8 wrigh0520

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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May 29, 2002

Publication on feed for natural, organic pork available from U of M

"Designing Feeding Programs for Natural and Organic Pork Production" is the title of a new publication available from the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The 18-page bulletin has information on standards for organic pork production, management of organically raised pigs, energy and protein sources, alternative feeds and use of forage and pasture. It has tables with diet formulations for early and late grower and early and late finisher swine growth stages, as well as sow gestation and lactation.

The authors are Jerry Shurson and Mark Whitney of the U of M Department of Animal Science, Lee Johnston of the West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris, Bob Koehler and Robert Hadad of the Southwest Research and Outreach Center at Lamberton, and Dean Koehler of Vita Plus Corporation in Shakopee.

"Designing Feeding Programs for Natural and Organic Pork Production" is available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. It's also available by credit card from the U of M Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item 07736-BU.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,S2,P1 Koehl523

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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Editors: A photo of the family on their farm is available by mail or e-mail. For a print, call (612) 624-3064 or (612) 625-3168. To obtain a digital photo by e-mail, send a request to brene001@umn.edu .

Modernization builds retirement for veteran dairy producer while launching next generation

Modernizing a dairy operation by going into debt or investing equity may seem like a questionable financial strategy for a 60-year-old producer. However, it could increase the value of the business, and therefore might be the wisest investment the producer could make, according to Tim McNamara. McNamara is vice-president of the Ag-Star Financial Services Dairy Business Group, and works from an office in Northfield.

Many producers look at cash from the sale of their dairy business to provide retirement. "If you enhance the value of the business you enhance the value of the revenue stream created by the business," says McNamara. "Without a business that can succeed, the cows and your land account for most of what you have to sell at retirement."

McNamara says a person looking at buying a business wants one that's modern, efficient, profitable, and large enough to provide a desirable standard of living and quality of life. And this includes young people interested in buying a dairy business from a producer approaching retirement, he adds.

"The numbers tell us that the dairy industry in Minnesota is shrinking, with fewer cows and fewer cow owners," says McNamara. "I believe one reason for this is that young people who have grown up on the farm are not being given the opportunity to buy into a viable, thriving business."

Minnesota has a generation of dairy producers at or close to retirement, McNamara points out. "If these producers are willing to make investments that will

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enhance the attractiveness of their businesses, it will create more demand for the businesses," he adds. "That will make it more likely that their retirement cash flow will be more sustainable."

A producer who has put into practice what McNamara advocates is Stanley Diers of Howard Lake in Wright County. Diers began the process of selling his dairy business to his daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Sean Groos, in 1993.

Stanley and his late wife Geneva raised four children on the 290-acre farm a mile south of Howard Lake. They began farming there in 1963 in partnership with Stan's father. The farm has been in the family since it was homesteaded by Stan's great grandfather in 1880.

Stan and Geneva called their farm Stangen Holsteins, and they were milking 44 cows in 1993. By that time the children had all finished high school and moved on to educational or career pursuits off the farm.

"Geneva and I came to the point where we knew we couldn't dairy without help," Stan recalls. "I didn't have enough land to be a crop farmer, and that really wasn't my first love...dairy was. I was also getting more involved in dairy boards, which required time away from the farm." He has served 16 years on the Minnesota Dairy Promotion Board and eight years on the United Dairy Industry Association board.

The Diers children include daughters Julie and Linda and sons Phillip and Alan. "All the kids helped with milking and were very much involved with showing cattle and working on the farm," says Stan. "They were all in 4-H and FFA, and they all went to college."

Linda majored in agricultural education at the University of Minnesota. In 1987 she got a summer job at a cheese plant in nearby Winsted. There she met Sean, who was doing an internship as part of his dairy manufacturing major at South Dakota State University.

Sean, the second of eight children, had grown up on a diversified South Dakota farm that included a dairy enterprise. After graduating from SDSU in 1989, he took a job as supervisor of a dairy processing plant in Waverly, New York.

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"I knew I was going to come back and farm someday," Sean says. "I just wanted to try something different and make a little money."

He and Linda were married in 1990. They moved back to Minnesota in August 1991, locating in the Lamberton area. Linda took a job teaching adult farm management in Redwood County, and Sean began selling feed for Land O'Lakes.

Linda, however, shared Sean's dream of farming. "I had a very positive experience growing up on the farm," she says. "We (she and her siblings) helped with the work, but we also did fun things. I knew the farm was where I wanted to live and raise a family someday."

Sean recalls that while they were living in southwest Minnesota they began to explore the idea of returning to either the farm where he grew up or the one where Linda grew up. "We kind of threw out feelers to see what the reaction was," he says. "We were looking at dairy as the best chance to survive, considering crop prices."

Sean and Linda's interest in farming came as no surprise to Stan. "Before they even asked us we knew they wanted to farm someday; they just didn't know where or how," he says.

One step Sean and Linda took in 1992 was to buy some heifers. Also, as a farm management instructor, Linda was familiar with the FINPACK financial analysis software developed by the University of Minnesota.

"Our local adult farm management instructor ran a FINPACK to see how many cows we would need so both families could make a living," Stan recalls. "We arrived at a decision that they (Sean and Linda) would need to come up with the same number of cows and youngstock that I had in order to form a 50-50 partnership."

They knew that doubling the number of cattle on the farm would require additional barn space. They listened to ideas from consultants and Sean visited some Wisconsin farms before they decided on building an 88-x-120-ft. curtained freestall barn with 108 stalls and an alley for drive-through feeding.

The 50-50 partnership began June 1, 1993 and the farm was renamed Stangen-Minkota Holsteins. The freestall barn was finished in August of that year. Sean and

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Linda lived in a rented house in Howard Lake. Stan and Geneva lived in the main farmhouse and Stan's parents lived in another house that had been built in 1962 on the farm.

Stan was without debt before joining the partnership, and paid for the construction of the freestall barn. "I was able to borrow the money....the partnership didn't have that kind of equity," he says. "Then I received a monthly lease payment on the barn from the partnership."

Stan and Geneva also retained ownership of the land and the crop machinery. They received a monthly payment on a per-pound basis for the corn silage and haylage produced on the farm. The price was to cover out-of-pocket crop production expenses, but not labor. Stan and Sean shared the labor that went into growing the crops.

Another change that occurred in the summer of 1993 was to buy the necessary equipment to begin feeding a total mixed ration. This was one of the first purchases the partnership made.

For two years, milking took place in shifts in the 44-stall tie-stall barn. It was clear that a change was necessary, and they began to look at different types of parlors. In June of 1995, they remodeled the tie-stall barn into a holding area and a step-up flat barn milking parlor with eight stalls. They were also able to find some used milking equipment for about a quarter of the price of new equipment.

Living arrangements for the families changed in June of 1994. Stan's parents moved into an apartment in town, Stan and Geneva moved into the house on the farm where his parents had lived, and Sean and Linda and their daughter Rebecca moved into the main farmhouse.

"It was just a miracle the way it fell into place," says Stan. "My parents were getting to the point where the house was too much to care for. They needed to go to an apartment...it was their decision. Sean and Linda were ready to come to the bigger house. Nobody felt pushed out."

Family changes have continued since 1994. Rebecca, now nine years old, was joined by brothers Ethan in 1995 and Luke in 1998, and baby sister Bethany in 2001.

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The family endured the death of Geneva due to cancer in 1998. Stan has since remarried, and he and his wife Sharon have built a new house on the farm. Stan's son Phillip now lives in the house built in 1962, though he is not involved in the farming operation.

The 50-50 partnership continued until Jan. 1, 1998, when Sean and Linda went to a 75 percent share. The partners tallied up all the assets of the partnership, minus the debt, and Stan financed the purchase of the quarter share. The same process occurred at the beginning of 2002, with Stan selling his remaining one-fourth share of the partnership to Sean and Linda. The farm is now called Minkota Holsteins. The number of cows milked has gradually increased to about 140 head, with a herd milk production average of 25,000 pounds.

Sean and Linda now own all the livestock and livestock equipment. Sean, outside the partnership, has purchased most of Stan's tillage machinery. Stan continues to own the freestall barn and half the farmland. Geneva's half of the farmland is in trust to Stan and Geneva's four children, and Stan rents that half from the trust.

Is Stan better off now that if he had just sold the cows and quit milking in 1993? "Very much so," he says. "My equity is far greater now than when the partnership began. There's no way I could have accumulated as much by crop farming. And I couldn't have dairied on my own. I wouldn't have been one to build a new dairy and run it with hired help."

Stan, Sean and Linda agree that communication is a challenge in a partnership and an area where there is always opportunity for improvement. They also agree that for a partnership between generations to work, it's a good idea for the younger partner to contribute some equity, thus having a financial stake in the operation.

Linda says a low debt load since 1993 has contributed to the success of the partnership. "A high debt load will keep dragging you down," she notes.

Sean says he has seen father-son partnerships where "the dad just doesn't want to let go."

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"The senior partner has to learn that to make it work he's going to have to make changes," Sean adds. "Otherwise, the younger partner will get frustrated and look for another way to make a living."

The three agree that two families can make a better living with 100 cows together than in separate operations with 50 cows each. "Fixed costs don't go up that much with more cows," says Sean. "Costs per cow are lower."

McNamara recommends that families looking at setting up a partnership seek experienced, professional legal and tax advice. "The warning, 'Don't try this at home' applies," he says.

McNamara says he sometimes hears doom and gloom about the future of dairying in Minnesota. "It doesn't have to be that way," he says. "We have the knowledge, ability, resources and experience to revitalize Minnesota's dairy industry. Transferring a dairy business as a going concern, rather than dismantling the business and selling the assets, can contribute to that revitalization."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,D1,91 diergroo2

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

May 31, 2002

Birch bark, wild blueberries examples of non-timber forest products

Picking wild blueberries, collecting willows and dogwood for basket material and harvesting birch bark to make canoes and baskets are only a few examples of what non-timber forest products are about.

There are probably about 250 native Minnesota plants that are subject to commercial or hobby harvest, according to a new University of Minnesota website titled "Non-Timber Forest Products and Implications for Forest Managers."

The website is a cooperative effort of the U of M Extension Service and College of Natural Resources plus the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. It's based on meetings where landowners were invited to discuss whether current forest management practices assure the sustainable use of non-timber products.

"The meetings weren't held to promote the use of any plants or groups of plants," says Mike Reichenbach, forest economic development educator with the U of M Extension Service. "We had the meetings to increase awareness about what's being harvested and to help define forest management needs in relation to resource sustainability."

The website includes sections on considerations for biodiversity and conservation; hazelnut production; birch and birch bark; balsam boughs; botanicals; berries, nuts and fruits; and use of native plants.

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"New uses for products are occasionally discovered and developed," Reichenbach says. "This is true of birch bark, where the bark has been found to contain compounds with potential use in medicines and paint pigments."

The parts of plants that are used and the harvest practices can affect ecological sustainability at four levels: the individual plant, the population, the community and the ecosystem.

At the individual level, a plant that's partially harvested may become less vigorous or be more susceptible to disease. Populations of plants may diminish if they're harvested before they can reproduce sexually.

And at the plant community and ecosystems levels, harvesting plants has an effect on the abundance and distribution of other species. However, Reichenbach says this effect can be hard to quantify.

For more detailed information, click on the website at www.extensiion.umn.edu/environment.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F8, T2,P1 reich5302

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 4, 2002

CCA treated lumber for residential markets to be phased out

Chromated copper arsenate (CCA) as a treatment for lumber used in consumer products and the residential building market is being phased out by Dec. 31, 2003.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the wood treating industry announced a voluntary decision in February 2002 to phase out CCA, says Tom Milton, forest products specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Milton says CCA has accounted for a huge share of pressure treated wood in the U.S., especially over the last 30 years. Over 78 percent of the 728 million cubic feet of wood treated in 1997 was treated with CCA.

"CCA is a registered pesticide," Milton says. "Considering the volume that's been used and the 70 years that it's been around, it continues to have an outstanding safety record when you follow proper handling precautions. But times have changed.

"In recent years, the public has become increasingly concerned about exposures to arsenic," Milton says. "Even though the EPA has not concluded that there is an unreasonable risk to the public from CCA-treated products, it does believe that any reduction in exposure to arsenic is desirable. When you couple the market's growing negative perception of CCA with the development of non-arsenic preservatives, it's easy to see why the industry volunteered to phase out CCA for the residential market.

"This is a huge change for the treating industry," Milton says. "We are already seeing a growing amount of non-CCA lumber at retail yards and Minnesota's treating plants are already beginning the transition to the new preservatives. The new preservatives are copper-based fungicides like CCA, but without the arsenic."

They include ACQ (Ammoniacal Copper Quat) found in the brand name products ACQ Preserve and NatureWood; and CBA (Copper Boron Azole) found in the

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brand name Natural Select. In place of arsenic, ACQ uses DDAC (the quat component) and copper azole uses tebuconazole to provide protection against copper tolerant fungi and insects. Both preservatives perform similar to CCA. CCA will continue to be used for a number of industrial products such as utility poles, piling and crossties.

What about replacing existing decks, playground sets or other CCA-treated material? "The EPA does not recommend replacing or removing any existing structures made with CCA-treated material, since exposure to such material has not been proven to be harmful," Milton says. However, the EPA does recommend, based on some limited studies, that potential arsenic exposures can be further reduced by applying a protective sealant such as a semi-transparent stain or water-repellent finish on an annual or semi-annual basis. Such finishes minimize moisture uptake into the wood and the leaching of preservative components out of the wood.

"Perhaps just as important is that a proper and well-maintained finish protects the appearance of wood exposed to weathering," Milton says. For more information, go to www.preservedwood.com or www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/cca_transition.htm. Or, you can contact Tom Milton at (612) 624-5307, tmilton@umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F9 milton632

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 4, 2002

U of M website can help diagnose plant diseases

If you have pallid petunias or cankered cucumbers, a visit to a University of Minnesota website can help you figure out the cause of the problem.

Two new additions to the Plant Disease Diagnostics website at www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/diagnostics/ are designed to help you diagnose vegetable and bedding plant diseases. The diagnostics website is a project of the plant pathology staff of the U of M Extension Service's Yard and Garden Clinic.

The website guides users through the process of diagnosing plant diseases. Plant categories include bedding plants, fruit, roses, shrubs and vines, trees, turf and vegetables. After clicking on a category, you begin by identifying the affected host plant. Then you can narrow down the possible problems affecting the plant.

What if you can't identify your host plant? "There are links to help with that process," says Janna Beckerman, U of M Extension plant pathologist. "With the recent addition of two new categories, bedding plants and vegetables, you can now access information to help diagnose problems with these plants. We will continue to add new host plants, so we encourage you the check back soon if you don't find what you're looking for on the first visit."

Once you have clicked on the name of the host plant, the next step is to determine which part of the plant is affected—leaves, flowers, stems or roots. Links take you to a

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page with photographs of common disease problems and descriptions of symptoms. This page helps you match the problems you are seeing with a specific disease.

Once you diagnose a disease by matching it to a picture on the web page, clicking on the picture links you to more information about the disease. There are more details and photos about the causal agent, life cycle of the pathogen, how the disease overwinters and causes new infections, and how to manage the disease.

Along with plant disease information, the website has information on other causes of plant problems, such as deer damage, herbicide injury and other weather-related conditions.

"Early diagnosis of plant disease problems is the most critical step in managing plant pathogens and minimizing their impact," says Beckerman. "The website was created to help home gardeners and nursery professionals diagnose plant diseases and manage them effectively. However, don't rely on a single website or textbook. Consult the University of Minnesota Yard and Garden Clinic when in doubt.

"Remember, without an accurate diagnosis, you can't proceed to the next step, and any management strategy that you develop will fail."

You can get further help with the diagnostic process, as well as other plant care and gardening questions, by calling the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bkrm0530

Source: Janna Beckerman, (612) 625-7022
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 7, 2002

Website gives the latest information on home food preservation

You can find tips on preserving almost any food--from apples to tomatoes and turnips—on the website of National Center for Home Food Preservation at www.uga.edu/nchfp.

The center is a good source for current research-based recommendations for most methods of home food preservation, say food scientists with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. You'll find recommendations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and from land-grant universities throughout the U.S.

The website tells you how to can, freeze, dry, cure, smoke and ferment dozens of foods. There are also tips on how to pickle, make jam and jelly and store foods. A special section for educators has resources such as graphics and slide shows.

Much of the information is related to seasonal harvests so you'll want to check it out as prepare to shop at farmers' markets or harvest produce from your garden.

And if you have more questions, you can submit an information request via e-mail directly from the site. You can also check with your local office of the U of M Extension Service to have information downloaded from the Internet.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F7 foodsafe672

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation www.uga.edu/nchfp
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 7, 2002

Livestock nutrition conference in Eagan, Minn. will be Sept. 17-18

A livestock nutrition conference will bring several hundred scientists from the U.S. and other countries to the Twin Cities in September. The 63rd Minnesota Nutrition Conference will be Sept. 17-18 at the Royal Cliff Conference Center in Eagan.

The conference will cover nutrition topics for beef and dairy cattle, swine and poultry. Animal nutritionists will share information about current research at universities, in industry and at government centers. The conference is designed for nutritionists, feed industry representatives, veterinarians, educators and livestock producers. Speakers are scientists from the University of Minnesota, other U.S. land grant universities, foreign universities and industry.

A pre-conference symposium entitled "Rendering: A Foundation for Food Security" will take place Sept. 17.

A registration flyer with details on the conference agenda, registration fees and hotel reservations is available. To obtain a copy, call (612) 624-3044 or (800) 318-8636, or e-mail jgrazier@cce.umn.edu. The conference website is at http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/mn-nutrition.

# # #

Web,V2,B1,D1,P3,R1,S2 nutrconf

Source: Mary Kay Ferguson, (612) 625-8215; Lee Johnston, (320) 589-1711
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 7, 2002

U.S. economy 'unlikely' to sustain levels of late-1990s

Slow productivity growth in the service sector is apt to drag the U.S. economy down in future decades, according to a University of Minnesota economist.

"Rapid growth in the material-producing sector has been the major source of productivity growth for the entire economy," says Vernon W. Ruttan, Regents Professor Emeritus at the U of M. But during the 21st century, Ruttan says the U.S. and other advanced industrial countries will be confronted by the new challenge of making the service sector the driver of economic growth.

He used a simulation model to demonstrate how continued slow productivity growth in the service sector dampens the rate of productivity growth of the entire economy. The study was published in the March 2002 issue of "Population and Development Review."

The "new economy" growth acceleration starting in the mid-1990s was the result of a dramatic rise in investment growth and in technical change in the information technology (IT) industry, Ruttan says. The IT industry accounted for almost half of productivity growth in the U.S. economy during 1995-99.

The IT industry is maturing, Ruttan says. But the more serious constraint on growth in labor productivity will come from the continuing decline in output share from the goods-producing sector and the difficulty of enhancing productivity growth throughout the service sector.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, V7, A2, E1

ruttan652

Source: Vernon W. Ruttan (612) 625-4701, vruttan@umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 11, 2002

Eating fiber-rich foods has many benefits

The magic numbers are five and seven—as in five or more servings of vegetables and fruits daily plus seven servings of whole grains and beans. Eating these minimum amounts of fiber-rich foods may protect you from some forms of cancer and reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Scientists say we should consumer about 30 grams of fiber daily--double the amount of fiber we currently eat. But you don't need to buy fiber supplements to do it, says Joanne Slavin, a food science and nutrition professor at the University of Minnesota. "You can plan a diet with 30 grams of dietary fiber using foods normally present in our food supply," she says.

You don't need to count the grams of fiber. You'll get enough if you eat the recommended five or more servings of vegetables and fruits daily plus seven servings of whole grains and beans.

A serving of fruits or vegetables is equal to just one apple or peach, one-half cup of pineapple chunks, one-half cup of chopped broccoli or one-quarter cup of raisins. And servings of grains and beans add up even faster.

The two slices of bread on a sandwich equal two servings, as does a cup of rice or pasta. A cup of beans is two servings, and you can wrap them in a whole-wheat

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tortilla for one more. A morning bowl of cereal probably has two or more servings of fiber.

Americans average less than one serving a day of whole grains, but we should be consuming three daily servings, says Slavin. "Whole grain consumption has been linked to less cancer incidence as well as protection against heart disease and diabetes," Slavin says.

"We usually think of whole grains as an important source of dietary fiber, which they are. But whole grains also have physiological properties beyond those traditionally associated with dietary fiber, such as improved antioxidant status."

You can find more information on fiber in two publications. One is from a University of Minnesota Extension Service publication authored by Slavin and former Extension nutritionist Mary Darling. It includes a listing of the fiber content of about 30 foods and examples of high-fiber diets. Titled "Fiber in the Diet," it's available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/living.

You can also purchase hard copies for a nominal price from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for publication number 00423.

The other publication, "The Facts About Fiber," is available from the American Institute for Cancer Research. Call (800) 843-8114 or read it online at www.aicr.org.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, H2 slavin6112

Source: Joanne Slavin (612) 624-7234, jslavin@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 18, 2001

School's out, but children are still learning

School is out for the summer and that's a good reminder about how important it is for parents to model a "learning" environment.

Children spend only nine percent of their total time in school. And parents have a huge influence on what kids learn the rest of the time, say educators with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Students become better learners when the adults in their lives read, study, ask questions, talk about education and set long-term goals. The "All Parents are Teachers" program from the U of M Extension Service has a number of ideas that parents can put to good use over summer vacation:

--Be a good role model by making your life the best example of the behavior and values you want your children to have. And remember that they're always watching!

--Use your brain. Let your children see you enjoying a book or balancing the budget. Talk about current events.

--Encourage your children to read, read, read. Schedule time for reading. Let your children read in bed before going to sleep. Read out loud to your children. And have them read to you—recipes, cereal boxes, the mail, newspaper articles—anything.

--Browse together. Subscribe to a magazine you all enjoy or check magazines out of the library.

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--Open up—tell your children about a personal goal and how you plan to reach it. Ask about their goals and plans.

--Read about heroes. Read stories to children about successful people and how education helped them.

--Share your learning. Tell your children about anything you're learning.

These are just a sampling of ideas from "All Parents are Teachers." Click on www.parenting.umn.edu for more information, or contact a county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

# # #

Web, C1, V4MN, V8MN parents6132

Source: Joan Sprain (651) 430-6804, sprai002@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 18, 2002

Editors, broadcasters: Check the schedule of dates and locations below for the field day in your county or in nearby counties. Where information is incomplete, check with your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Field days will focus on countering soybean aphid problems

The soybean aphid became a menace to Minnesota soybeans last year and is expected to pose a threat again this year. A series of field days designed to help producers deal with soybean aphid problems will take place across southern Minnesota in late June and July. The University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council are sponsoring the events.

"Soybean aphids first appeared in southeast Minnesota in July of 2000 and spread across the entire Minnesota soybean belt by last fall," says Lisa Behnken, Olmsted County Extension educator.

Field day topics will include the outlook for aphid problems this year, management of the pest, results of research last year by the U of M and other universities, yield reductions, aphid predators and use of insecticides.

For the latest schedule of soybean aphid field day dates and locations, contact Behnken at (507) 287-7144 or lbehnken@umn.edu, or Bruce Potter at (507) 752-7372 or bpotter@umn.edu. The following dates and locations have been set, with the possibility that others will be added:

--June 24, LeSueur County, 4-H Family Center, 1:30 p.m.

--June 25, Goodhue County, Brian Hokanson farm, two miles west of Hader on 400th St. at intersection with 90th Ave., Sect. 34, Leon Township, or from Wanamingo, Hwy. 57 north to Hader (intersection of 57 and 52), turn west (at the Y stay right to get onto 400th St.), then west two miles, farm is on the right, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

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Fillmore County, Jack Hjelmeland farm, one mile north of Harmony on Highway 52, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Houston County, Richard Snow farm, five miles north of Houston on County Rd. 9, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Nicollet County, Lafayette Community Center, 1:30 p.m.

--June 26, Faribault County, Blue Earth Ag Center, Blue Earth, 9:30 a.m.

Blue Earth County, Lake Crystal, Crystal Coop, 1:30 p.m.

--June 27, Winona County, Kryzer-Luehmann Partnership farm, 0.3 mile north of Lewiston on County Rd. 25, first farm on the left, 10–11:30 a.m.

Houston County, Spring Grove, soybean field along Hwy 44, across from Radio Station KQIB, 2–3:30 p.m.

Freeborn County, Mark Behrends farm, from stoplights at WalMart, Albert Lea, go four miles west on County Rd. 46 to 700 Ave., turn right and go one-half mile, 9:30 a.m.

Mower County – 1:30 p.m., location to be announced

--June 28, Steele County, SunRich, Hope, 9:30 a.m.

--July 2, Olmsted County, Lawler farm, approx. four miles east of Rochester on County Rd. 9, north side of road, 10:30 a.m.–noon.

--July 3, Cottonwood County, location to be announced, 10 a.m.

Dodge County, Wayne McColley farm, south of Dodge Center (new Hwy. 14) on Hwy. 56 for 4.3 miles, then east on County 6 for one-plus mile, third place on the south (just east of wind generators), 9:30 – 11 a.m.

Fillmore County, Wes Anderson farm, approx. seven miles east of Chatfield on Fillmore Co. 2, then south one mile on Co. 38, farm on the west side of road, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Pipestone County, location and time to be announced.

Rock County, location and time to be announced.

--July 8, Nobles County, location and time to be announced.

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Murray County, Gerald Meier farm, two miles north of Fulda on Hwy. 59, 1:30 p.m.

--July 9, Lyon County, Chuck Buysse farm near Marshall, two and a quarter miles south of Hwy. 23 on County Rd. 7, 9:30 a.m.

Lincoln County, Bob Worth farm, one and one-half miles east of Lake Benton on Hwy. 14, noon.

Olmsted County, University of Minnesota research site, one mile north of Potsdam and one-half mile east, 9:30 a.m.

Olmsted County, University of Minnesota research site at RCTC, corner of Hwy. 14 East and County 22, 1:30 p.m.

Watonwan County, location to be announced, 11 a.m.

--July 11, Redwood County, Steve Prokosch farm, junction of Hwys. 68 and 71, 10 a.m.

Brown County, location and time to be announced.

--July 12, Martin County, Bill Bulfer farm near Fairmont, two miles south of fairgrounds, 10 a.m.

Jackson County, location to be announced, 1: 30 p.m.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4MN,07,08,17,20,22,23,24,25,28,32,40,41,42,45,50,51,52,53,55,60,67,

70,79,88,90 behnk615

Source: Lisa Behnken, (507) 287-7144; Bruce Potter, (507) 752-7372
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 18, 2002

Soybeans can tolerate short-term flooding

Soybean plants are sensitive to excess water, but short-term flooding isn't likely to hurt yields. Soybeans tolerate 48 hours under water quite well, according to Seth Naeve, soybean agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Four days or more of flooding stresses the crop, delays the plants' growth and causes the plants to be shorter with fewer nodes," says Naeve. "Flooding for six days or more may result in significant or entire stand loss."

Naeve says flooding from streams overflowing their banks can leave silt deposits that can bury the crop or cover leaves with thick layers of soil. Without rains to wash silt from soybean leaves, recovery is slow. Fortunately, soil prone to stream flooding is often sandy and drains well, allowing quick crop recovery or replanting.

Lowland flooding, where water accumulates in low spots in fields due to lack of soil permeability or surface drainage, can last many days. Naeve says soils in low areas of a field often hold water so that as the water disappears from the surface, the soil profile may stay waterlogged for several more days.

Naeve cites four main factors that determine the fate of flooded soybean fields. They are duration of the flooding, temperature during the flood, rate of drying after the beginning of the flood and growth stage of the crop during the flood.

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"Temperature during the flooding plays a large role in determining the fate of submerged soybeans," says Naeve. "Higher temperatures cause soybean plants to deplete stored energy more quickly. Also, higher temperatures cause plants and soil microbes to use up oxygen in the water more quickly, which is detrimental to the plants. Cool, cloudy days and cool, clear nights greatly increase the survivability of a submerged soybean crop."

Flooding also hurts soybeans more on slow-drying soils such as clay, says Naeve. A research study found a yield loss of 1.8 bushels per acre per day of flooding on a clay soil and a loss of 0.8 bushels per day on a silt loam soil. The soybeans were at the V4 growth stage.

"Flooding is more detrimental to soybean yields in the early reproductive phases of crop development," says Naeve. "Flooding at the R1 stage caused losses of 2.3 and 1.5 yields per acre on clay and silt loam soils in the study. Larger yield losses would be expected in soybeans at the R3 to R5 stages."

Flooding can also hurt soybean yields indirectly by contributing to root diseases, nitrogen deficiency and other plant nutrient imbalances.

"Caring for recuperating soybean stands should focus on reducing stresses on the plant where possible," says Naeve. "Cultivation can help increase soil aeration. Herbicide stress should be minimized and postponed where possible."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,F4 naev617

Source: Seth Naeve, (612) 625-4298
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 18, 2002

Thousands of small communities face wastewater treatment challenges

After we wash dishes or take a shower the water doesn't just go away. We've made it dirty, and what used to be "drinking water" becomes wastewater or sewage.

That's why thousands of small communities in Minnesota and across the U.S. face wastewater treatment challenges, says Ken Olson, an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Olson, who specializes in on-site sewage treatment, says the typical home uses 75 to 100 gallons of wastewater per person per day.

In addition to water, wastewater has pathogens, or disease organisms; nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus; solids, both organic and inorganic; and chemicals from cleaners, disinfectants and medications.

"Wastewater must be cleaned up before it's returned to the environment to be recycled for future generations," Olson says. "As individuals and community members, everyone must take responsibility for wastewater generated in our community."

When a community faces wastewater treatment issues, Olson says a successful outcome often depends more on the process it follows than on the treatment technologies available to it. "Finding the technology solutions is the easy part," Olson says. "Working together as a community is the challenge."

Olson has written two new publications. One is titled "A Quick Guide to Small Community Wastewater Treatment Decisions," which you can read on the Internet at

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www.bae.umn.edu/septic. The other is a more detailed, 140-page version called "Small Community Wastewater Solutions: A Guide to Making Treatment, Management and Financial Decisions." Either publication can be purchased with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for item 07734 (Complete Guidebook) or 07735 (Quick Guide).

# # #

Web, V4, V5, C4, T2 olson.ken.6142

Source: Ken Olson (800) 657-3516, olson150@umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 21, 2002

Tour will feature three distinct types of Minnesota dairy farms

A tour featuring three distinct types of Minnesota dairy operations will take place July 16 as part of a conference in Bloomington. The tour will be part of the annual conference of the American Forage and Grassland Council, and will leave from the Thunderbird Hotel at 11:30 a.m. Farmers and others not registering for the entire conference can go on the tour as part of the conference's "Producer Days" package.

The dairy operations on the tour are all about a half-hour south of the Twin Cities. The tour stops will be:

--Mohn Dairy at Lakeville, owned by Bruce and Cheryl Mohn. The Mohns have 60 cows in a tie-stall barn, and use stored feed for their herd. They have tower silos for haylage and store corn silage in silo bags. They have 250 acres of crops and share labor and equipment with a neighbor. Mrs. Mohn has also developed a business manufacturing and retailing cloth dairy supply items for dairy farmers.

This stop will feature an educational presentation about the history and current status of dairy farming in Minnesota. There will also be a discussion on the impact of sprawling urbanization on dairying and business planning decisions.

--Cedar Summit Dairy at New Prague, owned by Dave and Florence Minar. The Minars graze 150 milking cows and youngstock on 46 paddocks. Their emphasis is on

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reducing inputs to increase margins. The farm also has a new mini-dairy processing facility for manufacturing cheeses and skim milk.

There will be educational presentations on pasture management and agricultural product marketing at this stop.

--Wolf Creek Dairy at Dundas, owned by Paul and Barb Liebenstein. The Liebensteins have a 375-cow free-stall confinement dairy. They don't own or operate a large amount of farmland, and contract many of the enterprises related to crop production and manure handling. They also contract heifer raising with a custom heifer grower.

Educational presentations at this stop will be on the milking center operation and managing an overall farm nutrient cycling program on an expansion dairy.

Along with the tour, the Producer Days package includes a steak barbecue and the opening day of the Minnesota Alfalfa and Forage Expo July 17 at UMore Park near Rosemount. For more information on the Producer Days package, contact Steve Drazkowski by phone at (651) 565-2662 or (800) 385-3103 or by e-mail at draz@umn.edu. To register for the Producers Package or the entire conference, call (800) 944-2342 or go to www.afgc.org on the web.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,D1 dairtour

Source: Steve Drazkowski, (651) 565-2662
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 28, 2002

EQIP boosts funding for conservation projects on Minnesota farms

Conservation funds of over $8 million are available to Minnesota farmers through the newly revised federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). But applications to get funding for projects must be submitted by July 19 to local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices across Minnesota.

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial assistance to install or apply a variety of conservation practices. These include terraces, grassed waterways, fencing and agricultural waste systems. In addition, producers can receive incentive payments to encourage improved management of resources such as manure, soil nutrients and grasslands.

"Conservation projects funded by EQIP can help farmers improve farm efficiencies and profitability while safeguarding the environment," says Gary Wyatt, educator at St. James with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The recently passed 2002 federal Farm Bill strongly emphasizes conservation on working agricultural lands, says Wyatt. Conservation programs such as EQIP received significant funding increases nationwide. Congress reauthorized and extensively revised EQIP when it passed the Farm Bill, which President George Bush signed into law May 13.

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Final rules for EQIP are still being written in Washington, D.C. However, NRCS in Minnesota is collecting EQIP applications now so it can quickly assist producers once the rules are completed and money is available.

William Hunt, NRCS state conservationist for Minnesota, encourages producers to contact their local NRCS office to learn what eligible EQIP practices would benefit their farm. These offices can also provide information on EQIP funding rules, development of individual farm conservation plans and other program details. Information on EQIP is also available from local Farm Service Agency offices and on the Internet at www.nrcs.usda.gov .

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A4,C4MN wyatt626

Source: Gary Wyatt, (507) 375-1275
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 28, 2002

Agricultural drainage events scheduled Aug. 13-14

Minnesota agricultural drainage meetings are scheduled Aug. 13 at Fairmont and Aug. 14 at Lamberton.

The annual Minnesota-Iowa Drainage Research Forum is at the Fairmont Holiday Inn at 2 p.m. Gyles Randall, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Center at Waseca, will give the keynote presentation. Drainage research at the University of Minnesota and Iowa State University will be discussed.

For more information, contact Gary Sands, U of M Extension Service water resources engineer, at (612) 625-4756, or Lowell Busman at (507) 835-3620.

The Agricultural Drainage and Water Quality Field Day at Lamberton is scheduled the following day, Aug. 14, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's at the U of M Southwest Research and Outreach Center. There will be field tours, presentations, displays and a noon speaker.

Topics at the Lamberton event include surface and subsurface drainage and rock inlets, open ditches and wetlands, alternative management strategies for agricultural drainage in row crop production, and climatic trends and agricultural management. For more information, contact Jeff Strock at (507) 752-7372.

# # #

Web, V2, V4MN, C4

sands6272

Source: Gary Sands (612) 625-4756, grsands@umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 28, 2002

New export regulations require treatment of wood crates, pallets

New export regulations that require treatment of wood crates and pallets to reduce the spread of insects and disease will be the topic of five meetings throughout Minnesota in July and August.

The new international standards were adopted by the governing body of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) March 15, 2002. The IPPC has been adopted by 117 countries, including the U.S., says Mike Reichenbach, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Cloquet.

Under the new standard, all wood packaging must be either heat-treated or fumigated with methyl bromide, Reichenbach says. All pallets and packaging materials must be marked to show compliance.

"The new regulations have the potential to impact the economic viability of pallet producers and their suppliers," Reichenbach says. "Any negative impact on pallet producers and related industries that leads to less wood use as a packing and shipping material may cause a reduction in forest stand improvement operations."

"Improving the quality of Minnesota's forests depends on markets such as pallets and crates for utilizing lower quality wood from forest stand improvement," Reichenbach says.

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The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and the U of M Extension Service are providing information and assistance to the wood products industry. Five upcoming meetings will cover certification and auditing procedures, what needs to be treated and how to treat it.

The meetings are scheduled from 7-9 p.m. as follows:

--July 16, Rochester, Peoples Cooperative Service Community Room, 3935 Hwy. 14 E.

--July 23, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Technical College, North Campus, Room H117, 9000 Brooklyn Blvd.

--July 30, Cloquet Forestry Center, 175 University Rd.

--Aug. 1, Bemidji, Ottertail Power Co. Meeting Room, 320-4th St. NW.

--Aug. 13, Brainerd, Social Service Bldg, 322 Laurel St.

The meetings are free, but you need to reserve your space by contacting Susan Seabury at (218) 879-0850, ext. 108, or sseabury@umn.edu. Request a map if you need one.

# # #

Web, V2, V4MN, V5, F9 reich6272

Source: Mike Reichenbach, (218) 879-0850, reich027@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

June 28, 2002

Flies that kill tent caterpillars build to large numbers, become nuisance

Flies that kill destuctive forest tent caterpillars have built up very large numbers recently in some areas of northern Minnesota. The large numbers make the flies nuisances themselves, says Jeff Hahn, entomologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"These flies emerge in mid-June and are active until about mid-July," says Hahn. "They are medium-sized, three-eighths to seven-sixteenths inch long. They have red eyes, a grayish body, three black stripes on their thorax and a checkered abdomen."

Hahn says the flies are parasites of forest tent caterpillars, which are harmful because they defoliate trees. The adult female flies deposit living young, or maggots, on forest tent caterpillar pupae. The maggots bore into the pupae and feed on the caterpillars inside, eventually killing them. When a maggot is done feeding, it drops to the ground to pupate and remains there until the next June.

"These flies are a significant factor in ending outbreaks of the caterpillars," Hahn points out. "However, people describe seeing hundreds or even thousands of the flies at a time. They are very deliberate in their movements and are not easily scared away. They return quickie when brushed aside, making their presence more frustrating."

Hahn says the flies land on just about anything including buildings, cars, laundry and people. They seem to be particularly attracted to white-colored objects.

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"Because these flies are so challenging to chase away, people commonly call them 'friendly flies,'" says Hahn. "They are also occasionally referred to as government flies because of the mistaken belief that they were imported into Minnesota to combat forest tent caterpillars. Actually, like the tent caterpillars, the flies are native to North America."

Despite their nuisance, friendly flies don't bite and are otherwise harmless to people, says Hahn. But they can cause problems on objects on which they are resting by staining the objects with fecal droppings.

"Although people would dearly love to discourage these flies, there isn't any practical way to repel them or keep them away from people or property," says Hahn. "The only thing people can do is tolerate them as much as possible until they go away on their own."

Answers to insect, lawn care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,T2,Z2 hahn0627

Source: Jeff Hahn, (612) 624-4977
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 2, 2002

Soil scientist says crop yields will drop if erosion continues

The scars of soil erosion continue to show throughout southern Minnesota. And if erosion continues at this pace, highly productive soils will no longer be able to sustain high yields, says a University of Minnesota soil scientist.

"This is the fourth year in a row of severe erosion," says Gyles Randall, U of M soil scientist at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca. "The agricultural community, especially corn and soybean farmers, should be very concerned when severe losses of highly productive soils and impassable gullies continue to develop."

"Now is the time to start making plans for less fall tillage," Randall says. "The best tillage system we've observed for keeping erosion in check is soybeans no-tilled into standing corn stalks, especially when combined with strategically placed, sufficiently wide grass waterways. Farmers are encouraged to observe these soybean fields and start asking questions about this easy and productive soybean cropping system."

Most farmers do some major tillage after corn. And with the corn-soybean rotation so prevalent, there's very little protection against erosion. Tremendous gullies develop, and a complacent attitude of "it happens" seems to exist, Randall says.

"No-till following corn works very well," Randall says. "We have the machinery to do it, we can get good stands and excellent weed control and yields and it's inexpensive. Some farmers are doing it very successfully, and can't understand why their neighbors aren't."

Randall may be reached at (507) 835-3620 or randa012@umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F4, P1

randall712

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 2, 2002

Dangerous spiders are extremely rare in Minnesota

It's fairly common for people in Minnesota to find what they believe is a dangerous spider in their home. But truly dangerous spiders are extremely rare in Minnesota, according to Jeff Hahn, entomologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Nearly all spiders that people suspect to be dangerous turn out to be relatively benign species native to Minnesota," says Hahn.

Large spiders cause the most concern for many people. The fishing spider is a large spider that shows up in the summer, says Hahn. The body of this spider is up to an inch long and including the legs, may be several inches across. People may also see wolf spiders, which are similar to fishing spiders in size and appearance.

"Despite their size, these spiders are not dangerous to people," says Hahn.

People occasionally believe they have found a brown recluse. "The native range of the brown recluse is the south central U.S., though they can accidentally be transported outside of that area," says Hahn. "A brown recluse is rarely, if ever, found in Minnesota. There is one report of a brown recluse from Lake County in 1953. Brown recluse specimens have never been verified in the Twin Cities."

Hahn says that despite dozens of reports of brown recluse in Minnesota each year, all suspected specimens turn out to be common native spiders. A recent case

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where brown recluse was suspected in a Twin Cities home turned up several house spiders and a wolf spider. Hahn says both types are very common in Minnesota.

"If there is ever any doubt about a spider you find, submit a sample to an expert for identification," Hahn concludes.

Answers to insect, lawn care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,V6,H5 hahn0626

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 2, 2002

Entomologist cites strategies to reduce spider numbers in your home

Although spiders spark fear in some people, the eight-legged creatures are generally harmless. They are usually only a nuisance, says Jeff Hahn, entomologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Many people find more spiders in their home than they would like," says Hahn, "whether that's many spiders or only a few."

Hahn says a home's location has a lot to do with how many spiders its inhabitants encounter. People living in rural or suburban areas tend to see more spiders. That's especially true where there is a lake, river or stream nearby. Spiders feed on insects, so spider numbers are usually higher in environments that support higher insect numbers.

"If you believe it's desirable to reduce spider numbers, first start outside," says Hahn. "Make the environment less favorable for spiders and their insect prey. Move brush piles, wood piles, leaf accumulations and other potential harborage areas away from the home's foundation. Also, keep tall grass and weeds near buildings cut down. Remove webs and crush egg sacs you find on the outside of buildings."

Indoors, clean up areas where papers, boxes and other objects have accumulated, says Hahn. If you find just one or two spiders, he suggests collecting them in a jar and

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releasing them outdoors. Or you can easily kill them with a broom or rolled up newspaper. Remove spider webs (a vacuum works well for this) and crush egg sacs. Check for these particularly in corners, near the floor, around the ceiling and around windows. Place sticky traps, such as Roach Motels, in areas where spiders are common.

"Although insecticides can be used to supplement these nonchemical methods, chemicals should not be used routinely," says Hahn. "Apply insecticides only when spiders are especially bothersome."

Hahn says insecticides are most effective when used outdoors to prevent spiders from entering homes. He recommends choosing a product that is labeled for use around the exterior of buildings. Products containing permethrin and bifenthrin are often labeled this way.

"If you decide to use an insecticide, treat nooks and crannies where spiders are more likely to hide," says Hahn. "Insecticides are a short-lived control measure and their use is more effective when combined with sanitation and physical removal."

Answers to insect, lawn care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,V6,H5 hahn0624

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 2, 2002

(Editors: photos of Linda Smith are available from Ann Henly at (612) 624-1977, or henly001@umn.edu)

Linda Smith named executive director of Minnesota 4-H Foundation

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation has named Linda L. Smith as executive director, according to Dean Ascheman, chair of the foundation's board of trustees. Smith was most recently employed as campaign director and assistant executive director of the United Way of Weld County in Greeley, Colo.

"In addition to her great strength in fundraising, Linda brings valuable experience in working with and motivating volunteers, fund allocation and accountability processes," Ascheman says.

In a decade of service to the United Way of Weld County, Smith has served in several positions of increasing responsibility. She helped the organization raise $11.3 million in five years of county-wide campaigns, directly overseeing campaign activities at the 14 key accounts responsible for 40 percent of the annual total funds raised. She was responsible for hiring, supervising and evaluating campaign staff. She also recruited, trained and motivated several hundred volunteers.

Smith and her family are long-time 4-Hers. Linda served on her county's 4-H leadership council and as a club leader. She has been involved with a number of other community organizations, including the Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce, the local school district and the Weld Library District.

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Smith earned a bachelor of science degree from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo., and has done graduate coursework at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colo. Smith and her family recently moved to Victoria, Minn., in Carver County.

Minnesota 4-H Youth Development reaches more than 300,000 young people in every part of Minnesota — from rural areas to inner-city neighborhoods. Through 4-H, young people learn practical life skills, serve their communities and develop leadership abilities.

Today's 4-H programs address such varied issues as multicultural relations, use of technology and wetlands conservation, along with traditional programs such as livestock management and nutrition education.

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation exists to provide all young people in Minnesota with access to 4-H youth development programs, and to be the undisputed philanthropy leader in support of youth development.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 fisher712

Source: Ann Henly (612) 624-1977, henly001@umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 5, 2002

Master Gardeners share ideas on dealing with ravenous rabbits

Bunnies are taking big bites out of many Minnesota gardens this summer. Rabbit numbers in urban yards seem to be higher than normal, reports Beth Jarvis, Yard and Garden Line coordinator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Jarvis recently polled a group of Extension's Master Gardener volunteers for ideas on dealing with the copious cottontails. The responses, she says, are "totally unscientific, purely anecdotal, but hopefully of some interest."

Jarvis says several Master Gardeners reported that providing alternate food, such as corn or sunflower seeds, seems to keep the rabbit-feeding damage to a minimum.

A Chippewa County Master Gardener reports successfully scaring rabbits from her peas and beans with silvery hologram print pinwheels. In Carver County, spun-bonded polyester floating row covers placed over tender transplants for a few weeks work well to protect the plants.

"Pepper spray as a deterrent was both endorsed and deemed useless," says Jarvis. "Repellent sprays and dried blood must be reapplied after rain. And dried blood contains 14 percent nitrogen, so applying it on plants can cause fertilizer burns. The extra nitrogen may also prompt plants to produce foliage at the expense of flowers."

Mothballs also received mention as a deterrent. However, mothballs shouldn't be used where children can reach them, notes Jarvis.

An Isanti County Master Gardener raises catnip that she claims attracts cats that keep rabbits away. Cats were generally considered by poll respondents to be effective at rabbit control, says Jarvis. Foxes and birds of prey were also cited as providing rabbit control benefits.

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Fencing generally gets the nod as the most effective barricade method, says Jarvis. She cites a Michigan State University publication on garden fencing. "Surround the garden with 36-inch widths of chicken wire attached to stakes," the publication says. "Bend the bottom six inches outward along the ground to prevent digging under the fence. By bending the top six inches outward, you can also prevent other animals from climbing the fence." The publication is on the Internet at www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modwl/11209808.html.

Trees and shrubs suffer from rabbit feeding during the winter. Jarvis cites a University of Minnesota Extension publication entitled "Protecting Trees and Shrubs Against Winter Damage." It's on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1411.html. It's also available for a nominal price from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for publication number 01411.

"Time of year seems to play a major role in rabbit feeding pressure, with the most damage coming in winter and spring," says Jarvis. "It's understandable, when food supplies are low, that rabbits will eat pretty much anything."

Answers to insect, lawn care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,G1,T2 jarv0702

Source: Beth Jarvis, (612) 625-5232
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 5, 2002

Specialty forestry products: it's all in the selling

You can't make money growing specialty forestry products (SFPs). The money is in the selling, say University of Minnesota educators who attended a recent workshop at the Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City, Neb.

SFPs can be profitable, but you need to understand the unique nature of niche markets before you invest money in producing them. Most SFP markets are niche markets, and this requires producers to spend more time and energy marketing them, compared to conventional row crops."

Many of these unique crops aren't suitable for large-scale production. Since large producers don't control most markets, there are usually opportunities for new growers.

SFPs generally fall into four categories: medicinals and botanicals, forest-based food products, woody decorative florals, and handicraft products and specialty woods.

Most SFP enterprises are risky, either because products are perishable or the markets are small and easily saturated. Prices can be volatile and government programs may be limited.

Some products have seasonal markets, such as pussy willows in spring, holly during the holiday season and berries for fresh fruit sales only when they're ripe. Others, such as curly willow and frozen fruit, have more year-round markets. And a few large processors dominate some markets, such as for cedar oil.

Some processors or wholesalers may purchase products from only a few small producers. Jelly, jam, juice and wine producers often establish contracts with a limited number of berry growers or harvesters. This allows them to avoid the high costs of dealing with a large number of growers who bring small quantities of fruit of variable quality to their processing facilities.

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In addition, newcomers to SFPs may have problems finding production or market information. Existing producers may be fearful of losing their already small markets and thus unwilling to share information.

Despite these realities, there are many market opportunities for producing a range of SFPs. Four brochures are available that detail the production and marketing of SFPs. Their titles are:

--Marketing Specialty Forest Products

--Productive Conservation: Growing Specialty Forest Products in Agroforestry Plantings

--Edible Woody Landscapes for People and Wildlife

--Hybrid Hazelnuts: An Agroforestry Opportunity

You can find them on the Internet at www.unl.edu/nac/news/html. Or, call (507) 375-1275 or (800) 204-1295 to order printed copies. Mailing costs are $1 each.

You can also contact the U of M faculty members who attended the SFPs conference: Dean Currant, Center for Integrated Natural Resource and Agricultural Management (CINRAM) in St. Paul at (612) 624-4299, or Extension Service educators Mike Demchik, Staples, at (218) 894-5167 or Gary Wyatt, St. James, at (507) 375-1275.

# # #

Web, V2, V4MN, P1, F4 wyatt6272

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July 9, 2002

'Locally grown' more important than 'organic' for consumers

Consumers choose locally grown food for product freshness and to help support local small farmers. And they're also more willing to pay a higher premium for "locally grown" than for "organic," according to a new University of Minnesota analysis by economist Luanne Lohr.

Lohr held an Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems from the U of M's (former) School of Agriculture. Her analysis, "Growth and Change in U.S. Organic Food Markets," focused on states in the north central region. Details she used for the analysis are in a chapter she wrote for a U.S. Department of Agriculture report at www.ers.usda.gov/publications/wrs011. The chapter is titled "Factors Affecting International Demand and Trade in Organic Food Products."

Lohr says there's some evidence that consumers may seek more locally grown products due to concerns about food safety and agroterrorism treats. "People feel safer buying local food, especially meat and dairy products," she says.

Savings of diesel fuel with the reduced carbon dioxide emissions is another argument for local foods. According to an Iowa State University study, regional distribution of produce could save 273 miles per truck haul from Chicago to the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. This would save almost nine million gallons of diesel fuel per year and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 195 million pounds per year. Details of the Iowa State study are available at www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/ppp/intro.html on the web.

Sales of organic food products have increased rapidly in recent years, although Lohr says there's some evidence that growth is slowing. Her analysis also discusses the relationships of organic products to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), foreign standards, eco-labels and social goals.

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GMOs are not permitted in certified organic products. However, Lohr says entry of "mainstream" farmers and food processors into the organic industry may add pressure to permit GMOs. "Field contamination by cross-pollination with GM varieties may undermine efforts to keep organics GM-free," she says.

"U.S. refusal to label and regulate GMOs in conventional agriculture is a barrier to organic trade with Europe and Japan," Lohr says. "Fear of contamination means loss of markets to countries that don't permit GMOs."

"In terms of foreign standards for organics, protectionism is likely to continue in many European Union (EU) countries," Lohr says. "Producers and manufacturers in the U.S. will face greater competition from foreign sources than the EU will."

The Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems is administered by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), and Lohr's report is available on the MISA website at www.misa.umn.edu. Lohr is on leave from the University of Georgia and will be returning there later this month.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, P1 lohr722

Source: Luanne Lohr (612) 624-7258, llohr@apec.umn.edu; after mid-July (706) 542-0847, llohr@agecon.uga.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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July 9, 2002

Dairy cow longevity, health, forages covered in new publication

A publication with new information about dairy cow longevity and health and forage feeding is now available from the University of Minnesota. The publication contains proceedings from a recent professional dairy management seminar in Dubuque, Iowa. The conference involved faculty from the University of Illinois, Iowa State University, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin.

Cow comfort, extending longevity through genetics and the relationship between lameness and longevity are topics in the publication. There are also papers on management of silage from bunkers, trenches and piles, and on particle size in diets for milking cows.

Health-related topics include culling strategies, implementing a Johne's disease control program and the relationship between bedding management and udder health.

MidWest Plan Service (MWPS) compiled papers from the conference into the 175-page publication, which is entitled "Four-State Professional Dairy Management Seminar," MWPS-4SD13. Its price is $15 per single copy, plus $3.50 shipping and handling and $1.20 sales tax for Minnesota residents. The total cost for Minnesota residents is $19.70 per copy, and the total cost outside Minnesota is $18.50 per copy. Quantity discounts are available.

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To order this and many other MWPS publications, send a check for the appropriate amount to MWPS Orders, 219 Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, University of Minnesota, 1390 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6005. Orders can be made by e-mail at mwps@gaia.bae.umn.edu, from the web at www.bae.umn.edu/extens/mwps or by phone at (800) 322-8642 or (612) 625-9733.

# # #

Web,V2,D1 wilc0703N

Source: Bill Wilcke, (612) 625-8205
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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July 12, 2002

U of M St. Paul campus to host National 4-H Technology Conference

2002 is the centennial year of America's 4-H youth development program, and part of the celebration is the second National 4-H Technology Conference. It's scheduled for the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota July 24–28, 2002.

Over 300 4-H-involved high school students and adults from nearly every state will attend. Youth and professionals will participate in workshops and hands-on activities focusing on integrating technology into 4-H programs and communities.

Conference workshops will expose delegates to advanced technology applications and ideas for promoting technological access and aptitude in their communities. Additionally, attendees can boost their technological savvy by attending the TechCareerSkills Fair, where they'll work on resume writing and internship applications.

Delegates will meet professionals from corporations such as IBM (which will showcase its e-Mentoring program and partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Service) and Microsoft. Youth will also participate in a GPS orientation event and compete in robotics, flight simulation and multimedia presentation contests.

Those 4-H members who can't make the trip won't miss everything: portions of the conference will be webcast live over the Internet, allowing virtual participation.

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Conference goals include promoting networking and discussion of important 4-H issues. The conference provides an opportunity for youth and professionals to develop action plans and commit to integrating technology into their state and local 4-H programs.

Overall, conference facilitators expect the delegates to learn valuable life skills to help them in their academic and professional pursuits. The conference will demonstrate the importance of youth as catalysts for creating technological access and enhancing its effective use throughout the world.

For more information, check the conference website at www.ca4h.org/4hntc, or contact Amy Shaffer, U of M Center for 4-H Youth Development, at (612) 624-2116 or ashaffer@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, Y1 4h782

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July 12, 2002

Rainy summer weather encourages diseases in yard and garden plants

This summer's rainy weather means "easy living" for diseases in yard and garden plants. Wetter years tend to encourage diseases that don't show up much in normal years, according to Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Identifying the diseases and determining control strategies are challenges for homeowners.

Collecting a good specimen for an expert to examine is a key to identifying unfamiliar plants or plant diseases, says Beckerman. As far as what a good specimen is, she says "the fresher the better."

"If you suspect your plant has a disease, collect a section of the plant that shows both healthy and unhealthy tissue," says Beckerman. "You may wish to include a dead section and a really healthy section to provide a comparison. "

She says key identifying symptoms of a disease and signs of the disease-causing organism may be apparent on the plant material that is transitioning from healthy to dead. "Too often, homeowners send in branches that died many years ago," she says. "These old specimens may harbor secondary pests or pathogens that didn't cause the initial damage and now obscure the cause of the problem. The symptoms and signs necessary to diagnose the problem are not usually apparent on these completely dead samples."

Once you've collected the specimen, you need to provide some information to get diagnostic help from an expert. A sample submission form for specimens is on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/info-req-form-plant-dx.html.

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One source for diagnostic help from experts is the University of Minnesota's Yard and Garden Clinic. The clinic has scientists with advanced degrees in horticulture, entomology and plant pathology. You can take or mail specimens to the Yard and Garden Clinic, 155 Alderman Hall, 1970 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. There is a $5 fee for the clinic's diagnostic service for most plants, and a $10 fee for diagnosis of lawn diseases.

For more information on collecting, packaging and sending samples to the Yard and Garden Clinic, check the clinic's website at www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/ygclinic.html .

Another option is to call the Yard and Garden Clinic and describe the plant disease problem over the phone. Call (612) 624-4771 from the Twin Cities metro area or (888) 624-4771 toll free from Greater Minnesota. You can leave a question for a Master Gardener who will call you back for free. Master Gardeners are volunteers trained by the Yard and Garden Clinic staff and other U of M Extension faculty.

You can also talk to a plant or insect expert immediately at the Yard and Garden Clinic for a $5 fee. The fee includes the opportunity to submit a sample. The clinic is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays from May through October and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the rest of the year.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bkrm0709

Source: Janna Beckerman, (612) 625-7022
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 12, 2002

New brochure on 'Managing Soybean Aphid' available from U of M

"Managing Soybean Aphid" is the title of a new color brochure available from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The soybean aphid is a native of Asia that first came to Minnesota two years ago and spread rapidly across the state last year. Much of the state is at-risk for severe infestations in 2002, according to U of M Extension entomologist Ken Ostlie.

Ostlie is the author of the new brochure, which is available on the Internet by going to www.soybeans.umn.edu/ and clicking on the icon for the brochure. Printed copies are available at county Extension offices in Minnesota or from Extension Entomology at (612) 624-6706.

The brochure provides basic information on the soybean aphid, its population dynamics, its damage to soybeans and management options.

Ostlie says aphid populations build rapidly, and may reach several thousand aphids per plant at their peak in early August. When this occurs, soybean yield reductions may top 50 percent.

"Insecticides only suppress soybean aphid populations for 7-14 days," says Ostlie. "Applications during the initiation of flowering and into full flower had the greatest yield benefit in 2001. Earlier applications risk rebound of aphid numbers during pod set. Later applications may achieve less-than-desired benefits."

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He adds that many aphid species are resistant to insecticides. Multiple or poorly timed insecticide applications favor development of resistance. He recommends scouting to ensure insecticides are needed and well-timed.

"To identify heavily infested fields, scout one to two times per week through pod set," says Ostlie. "Look for aphids on the undersides of the upper three leaves in vegetative and flowering soybeans. Consider treating with insecticide if aphid numbers average more than 250 per plant. Insecticides may not be economical if soybeans are setting pods, infestation is spotty, most aphid nymphs are developing wings or diseased nymphs are common."

He also recommends following precautions to minimize bee kills and communicating treatment plans to beekeepers.

The website at www.soybeans.umn.edu/ has additional information on the soybean aphid and its management.

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Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,F4MN ostl0710

Source: Ken Ostlie, (612) 624-7436
Writer: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 12, 2002

Study finds grain market advisory services top prices farmers receive

Grain market advisory services consistently beat the price farmers received for their grain from 1995-2000 in an Illinois study. The study results are relevant for Minnesota farmers, according to Paul Carr, educator at Blue Earth with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The Ag Market Advisory Service (AgMAS) project at the University of Illinois conducted the study. The project has evaluated the performance of about 25 advisory services each year since 1994. Economists subscribe to the advisory service, read their recommendations each day and then record the recommendations.

The results of individual services and the group of services as a whole are then compared with three different benchmarks. Two of the benchmarks involve an average price over a specified time period. The third is the USDA average price received by Illinois farmers.

"While the study used Illinois prices, the relationship between benchmarks and advisory service performance should still be relevant for Minnesota farmers," says Carr.

As a group, the advisory services consistently beat the farmer's price received benchmark for both corn (73 percent of the time) and soybeans (74 percent of the time)

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from 1995-2000. The advisory services beat the average price benchmarks in soybeans 60-70 percent of the time, but did not consistently beat them in corn (51-59 percent of the time).

The average advisory service corn price in the crop year 2000 was $2.12, which was 17 cents more than the farmer benchmark and 3-11 cents better than the average price benchmark. The average advisory service soybean price was $5.44, which was 15 cents more than the farmer benchmark and 2-6 cents more than the average price benchmark.

Advisory service prices ranged from $1.79 to $2.78 for corn and $5 to $6.83 for soybeans. The prices are cash prices for central Illinois and include government loan deficiency payments.

A website with more information on the AgMAS study is at http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/farm.doc/agmas/index.html.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,F4MN,X2 carr0703

Source: Paul Carr, (507) 526-6240
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 16, 2002

Irrigation scheduling help available in updated U of M bulletin

For farmers who irrigate their crops, how much water to apply and how often to apply it are key questions. A combination of scheduling tools can help, says Jerry Wright, engineer with the University of Minnesota Service. Wright recently updated one available tool, a U of M bulletin entitled "Irrigation Scheduling: Checkbook Method."

The bulletin is designed for use in combination with a soil probe, rain gauge and daily crop water evapotranspiration (ET) information, says Wright.

The revised bulletin includes daily crop water use estimation tables for conventional crops such as alfalfa, corn, potatoes, soybeans, dry beans and sugar beets. It also has a new ET table that estimates the daily crop water use for a generic full-canopy crop throughout the growing season. This table, for example, can serve as a guide for lawn irrigation with only some minor correction. Well managed turf will use only about 75-80 percent as much soil water as a conventional full-canopy crop each day, according to Wright.

"Irrigation Scheduling: Checkbook Method" is on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC1322.html. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension

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Service. They're also available by credit card from the U of M Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item 01322.

Two other U of M Extension bulletins have information on irrigation water management. "Irrigation Water Management Considerations for Sandy Soils in Minnesota" (item 03875) is on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC3875.html. "IPM Control of White Mold in Irrigated Dry Beans" (item 07397) is at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7397.html.

For additional information on irrigation, contact Wright at the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris at jwright@umn.edu or (320) 589-1711.

# # #

Web,V2MN,F4MN,H7,X8 wrigh712

Source: Jerry Wright, ((320) 589-1711
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 16, 2002

Minnesota Nutrition Conference on livestock feeding set for Sept. 17-18

Leading U.S. and international scientists in livestock nutrition will gather in Eagan, Minn. Sept. 17-18 for the 63rd Minnesota Nutrition Conference. It will be at the Royal Cliff Conference Center, and will be preceded by a pre-conference symposium the morning of Sept. 17. Dairy, beef, swine and poultry nutrition topics will be on the agenda.

The conference provides an opportunity for animal nutritionists to share information about current research at universities, in industry and at government centers. It's designed for nutritionists, feed industry representatives, veterinarians, educators and producers. Speakers are scientists from the University of Minnesota and other universities, and from industry.

Phosphorus in livestock feed and it's environmental impact will be the topic of the opening general session the afternoon of Sept. 17. Topics will include phosphorus and animal manures from a soil scientist's perspective, ruminant phosphorus requirements and the environment, phosphorus requirements for non-ruminants, and establishing national standards for estimating nutrient excretion from livestock. Among the speakers will be Neil Hansen, University of Minnesota soil scientist at Morris.

Ruminants will be the subject of an all-day session Sept. 18. Morning topics will be predicting feed intake of lactating cows, National Research Council dairy protein

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and energy requirements, and energy content of fat supplements for ruminants. Afternoon topics will be blood parameters in dairy nutrition, implants for dairy steers, receiving diets for feedlot cattle, and corn processing for ruminants. U of M animal scientists Jim Linn and Hugh Chester-Jones will speak at this session.

A separate session on nonruminants will also take place Sept. 18. Morning topics will be oligosaccharides and gut modifiers as replacements for dietary antibiotics, nutrition for alternative poultry production and feed intake for meat birds. Afternoon topics will be exogenous enzymes for pig and poultry feed, fiber nutrition for sows, inulin in swine diets and the relationship between dried distillers' grain solubles and ileitis in swine.

U of M animal scientists Jacquie Jacob, Lee Johnston, Sam Baidoo and Mark Whitney will make presentations at the nonruminant session.

A pre-conference symposium entitled "Rendering: A Foundation for Food Security" will take place the morning of Sept. 17. Biosecurity of animal by-products and rendering to eliminate food pathogens will be among the topics covered.

The conference fee for registrations through Sept. 8 is $175 per person. The fee after that date and at the door is $205 per person. To obtain a registration flyer, call (612) 624-3044 or (800) 318-8636 or e-mail jgrazier@cce.umn.edu. Registration is also available at the conference website at http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/mn-nutrition.

# # #

Web,V2,B1,D1,P3,R1,S2 nutr0711

Source: Mary Kay Ferguson, (612) 625-8215; Lee Johnston, (320) 589-1711
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 19, 2002

New book on livestock odor, air quality available from U of M

A new book with up-to-date, detailed information on livestock odor management is now available from the University of Minnesota. "Outdoor Air Quality," MWPS-18 Section 3, was written by engineers from the U of M and several other land grant universities.

The book outlines a science-based approach to measuring air quality and emphasizes basic principles for controlling odor and dust. It's designed to serve as a tool for producers, educators, extension specialists, regulators, lawmakers and others dealing with livestock odor issues.

Authors of the new, 95-page book are Brent Auverman, Texas A & M University; José Bicudo, University of Kentucky (formerly of the University of Minnesota); Jeff Lorimor, Iowa State University; and Larry Jacobson and David Schmidt, University of Minnesota. They prepared the book under the auspices of MidWest Plan Service, a cooperative research and Extension organization representing 12 Midwest land grant universities.

The authors stress that minimizing odor is often a matter of combining good housekeeping practices with technological improvements. The book covers five major topics: basics of outdoor air quality, managing odors from buildings, managing dust

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and odor from open lots, managing odors from manure storages and managing odors during manure application. It includes details about biofilters, windbreaks and manure treatment options.

The book is illustrated with more than 35 photos, drawings and diagrams. It has tables with information abut the properties of noxious gases, odor thresholds for selected chemicals and odor thresholds for various manure application methods. It has tables summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of various odor control technologies, a list of links to regulatory standards, and worksheets for assessing odor management needs.

"Outdoor Air Quality," MWPS-18 Section 3, costs $15 per single copy, plus $3.50 for shipping and handling and $1.20 sales tax for Minnesota residents. The total cost is $19.70 for Minnesota residents and $18.50 for those outside Minnesota. Quantity discounts are available.

To order this and many other MWPS publications, send a check for the appropriate amount to MWPS Orders, 219 Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, University of Minnesota, 1390 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6005. Orders can be made by e-mail at mwps@gaia.bae.umn.edu, from the web at http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/mwps or by phone at (800) 322-8642 or (612) 625-9733.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A4,S2,P3 wilc0717

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 19, 2002

Extension website has free spreadsheet to help make Farm Bill decisions

Many circumstances in farming require making decisions, and the new federal Farm Bill is no exception. "Nearly all Minnesota farmers will need to make Farm Bill decisions regarding whether to update their base acres and yields," says economist Kevin Klair of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Klair says the decision will be different for each producer, depending on the producer's situation. "There aren't many easy thumb rules for these decisions," he points out.

Because of the complexity of the Farm Bill decisions, Klair says using a computer is the easiest way to help calculate the best option. He suggests a free spreadsheet available on Extension's Farm Bill website at http://www.extension.umn.edu/farmbill/.

"This spreadsheet is more comprehensive than some earlier spreadsheets," says Klair. "However, it still doesn't accommodate all the potential crops a producer may need to evaluate. It also doesn't help answer questions about how to verify past yields."

Klair says the U of M Extension Service and the Farm Service Agency are planning to hold Farm Bill training sessions for farmers across the state in late August and September. Watch Extension's Farm Bill website or check with your county Extension office for information on meetings in your area.

# # #

Web, V2,V4MN,V5MN,A2MN,A4 klair0719

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 23, 2002

Book on 'Getting Established in Farming' available from U of M

"Getting Established in Farming" is the title of a book now available from the University of Minnesota. It's published by MidWest Plan Service and is part of a six-part series on "Business Management for Farmers."

The book focuses on the process of deciding whether to farm and how best to get started and established in farming. It emphasizes the decision-making process, and is designed for educators, lenders and consultants as well as those considering farming as a career.

"Getting Established in Farming," NCR-610E, is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on how prospective farmers can assess their personal and financial situation as part of the process of deciding whether to choose farming as a career. It discusses how to decide whether farming is a suitable personal choice and whether enough resources are available to support that choice. It also examines major options for entry into farming.

The second chapter lays out a procedure for deciding if farming with a partner, either a family member or someone else, is workable. It describes a testing stage that prospective partners might use to determine financial and personal compatibility.

The third chapter centers on getting established in farming as part of a multi-owner/operator situation. It covers developing an appropriate partnership agreement, and transferring farm assets and management responsibilities during the early, middle and late stages of a partnership.

The fourth chapter focuses on establishing a single owner/operator farm business. It examines the keys to building a full-time farm business and discusses the requirements and options for developing a crop- or livestock-oriented farm business.

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The book contains three worksheets designed to help prospective farmers analyze their business and personal situations. Other worksheets show how to develop a partnership agreement and how to plan a financially workable sharing arrangement.

The author of "Getting Established in Farming" and other volumes in the "Business Management for Farmers" series is Kenneth H. Thomas, a farm business management economist retired from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The series is derived from the author's research and thinking about farm business management during a career that spanned more than 30 years. The series was developed under the auspices of MidWest Plan Service, a cooperative research and Extension organization representing 12 Midwest land grant universities.

The cost of "Getting Established in Farming," NCR-610E, is $8 per single copy, plus $3.50 for shipping and handling and 75 cents sales tax for Minnesota residents. The total is $12.25 for Minnesota residents and $11.50 for those outside Minnesota. Quantity discounts are available.

To order this and other volumes in the "Business Management for Farmers" series, send a check for the appropriate amount to MWPS Orders, 219 Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, University of Minnesota, 1390 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6005. Orders can be made by e-mail at mwps@gaia.bae.umn.edu, from the web at http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/mwps or by phone at (800) 322-8642 or (612) 625-9733.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,A4 wilc0718

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 26, 2002

(First in a series)

Interest in alternative medicine and therapies growing

More Americans are becoming interested in alternative medicine. And acceptance by mainstream health care providers is growing too—especially when certain therapies are used to complement more traditional forms of treatment.

Medical doctors now say they want more training in alternative therapies such as biofeedback, acupuncture, massage and herbal medicine. Some want to learn the techniques; others want to know what their patients are using so they can inform them of relative benefits and risks.

Consumer interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is driven by four factors, says Marilyn Adams Maiser, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They include:

--Disenchantment with mainstream medicine.

--Recognition that most diseases are chronic and few are ever cured.

--Consumer demand for options. "Some people dislike or don't tolerate drug therapy," Maiser says. Others prefer to try less invasive treatments (for example, to avoid surgery).

--A need for a relationship, personal attention and interaction with caregivers. "People want to be known and cared about," says Maiser, a regional health and nutrition educator at Waconia.

It's very important to see your doctor before trying alternative therapies. "You absolutely need to talk to your doctor first," Maiser says. "It's especially important not to change or quit a medication until you have your doctor's okay."

Indicative of the growing acceptance of CAM is the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Established by Congress in 1998, it's an

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agency of the federal Department of Health and Human Services. Their website, www.nccam.nih.gov, has a wealth of information, including consumer advisories.

Alternative medicine is not a cure for everything, Maiser emphasizes. "If you require critical care, conventional medicine with its base of drugs, surgery, laboratory and imaging technology is the best system of care."

Many illnesses and medical conditions cannot be treated effectively with alternative medicine. Always check with your doctor before trying alternative therapies or changing medications.

Other precautions if you're considering using alternative therapies:

--Do your homework. Learn both the potential benefits and risks of a therapy.

--Talk to your doctor about what you've learned and what you're considering.

--Avoid herbal and aroma therapies while pregnant.

--Fasting, enemas and some herbs are not suitable for kids.

--Adults should not fast for more than two days.

--Avoid high-dose nutrition supplements without professional supervision.

--Always consult a medical doctor if you have questions regarding your health.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, V7, H2 adams7232

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 26, 2002

Successful farm managers motivate workers to attend to details

Attention to detail is a key to success in farming operations and most other businesses. It's a matter of motivation, says Lee Gross, educator at St. Cloud with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Successful farm managers learn how to motivate employees and contributing family members to pay attention to critical details," says Gross. "It's not a matter of making people do something. They have to want to do it. That's what motivation is."

Gross offers these ideas to help motivate workers to attend to critical details:

--Regularly review your mission statement with your workers.

--Tell them how important your business is to you and your family.

--Let them know how important they are to the success of your business.

--Let them know that they are important to you as individuals.

--Tell them you need their skills and experience.

--Tell them the business can only succeed with their help.

--Tell them you want to see them grow in their job and achieve whatever they want and are capable of doing in your business.

--Show them that your business is a fun place to work.

--Tell them the "little things" are the most important things.

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It's not easy--it takes serious effort to convey these messages to your workers on a regular basis, says Gross. It may be necessary to write reminders on your calendar. But the effort can produce abundant benefits.

"People who are appreciated are motivated," he says. "People who are valued are motivated. People having fun are motivated. People who know they matter to the organization or family are motivated. And motivated people do great things."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A2,A4,F2 gross724

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

July 26, 2002

Air dry flowers to preserve their color and beauty

The color and beauty of summer flowers don't have to disappear with autumn frosts. You can preserve some of your summer flowers for winter bouquets and arrangements, says horticulturist Deb Brown of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Air drying is the easiest way to preserve flowers, although it works best with certain specific flowers," says Brown. She lists globe amaranth, larkspur, goldenrod, mealycup sage (blue sage), celosia, yarrow and statice as favorite flowers for air drying.

"Pick them for drying before they're completely open," she says. "Flowers that are too mature will often shatter in the drying process. Grains and grasses also air dry easily."

Brown says the first step in air drying flowers is to strip off the leaves. Then hang the flowers in small bunches upside down from metal clothes hangers. Use rubber bands to hold the stems together and attach them to the hangers.

If you want stems that arch gracefully, Brown suggests making a vase-like cylinder from hardware cloth (metal mesh) or chicken wire. Prop the flowers upright in the cylinder to dry.

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"Keep the flowers in a well-ventilated, dark location until they're ready to use," says Brown. "The colors will be more muted than when they were fresh, but not as faded as they would be if dried in a lighted location."

Answers to questions on drying flowers and other plant care and gardening topics are available from experts at the University's Yard and Garden Clinic between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow0722

Source: Deb Brown, (612) 624-7491
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 2, 2002

(Second in a series on complementary and alternative medicine)

Western herbal medicine helps the body help itself, but has risks

Herbal medicine--using plant remedies to treat illness—is considered the oldest form of medicine. Prehistoric records of herbal medicine date back 5,000 years. But many of today's common medications are also derived from herbs, says Marilyn Adams Maiser, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Helping the body help itself" is a guiding principle of western herbal medicine--proponents believe the body is a self-healing organism. Illness is understood the same way as in traditional medicine—as a biological problem where organs are not working well. Maiser says the herbalist considers the healing capacity of the whole person and chooses herbs that strengthen organ systems under stress. These are often the adrenal and nervous systems.

"Some believe that herbs are safer and less expensive than most drugs," Maiser says. "But herbs can be dangerous if they're used by uninformed people. In the U.S., they're considered 'supplements' and aren't regulated by the U.S Food and Drug Administration as food and medicine are."

"The contents of supplements are not standardized and no agency certifies that a herbal product is what it claims," Maiser says. Also, dosages are not standardized, quality control is a big problem and herbs are not tested for safety during pregnancy. In Europe, however, herbals are regulated and contents are standardized. Europe has also set limits for microbes (yeast, mold, E. coli and salmonella) in herbs. "But this is not so in the U.S.," Maiser says.

"Be sure to see your medical doctor first before using herbs and switching or quitting regular medications," Maiser emphasizes. She lists some examples of herbal remedies, along with precautions for their use:

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--Black Cohosh lowers blood pressure, is anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic so it's useful for women suffering from hot flashes and menopausal complaints. However, at high doses it may cause gastrointestinal distress and should not be used along with any hypertensive medication.

--St. John's Wort is an effective antidepressant for mild to moderate depression. Side effects include gastrointestinal problems and light sensitivity. "Do not take St. John's Wort with other antidepressants or sedatives," Maiser warns.

--Echinacea stimulates the immune system and has antiviral effects. It improves cold and flu symptom and may shorten their duration. But don't use echinacea if you have progressive, autoimmune diseases such as lupus, HIV, MS or tuberculosis.

--Other herbal remedies include gingko to help with poor memory, concentration, dizziness and headache; and garlic to lower blood pressure, cholesterol and chances of clots.

But they aren't risk-free. Some supplements may interact with prescription and over-the-counter medications. "Be sure to consult a doctor or pharmacist before taking any herbal medications," Maiser says.

More information is available from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. The center's website, www.nccam.nih.gov, has a wealth of information, including consumer advisories. Also, see "Tips for the Savvy Supplement User: Making Informed Decisions and Evaluating Information" on FDA's website at www.fda.gov.

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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August 2, 2002

You can get answers to your lawn, garden questions on U of M website

If you have a question on gardening, plant or lawn care, it's likely you can get the answer from a trained Master Gardener volunteer on a website hosted by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The "Ask a Master Gardener" website is at http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/askmgintro.html.

The website has a space for submitting questions. Answers don't come back by e-mail or phone. Instead, the questions and answers are posted on a bulletin board on the website. This usually happens within 48 hours after the question is submitted, says Beth Jarvis, coordinator of Extension's Yard and Garden Line.

"The bulletin board contains over 2,500 questions and answers that have been posted in the past year," says Jarvis. "However, if you submit a question, you don't have to sort through all 2,500 questions and answers to find yours. The questions and answers are divided into 18 topic categories, so you can check the appropriate category. There is also a search mechanism on the bulletin board, so you can search by typing in key words to find your question and answer."

Jarvis recommends checking the bulletin board before submitting a question, since there is a good chance the question and its answer are already on the bulletin board. The search mechanism can help with this process. To browse posted questions, go to http://webboard.extension.umn.edu/~askmg.

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Master Gardeners from throughout Minnesota help with the site. Master Gardeners are volunteers trained by the U of M Yard and Garden Clinic staff and other U of M Extension faculty.

You can also use the telephone to get answers to questions on gardening, lawn and plant care and insects from the Yard and Garden Line. You can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in your county at no charge. Or, you can speak directly with an expert to get answers to your questions between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 jarv0729

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 6, 2002

Late summer lawn seeding opportunity passes quickly

Late summer is the best time to seed lawns in Minnesota. But the "window of opportunity" for lawn seeding passes quickly, says Deb Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"In the Twin Cities metro area, seeding should begin in mid-August or early September," says Brown. "It should be completed by the middle of September. You might stretch that deadline by a week or so in the southernmost part of the state."

Brown says young grass seedlings need to grow enough that their roots can carry them through winter. The roots also must provide the energy necessary for the seedlings to sprout again the following spring.

"If you plant too late, seeds may germinate," says Brown. "However, it's unlikely they'll come back strong, if at all, next year."

Whether you're starting a new lawn or replacing a poor section of an existing lawn, you must eliminate weeds and grasses first. Brown recommends using a product containing glyphosate, such as Round Up. It kills practically all green and growing plants, but it won't leave any residue in the soil to interfere with new seeds.

"In 10-14 days, when the grass looks dead, you can remove it," says Brown. "Then add fertilizer, rototill the soil, rake it smooth and plant new seed."

Answers to lawn and plant care and gardening questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow0801

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 6, 2002

Don't give up on garden weeding, watering during August

Weeding and watering will benefit your garden throughout the growing season. August is not the time to give up on these activities, says horticulturist Deb Brown of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Keeping after garden weeds is as important in August as it was earlier in the summer," says Brown. "Weeds compete with desired plants for moisture and nutrients. Weeds may also harbor insects that feed on desired plants, causing injury and possibly spreading plant disease. And seeds from weeds will remain viable in the soil, ready to sprout, for years to come."

Brown says it's ok to incorporate weeds into a compost pile if they're not full of seeds. But if they're loaded with seeds, you probably shouldn't put them in the compost unless it's a good, active pile that heats up well. Otherwise, when you use your compost you'll inadvertently spread the weed seeds.

It's also important to provide a steady moisture supply to developing plants, especially in hot weather. "Uneven moisture is responsible for blossom end rot, a common malady of tomatoes and sometimes squash," says Brown. "Inadequate moisture also causes knobby potatoes. And it may cause carrots and cucumbers to taste bitter."

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Brown recommends watering early in the day, when temperatures are coolest. This will result in less water loss through evaporation.

"Sprinkling plants from above in the evening isn't a good idea," says Brown. "When foliage is wet at night, it often won't dry until the next morning. This creates an ideal environment for plant diseases. On the other hand, if evening is the only time you can water, it's better than nothing."

Some gardeners use oozing hoses that allow water to seep into the soil, or trickle irrigation that directs water to the base of each plant. With these strategies, timing isn't so critical, says Brown.

The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on gardening, plant care and insects between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 brow0805

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 6, 2002

Don't 'beat up' on carbohydrates or fats, U of M scientist advises

For a healthy diet, use a "full-food" approach with ample amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and cereals. However, it's a mistake to micromanage our diets by concentrating too much on carbohydrates or fats, says Joanne Slavin, a food science and nutrition professor at the University of Minnesota.

"We beat up on fat for many years, and we shouldn't make the same mistake with carbohydrates," Slavin says. She was referring to an article in the "New York Times" magazine July 7 that questioned whether eating more carbohydrates and less fat contributed to the "rampaging epidemic of obesity in America."

"We have abundant, cheap food in this country and obesity is caused simply by eating too many calories," Slavin says. For people who are overweight, the enemy is calories, not carbohydrates or fats.

The food guide pyramid is just that—a guide, Slavin says. "We need to go a bit beyond the guide," she adds. "For example, it calls for 6-11 daily servings of bread, cereal, rice and pasta. But 11 servings of white bread would be a mistake, since we need to eat more whole grains."

Likewise, the guide calls for two to four daily servings of fruit. But again, four servings of juice is a mistake, since we need whole fruits for their fiber and other dietary benefits.

The guide is available at www.extension.umn.edu/living on the Internet. Daily recommendations are based on five food groups as follows:

--Six to 11 servings of the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group.

--Three to five servings of the vegetable group.

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--Two to four servings of the fruit group.

--Two to three servings of the milk, yogurt and cheese group.

--Two to three servings of the meat, chicken, turkey, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group.

--Fats, oils and sweets should be eaten only rarely. Examples include butter or margarine, sour cream or cream cheese, candy bars and ice cream.

Fiber is important, Slavin says. Eating fiber-rich foods may protect you from some forms of cancer and reduce risks of heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Five or more servings of vegetables and fruits daily plus seven servings of whole grains and beans give you the minimum amount of fiber-rich foods.

You can find more information on fiber in two publications. One is from a University of Minnesota Extension Service publication by Slavin and former Extension nutritionist Mary Darling. It includes examples of high-fiber foods and diets. Titled "Fiber in the Diet," it's available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/living.

You can also purchase hard copies from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for publication number 00423.

The other publication, "The Facts About Fiber," is available from the American Institute for Cancer Research. Call (800) 843-8114 or read it online at www.aicr.org

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 6, 2002

Minnesota Forestry Association annual meeting is Aug. 16-17

The Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) annual meeting Aug. 16-17 will feature a hands-on session where you can learn new management options for your forest.

On Friday, Aug. 16, the MFA board will meet from 1 to 4 p.m. There will be a tour of the Itasca Greenhouse in Cohasset from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The all-day session on Saturday, Aug. 17 will be. at Dave and Virginia Parent's forest property on the Mississippi River in Itasca County starting at 9 a.m. It will include sessions on tree care equipment, trail building and mowing equipment, brush cutting equipment, chainsaw use and safety, and seeding and planting equipment. There will also be a wildlife walk in the woods, and a forest ecology walk in the woods.

There will be displays by the Ruffed Grouse Society, National Wild Turkey Federation and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association.

The registration fee is $10 per person for non-MFA members. Call MFA at (800) 821-8733 for more information. You can also contact Mike Reichenbach or Susan Seabury of the University of Minnesota Extension Service at (218) 879-0850.

Directions to the Itasca Greenhouse in Cohasset for Friday's events: From Hwy. 2 in Cohasset (also called Bass Brook) take Co. Rd. 87 south for one mile to the Clay Boswell Energy Center billboard, turn left and the greenhouse is on the right.

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Directions to the Parent property for Saturday's events: From Grand Rapids, take Hwy. 2 west to County Rd. 63, turn left to County. Rd. 257 and look for the MFA sign. Turn right (north) and go to #39522 on the right (north) side of the road. Look for MFA signs.

From Remer, take Hwy. 6 north to County Road 63 and turn right (this is also the turn for the Forestry History Center), go to County Rd. 257 and look for the MFA sign. Turn left (north) and go to #39522 on the left (north) side of the road. Look for MFA signs.

# # #

Web, V4MN, V5MN, F8 reich852

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 9, 2002

(First of three articles)

How would collective bargaining work for dairy farmers?

Let's say the nation's dairy farmers decide to work together to build economic power through collective bargaining. How might it work?

There are about nine million milking cows in the U.S., says Richard A. Levins, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Let's say the milk from all of those cows was priced by a single agency acting on behalf of all dairy farmers, rather than by individual farmers trying to get the best deal on their own. You could call this the 'nine-million cow dairy.'

"In a nine-million cow dairy, individual farmers would continue to make their own decisions on how to run their individual dairies. They would sacrifice no freedom whatsoever," Levins says. "They would merely agree to work together in negotiating higher milk prices and enjoy whatever benefits marketing muscle might bring their way."

The nine-million cow dairy would not be big in the way individual dairies get big. "Individual dairies get big trying to cut costs and compete with neighbors," Levins says. "But they can't get big enough to match the size of the nation's largest processors and retailers."

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The nine-million cow dairy would require much thought and study before it was put in place, according to Levins. "For now", he says, "we must learn to walk before we can run. Part of that process is getting used to new goals."

"The nine-million cow dairy is not about efficiency and competition. It has a goal of building economic power so farmers can claim their fair share of food system profits," Levins says. "Efficiency helps farmers live with low prices, but economic muscle helps them do something about low prices."

# # #

(Next in series: Collective bargaining is not dumping milk)

Web, A2, A4, D1, V2, V4, F2, P1 levins882

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 9, 2002

Good tillage management protects water quality, improves profits

Good tillage management can help prevent severe gullies and soil erosion in southeastern Minnesota.

A new publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) gives you the details. Titled "Tillage Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection in Southeastern Minnesota," it identifies key farm management practices to manage production risks with reduced tillage and no-till systems.

"Fall tillage time is coming fast, and now's a good time to get the publication and do some planning," says Tim Wagar, a crops and soils educator with the U of M Extension Service, Rochester district office.

"The publication draws on over 18 years of University of Minnesota field trials to help evaluate how reduced tillage systems perform in different crop rotations and soils," Wagar says. You need an integrated system of reduced tillage and conservation structures for successful soil and water conservation, he adds.

The 14-page publication gives specific tillage recommendations for continuous corn grain production, corn following soybeans, soybeans following corn and corn following alfalfa. It summarizes long-term research in southeastern Minnesota for both Loess soils over Karst bedrock and Loess-cap soils over glacial till.

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You can see the publication at

www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7694.html on the Internet. You can also get copies for a nominal charge from the U of M Extension Service Distribution Center by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for number 07694.

Or, order one by contacting Norman Senjem at MPCA's southeast office at (507) 280-3592. Senjem, Wagar and co-workers Gyles Randall, Lowell Busman and John Moncrief wrote the publication.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F4, C4

wagar872

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 13, 2002

Grimes will discuss hog market outlook at 4 pork producer meetings

Nationally-known swine marketing expert Glenn Grimes will be a main speaker at four meetings for Minnesota pork producers Aug. 20 and 21. Grimes, a University of Missouri economist, will speak at meetings at Morris, Marshall, Fairmont and Owatonna.

Topics Grimes will cover include the price outlook for hogs this fall and the results of a swine industry structure study. Also on the program will be John Deen, University of Minnesota Swine Center director. Deen will discuss the effect of changing hog prices on optimal market weights.

On Aug. 20, Grimes and Deen will be at the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris from 9-11:30 a.m. They will be at the Best Western Marshall Inn at Marshall from 2-4:30 p.m. On Aug. 21. they will be at the Holiday Inn at Fairmont from 9-11:30 a.m. and at the AmericInn at Owatonna from 2-4:30 p.m.

There is no registration fee for the meetings. Sponsors include the National Pork Board, the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, AgStar Financial Services, the U of M Swine Center and the U of M Extension Service. For more information, call the MPPA at (800) 537-7675 or U of M Veterinary Outreach Programs at (800) 380-8636.

# # #

Web,V2MN,S2MN jswan812

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August. 13, 2002

U of M post-harvest marketing workshops set for September

Which grain marketing strategy will work best for you this fall, given this summer's dramatic market changes? You can get some help by attending a half-day post-harvest marketing workshop in September.

The marketing workshop is being offered by the University of Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM) at five Minnesota locations: Sept. 4, Blue Earth; Sept. 5, St. Cloud; Sept. 10, Mankato; Sept. 11, Luverne; Sept. 12, Rochester; Sept. 17, Mankato. All sessions are scheduled from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., and the Sept. 17 session is designated "for women only."

The sessions will cover both corn and soybean marketing plans, says Robert Craven, farm management economist with the U of M Extension Service. The workshops are titled "2002 Post-Harvest Marketing Strategies—Planning for Success," and will be lead by U of M grain marketing specialist Ed Usset.

Grain markets have changed dramatically the past eight weeks, and your marketing plan must address the basic post-harvest question of whether to store grain. "The answer may surprise you," Usset says. "We'll discuss the pros and cons of different marketing strategies. By examining the alternatives, we can figure out which strategy is best for you."

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"All producers are welcome, but I would particularly like to encourage young producers to join us," Usset says.

The workshop cost is $25 per person. To register by credit card, call the CFFM at (800) 234-1111. You can also mail your registration to the Center for Farm Financial Management, 130 COB, 1994 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

"We're encouraging pre-registration, but you can register at the door," Craven says.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2, F4 craven892

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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August 16, 2002

4-H sheep show at Minnesota State Fair will be Aug. 22-24

The Minnesota State Fair will draw over 2,100 4-H youth and their livestock projects again this year. While most kids are at home waiting for school to start, these young people will be busy exhibiting their animals, meeting new people and learning more about their livestock project.

The State Fair is not only a fun time for the participants, but also a learning experience. This is the eighth year that all livestock participants are involved with an interviewing process. Exhibitors are asked questions relating to knowledge of their project. These interviews enhance the youth as they learn to express their knowledge and communication skills, along with their decision-making and problem-solving abilities. Sheep producers, agri-business representatives and Extension educators conduct the interviews with the 4-H members as their animals are checked in at the fair.

The state 4-H sheep show is a three-day affair, from Thursday, Aug. 22 through Saturday, Aug. 24. It begins with the fleece show on Thursday at 2 p.m. in the swine barn, with Lowell Slyter from Aurora, S. D. judging. The market and breeding lamb shows will take place on Friday starting at 4:30 p.m. in the livestock judging arena.

Concluding the 4-H state sheep show will be the lamb lead and showmanship competitions on Saturday. The lamb lead starts at 8 a.m. and showmanship is at 11 a.m. in the swine barn arena.

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This year's official judge for breeding sheep is Tom Willwerth, Eagle Grove, Iowa and the market lamb judge is Vince McGolden, from Fairview, Okla. Judging showmanship are Kandy Schminke, Van Horne, Iowa, and Jim Schoelerman, Everly, Iowa. This year's lamb lead judges are Sandy Ducharm and Juanita Reid-Bonniface, both of the Twin Cities metro area.

For more information on the 4-H sheep show at the Minnesota State Fair, contact Philip Berg at (507) 825-6715.

# # #

Web,V2,A4,S1 berg0814

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 16, 2002

(Second of three articles)

Collective bargaining for dairy farmers doesn't mean dumping milk

The term "collective bargaining" brings images of the angry milk-dumping episodes of 40 years ago for many dairy farmers.

And that's unfortunate, says Richard A. Levins, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Collective bargaining is often confused with supply control," Levins says. However, many objections to supply control don't apply to collective bargaining.

There are two separate ways that your price can be low, Levins says. One is supply and demand; the other is lack of economic power. Supply control deals with the supply and demand issue; collective bargaining addresses the lack of economic power.

"By separating supply control from collective bargaining, we eliminate a principal objection to farmers acting together," Levins says. If farmers act together to control supply and not all of them participate, the ones who don't will benefit just as much as those who do, since supply control raises everyone's price. Some bear the costs of supply control, while everyone shares the benefits.

"But collective bargaining benefits only those who participate," Levins says. "A labor union bargains for higher wages for its members, not for all workers in the United States. To benefit, you must belong to the union."

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"The same reasoning would apply to the nation's dairy farmers," Levins says. The marketing representative who bargains with processors for higher prices only bargains for members. "There would be a powerful incentive to join," Levins says, "and virtually no incentive to stay out."

For bargaining to be successful, there must be some threat to back it up. "There are better options than dumping milk," Levins says. For starters, milk could no longer be dumped legally due to environmental regulations.

"Participating farmers could threaten to restrict the supply of milk to one processor, but not to others, as long as that processor did not agree to higher payments for milk. Or, farmer-owned co-ops could process milk into products for food relief operations," Levins says. "Other legitimate threats might come to mind."

The collective bargaining issue for dairy farmers needs more thought and detail. "There will always be objections, and always more that we need to know," Levins says. "But we must be guided by the understanding that collective bargaining is simply another business tool that farmers can use to insure fair treatment in the marketplace.

"Those who are buying milk from farmers are growing larger by the day and as a result, building their economic power. Collective bargaining is one way farmers can counteract that market power."

# # #

(Next: In the new food economy, adding value doesn't mean keeping value)

Web, A2, A4, D1, V2, V4, F2, P1 levins892

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Aug. 16, 2002

Hybrid poplar can be profitable crop in northern Minnesota

Hybrid poplar can compete with corn and soybeans as a profitable crop on many northern Minnesota farms, according to a new University of Minnesota publication.

Hybrid poplar is a short-rotation, woody crop that's typically planted and harvested in less than 15 years. Production of the crop has been developed and refined since the late 1970s, when it was considered a potential biomass fuel.

"Uses for this fast-growing tree have expanded beyond biomass," says Mike Demchik, an agroforestry management educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Staples and one of the publication's six authors. Each of the authors has considerable experience with research and production of woody crops.

The publication, "Hybrid Poplars as an Alternative Crop," is a short introduction to help you determine if you might be interested in growing hybrid poplar. It covers site selection and preparation, soils and fertility, planting and planting stock, weed and insect control, production costs and potential profits.

You can check it out at http://www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/nryb/nrr/. To order copies, contact Susan Seabury at (218) 879-0850, ext 108, or sseabury@umn.edu.

# # #

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Aug. 20, 2002

Publication on subsurface drainage receives award

A University of Minnesota Extension Service publication, "Planning an Agricultural Subsurface Drainage System," has received a blue ribbon award in national competition.

The award was in the 2002 educational aids competition of the Society for Engineering in Agricultural, Food & Biological Systems (ASAE). ASAE awards blue ribbons each year to outstanding engineering Extension materials and methods. The publication, written by U of M Extension engineers Jerry Wright and Gary Sands, is one of several planned for an "Agricultural Drainage Publication Series".

The award-winning publication covers planning a subsurface (or tile) drainage system. Topics include economics, system capacity and drainage coefficient, topography and system layout, drain depth and spacing, drain sizing, use of drain envelopes, environmental impacts, surface inlets and installation quality.

There are also general rules of thumb, recommendations, design tables and references to resources and agencies for more detailed information. The publication was designed for farmers, engineers, public agencies, crop consultants, Extension educators and water quality professionals across the Midwest region.

Sands has written another publication for those interested in a more in-depth understanding of subsurface drainage. "Agricultural Drainage: Soil Water Concepts," is

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an 8-page, heavily illustrated publication presenting concepts that are fundamental to understanding how subsurface drainage affects soil water and the water balance.

It explains, with practical examples, the components of the water balance in the crop/soil system and their relationship to drainage. It also has answers to common questions about drainage, soil water and hydrology to help guide policy makers as they address broad issues related to agricultural drainage. The publication was designed for agricultural professionals, engineers, soil scientists, local and state policymakers, Extension educators and water quality professionals.

"Agricultural Drainage: Planning an Agricultural Subsurface Drainage System" (item 07685), and the more in-depth "Agricultural Drainage: Soil Water Concepts" (item 07644) may be purchased from the Extension Distribution Center. Call (612) 624-4900 or (800) 876-8636.

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 20, 2002

Editors: Two photos of the Kieffer family on their farm are available by e-mail or mail. For color prints, call (612) 624-4267 or (612) 625-3168. To obtain digital color photos by e-mail, send a request to jk@umn.edu.

Family dairy adds cows, new buildings as 2 sons join operation

Sons in their 20s wishing to become full-time business partners with their parents provided the impetus for new facilities and major changes in the Kieffer family dairy operation south of Hastings in Dakota County.

Wayne and Bernie Kieffer are the parents of four sons—Mark, 30; Kevin, 28; Tim, 25; and Nick, 19. Mark is not involved in the dairy operation, but both Kevin and Tim joined the operation full-time after completing college degrees in animal and plant systems at the University of Minnesota. Kevin completed his studies in 1996 and Tim in 1999. Nick is a sophomore at the U of M.

The Kieffer farming operation, with a current herd of 200 Holsteins, was started by Wayne's great grandfather in the late 1880s. Wayne began farming full time after graduating from high school in 1959. He and his brother bought heifers and established a herd of 24 Holsteins. In 1967 they remodeled their barn and put in a barn cleaner and bulk tank. They increased the herd to 40 cows and Wayne bought out his brother in 1969. Wayne and Bernie were married in 1970, and Bernie has taken care of bookkeeping and bills for the operation since then.

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"From the time we were married until Kevin came back from college, we milked 40 to 45 cows," says Wayne. "In 1998 we built another heifer shed and bought 20 more heifers. We decided to put up a bigger building to house the cows."

New location

The Kieffers considered converting their old barn into a milking parlor and putting up a new freestall barn. But they eventually decided the best option was to build new dairy facilities about 150 yards from the existing farmstead. The new location was part of a 40-acre field, and would provide room for expansion if the other boys wanted to join the family operation.

"At our old location we were directly up against a neighboring farm," says Wayne. "We didn't have room to expand to more than 100 cows. The way the land was laid out, there was no room for future growth. And remodeling where we were would have taken a lot of money with the labor involved, and we still would not have had what we really wanted."

In addition to deciding on a location for their new buildings, the Kieffers had to determine what kind of design to use. "We spent three years looking at other dairy operations," says Wayne. "We went to California, Michigan, Wisconsin and southern Minnesota to look at a lot of different dairy setups."

After deciding on a design, they obtained the help of Arlo Habben of Southern Minnesota Agronomic and Environmental Services at Chatfield. Habben drew up the building layout and planned the manure handling system to meet state environmental

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regulations. They selected Jim Kreofsky of Kreofsky Building Systems at Plainview as their builder. Construction began in the fall of 1999 and continued through the winter.

The freestall barn is 110 by 176 feet with curtain-wall ventilation. It has 204 stalls in six rows with a drive-through alley for feeding. Next to the freestall barn is a parlor and holding pen. The parlor is a double-eight parallel and is expandable to a double-twelve. The building with the parlor also has two business offices and a veterinarian room, break room and bathroom.

The Kieffers moved cows into the new barn May 17, 2000. They had purchased heifers to calve after the new barn was ready, so they were milking 160 cows by the fall of 2000 and were up to 200 by December of that year.

Milking three times a day

They switched to milking three times a day soon after moving their cows into the new barn. "We were starting milking about 4:30 a.m., and by 2-3 p.m. a lot of the heifers were leaking milk already," Kevin recalls. "So we decided we needed to milk three times a day. Production went up 10 pounds per cow per day just like that."

Milking now begins at 4 a.m., noon and 7: 30 p.m. Wayne says they have been fortunate to find part-time help for milking. Although one person can do the milking, they almost always have two. A neighbor comes to do the early milking, and either Kevin or Tim milks at noon. They have had various people do the evening milking.

"Situations such as this can provide three to five hours of work a day for someone who just wants half-time work," says Wayne. "It works out well for a couple where one has a full-time job and the other wants a little extra work."

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Before the Kieffers moved into their new barn, herd production averaged about 22,000 pounds of milk per cow per year. With the new barn and three-times-per-day milking, production is averaging 27,400 pounds.

"We buy dry baled hay, along with cottonseed and a commercial protein mix from Hubbard," says Wayne. "We grow the rest of our feed, including corn silage and haylage." John Bauer, a full-time employee, does most of the feeding. Duane Fowler of Farmers Union in Miesville works with Kevin and Tim to formulate the rations.

Young heifers go to a grower about seven miles away. "He does an excellent job with the heifers," says Wayne. "Our heifers average over 1,300 pounds when they come back, and some are not yet two years old. We started sending them off in the fall of 1999, about the time we started construction on the new buildings. We didn't have room for them, and if you don't have room, you don't do a good job."

The Kieffers own 360 acres and farm more than 900. Crops include 450 acres of corn, 275 acres of soybeans, 110 acres of alfalfa, and 100 acres of sweet corn and peas contracted for canning.

Strong family relationships

Strong family relationships are a key to the success of the Kieffer family dairy enterprise. Would the type of arrangement they have work for every family? "Probably not," says Wayne. "I think most could do it if they wanted to make the effort. But if you have really conflicting personalities to start with, it would be difficult. Kevin and Tim have always gotten along , and that's very important."

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"We don't have regularly scheduled meetings," he adds. "But there are a lot of times we have breakfast or dinner together, and that is a good opportunity to talk. If you talk a little every day you kind of keep on top of things."

Kevin and Tim both live off the farm and are married, and both their wives work full time off the farm. But both wives grew up on dairy farms.

Bernie says the employees are "extremely important" to the success of the dairy. "We have a very good employee (Bauer) who has been with us on and off since high school and is now here full time," she says. "The part-time help is very important also. We've been very fortunate with employees. I think it's important that you pay them fairly, treat them fairly, respect them and honor their wishes for time off."

Wayne says the new site with the new barn and parlor have worked out well, but adds, "If you're operating on a shoestring, you definitely don't want to do what we did. You might want to build a freestall barn and milk in the other barn, and get into the parlor when your freestall barn is completely filled and you have a good supply of replacements."

Focused on production

Tim says that when they were planning their new facilities, "a lot of people told us it wouldn't work—that you have to go to 400 cows. But we thought it would be better to have fewer cows produce more milk, so we've focused on production."

Wayne says going from 40 or 50 cows to 500 is too difficult mentally and financially for most people. "It's like trying to run before you know how to walk," he says. "I really feel that in two or three years they (his sons) could handle another barn

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and doubling the herd because of what we've learned. Some mistakes that weren't financially disastrous at 200 cows could have been at 400 or 500 cows. Change is never comfortable, but if you can take it step by step, it works better."

Wayne says adding another barn is a strong possibility if Nick wants to join the operation after finishing college. "Even if he doesn't, Kevin and Tim could still do it if they need to," he adds.

Tim says he and his brother work together in choosing bulls and most other aspects of the operation. "We take the work and split it up," he says. "But all of us know what to do and how everything works."

Kevin and Tim both say they like working in the family operation better than having an individual operation of their own. "It splits up the work," says Kevin. "And it helps a lot that we don't all have to be here all the time. Everyone gets a week or two of vacation every year."

Manure management system

The manure management system that Habben designed includes a liquid storage basin at one end of the freestall barn. Manure is pushed into a passive sand-and-solids separator with a skidsteer loader. The manure solids remain in the separator and are cleaned out periodically. The liquids flow into the storage basin and are pumped out through an irrigation system onto crop ground.

"The system had to be approved and certified by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency," says Habben. "There are a lot of checks to protect the environment."

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Kreofsky, the builder of the Kieffers' new facilities, recommends that producers do plenty of research on various building designs before going ahead with a new facility. "That way they'll get the end product they will be most satisfied with," he says.

He notes that moving to a new site, as the Kieffers did, is often the most economical. "Newer dairies take more room for manure storage facilities," he points out. "And it's generally a good idea to keep feed commodities nearby. Also, ventilation is typically improved by getting away from shelterbelts and existing buildings."

John Poepl, chief executive officer of the Vermillion State Bank in Vermillion, worked with the Kieffers on financing their new facilities. He says it can be a challenge for a family to successfully expand a business.

"In a family business, you have to know everyone is going to get along—father, sons, daughters-in-law, everyone," he says. "In the Kieffers' case, they're very confident in working with each other in terms of both work skill and desire to get work done. They're a close family, and they trust each other."

He said the Kieffers have banked at the Vermillion State Bank for many years, going back to when his father was in charge of the bank. "They keep such good control of expenses and are so efficient," he says, "that they don't need as much revenue as others might need to succeed."

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A2,D1,19 kieffer2

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 20, 2002

Extra milk or milk replacer speeds up growth of young dairy calves

Feeding more whole milk or milk replacer than normal to young dairy calves speeds up their growth, a University of Minnesota study shows.

Dairy scientist George Marx conducted the study on 64 calves at the U of M Northwest Research and Outreach Center at Crookston. He fed one group of calves the standard recommended levels of whole milk or milk replacer to meet their minimum needs. The other group of calves got 150 percent of the standard amounts.

"Calves fed at 150 percent of required conventional milk levels were more growthy and gained faster," says Marx. "They were healthy, and they maintained their weight advantage after weaning."

Marx studied the growth performance of calves from birth through their first five weeks, after which they were weaned. Calves in one control group received four quarts of whole milk per head per day starting at birth, split between two equal daily feedings. Calves in an experimental group received six quarts per head per day.

Another control group received 1.4 pounds of milk replacer powder per head per day, while an experimental group received 2.1 pounds. All calves got colostrum the first three days of life, and grain starter free choice starting on day four.

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Calves fed the high levels of whole milk and milk replacer gained 1.01 and 1.14 pounds per day, respectively. Control group calves on whole milk gained .84 pounds per day, and those on milk replacer gained .88 pounds per day.

Marx also checked calf performance during a five-week post-weaning period, when the calves received a grain starter diet along with free-choice alfalfa haylage.

"There were no significant differences in grain starter intake for either pre-weaned or weaned calves," Marx reports. "The weaned calves that had received the higher levels of whole milk or milk replacer gained slightly more during the post-weaning period. However, the differences were not statistically significant. Feed efficiency was similar for all groups of weaned calves."

Scours and other calfhood diseases were not a factor in the study, and no unusual health problems occurred.

"In this study, feeding higher levels of whole milk or milk replacer to baby dairy calves increased daily weight gain and produced more growthy calves," Marx concludes.

# # #

Web,V2,D1,R1 marx0816

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 23, 2002

Fact sheet with grain storage tips available from U of M website

"Grain Storage Tips: Factors and Formulas for Crop Drying, Storage and Handling" is the title of a new two-page fact sheet available on a University of Minnesota website.

The publication's authors are Bill Wilcke, engineer with the U of M Extension Service, and Gary Wyatt, regional Extension educator.

The publication has general tips for successful grain storage and recommendations on storage moisture, temperature and airflow. It includes tables of basic grain properties and key formulas useful in managing stored grain. It also provides references to grain storage publications and computer programs.

The fact sheet is available from the U of M Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Extension postharvest website at http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/postharvest/. Under the list of "web-based publications" on the website click on the fact sheet's title. You can also go directly to the fact sheet by entering the following web address into your browser: http://www.extension.umn.edu/specializations/cropsystems/M1080-FS.pdf.

You can either view the fact sheet on the Internet or print out a copy. If you need to use the fact sheet frequently, Wilcke suggests copying it on two sides of one sheet of paper and then having the sheet laminated. If you can't access the fact sheet on the Internet, contact Wilcke at wilck001@umn.edu or (612) 625-8205 for a paper copy.

# # #

Web,V2,F4 wilck819

Source: Bill Wilcke, (612) 625-8205
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 23, 2002

West Nile virus risk is low, and common sense can reduce it even more

The presence of West Nile virus in Minnesota should not cause the state's residents to panic. The risk of human infection is low in Minnesota, says entomologist Jeff Hahn of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. And common sense strategies to minimize exposure to mosquitoes can reduce the risk even more, he adds.

"The only known way to become infected with West Nile virus is to be bitten by a mosquito that's carrying the disease," says Hahn. "Minnesota is home to about 50 different types of mosquitoes. However, the two most common species, the vexans mosquito and the cattail mosquito, have not proven to be effective transmitters of West Nile virus."

Hahn says there are several species of "Culex" mosquitoes in Minnesota that are more efficient transmitters of the disease. Fortunately, these are much less abundant in Minnesota, reducing the chances of an encounter with a West Nile virus-infested mosquito.

While the risk of West Nile virus for humans is generally low, Hahn recommends common sense steps to minimize mosquito bites. "Avoid being outside at dawn, dusk and in the early evening when mosquitoes are most active," he says. "Wear protective clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and long pants, when you are in areas where mosquito numbers are high."

He also recommends using repellents. "The most effective product is DEET," he says. "Apply DEET to clothes or skin, but only enough to lightly cover the desired areas. Do not overapply repellents!"

Hahn recommends cutting areas with weeds and tall grass near your home, because these areas harbor mosquitoes. Leave yard lights off when possible to avoid

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attracting the insects unnecessarily. You can also try sodium lights, which are less attractive to mosquitoes than fluorescent or incandescent lights. Make sure window and door screens fit properly and repair or replace any screens with holes or tears.

It's also important to remove any containers that may hold water, such as old tires. If you can't remove them, then drain them. If this isn't possible, Hahn suggests applying a small amount of vegetable oil to the water's surface. This will suffocate any larvae in the water. Keep gutters cleaned so water doesn't accumulate.

"Be skeptical of traps, electrocutors, sound-repelling devices and other products that offer mosquito control," says Hahn. "If a product's claims seem to good to be true, they probably are."

Hahn says most people infected with West Nile virus either show no symptoms or experience mild illness before recovering. Those getting the mild illness may have fever, headache and body aches. "The disease at its most serious can cause permanent neurological damage and can be fatal," he says. "Fatal cases are more prevalent in people age 50 or older. Fortunately, there have been few serious West Nile virus cases in the United States to date."

West Nile virus was found in Minnesota in July with the discovery of two infected crows, one each in Hennepin and Crow Wing counties. As of Aug. 19, the Minnesota Department of Health had reported a total of 128 birds and 93 horses that tested positive for West Nile virus in 53 counties. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded confirmed infections in 39 states and the District of Columbia as of Aug. 21. The first West Nile virus case was found in New York in 1999.

Further information about West Nile virus is available on the Internet at http://www.ncpmc.org/NewsAlerts/westnilevirus.html.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V7,V9,A4,H2,H6 hahn0821

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 23, 2002

(Third of three articles)

In the new food economy, value-added doesn't mean keeping value

Every dairy farmer has tried getting more efficient to live with low prices. But for many, it hasn't worked. Prices are often so low that even top efficiency can't make up the difference, says a University of Minnesota agricultural economist.

The alternative to getting more efficient is usually seen as adding value to milk, says Richard A. Levins, economist with the U of M Extension Service. "But the agricultural economy is changing in ways that will make value-added strategies less profitable," he says. "Neither efficiency nor value-added strategies increase the market power of farmers."

A dairy cooperative is adding value when it buys milk from its farmer-members and processes it into cheese. "But even though they're adding value, farmers will find it increasing difficult to keep that value. They lack the market power to successfully face the giant retailers head-on in negotiations over cheese prices," Levins says. "So instead of selling cheap milk to processors, farmers sell cheap cheese to retailers."

"Remember the 'squeeze your supplier' advice that Sam Walton used to make Wal-Mart so successful? But a farmer-processing cooperative has obvious problems with this advice," Levins says. "Its suppliers are its farmer members."

"Unfortunately, adding value doesn't necessarily increase economic power," he says. "The lack of market power is the root of our price problems.

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"That means the idea of farmers cooperating is now more important than ever. That cooperation will need to recognize market power as well as value-added in the new food economy."

"It's only natural for farmers to worry about the size of those who buy their milk, but there's more to the story," Levins says. "Retailing is the real emerging power in the food system."

Five food retailers now account for 42 percent of all supermarket sales. And Levins says to make matters worse, the market share of these top five is growing rapidly.

Levins has written a 40-page publication to help farmers learn more about market power and collective bargaining. "An Essay on Farm Income" is available free of charge at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu or by calling (612) 625-1705. Or, write the Waite Library, Department of Applied Economics, 232 COB, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

# # #

Web, A2, A4, D1, V2, V4, F2, P1 levins8122

Source: Richard A. Levins (612) 625-5238, dlevins@apec.umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 23, 2002

Woodland Advisor Training Course scheduled for Cloquet

A Woodland Advisor Training Course is scheduled at the University of Minnesota Cloquet Forestry Center on four weekends in October and November.

The dates are Oct. 4-5, Oct. 18-19, Oct. 25- 26 and Nov. 1-2. Contact Mike Reichenbach, educator with the U of M Extension Service, at (218) 879-0850 ext. 123 or reich027@umn.edu to register or for more details. The Carlton County Woodland Owners Association is sponsoring the course.

"Woodland Advisors who have participated in the program say the training they receive is one of the program's greatest benefits," Reichenbach says. The Woodland Advisor Program offers more than 40 hours of training in forestry and natural resources stewardship.

The training helps landowners to manage their own land more effectively and provides woodland advisors with the satisfaction of helping other landowners. The Woodland Advisor Program extends the outreach education efforts of the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U of M Extension Service.

In return for this training, woodland advisors provide 40 hours of volunteer service to the local community. This service most often involves sharing knowledge about trees and forestry with neighbors and friends, Reichenbach says.

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Woodland Advisors participate in 40 hours of forestry-related training. This includes classroom and field sessions on forest protection, tree biology, silviculture, forest management and forest product marketing. As a part of the training, classes will be held on chain saw maintenance and sharpening, building trails and tree planting.

The $150 fee for the courses includes all handout materials. MFA members receive a $25 discount. For more information about MFA membership, contact MFA, P.O. Box 496, Grand Rapids, MN 55744; (218) 326-3000.

The U of M Extension Service in partnership with the MFA and the DNR stewardship committee developed the Woodland Advisor Program curricula.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F8, F9 reich8272

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 27, 2002

Farm measures to counter terroroism also enhance worker safety

Steps you can take to protect your farm from terrorism will also make it a safer and healthier place to work. Biosecurity and farm safety go hand in hand, says John Shutske, farm safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"The tragic events of Sept. 11, 2002 have made agricultural producers more aware of the need to protect their operations and the health of the public," says Shutske. "Terroristic introduction of disease, contamination or other damaging agents has become a concern. A single intentional event could ripple through agriculture and cripple it, costing billions of dollars."

Shutske advocates proactive, systematic evaluation of the biosecurity hazards of all farms. This should include threats to inputs such as feed, water, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers and pesticides, and to other products stored on farms.

While working to reduce biosecurity risks, we also need work to reduce safety risks, says Shutske. "Agriculture again took first place in 2000 among all U.S. industries in work-related deaths," he points out. "Each year, more than 700 farmers and farm workers die and more than 120,000 are seriously injured. In addition, 100-150 children are killed annually in the farm workplace. The monetary loss is at least $4 billion annually, not including lost time or production."

If faced with an agriculturally-related terrorist event in which 800 to 850 people would die and 120,000 would be seriously injured, we would do everything we could to prevent it. "Yet that's the magnitude of death and injury we see every year because of workplace hazards on the farm," says Shutske. "Farmers, their families and their employees deal with these hazards daily."

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Shutske has three general recommendations for farm managers to protect their operations from terrorism and also protect the safety and health of farm workers. They are:

1. Know who you are hiring. Workers are key in efforts to insure internal security. Consider implementing a more formal process to screen workers and check backgrounds and references from previous employers. Make sure workers, including family members, are properly trained. Provide instruction so that workers know what to do in an emergency or other out-of-the-ordinary event.

"Careful attention to the safety and health of workers helps build and maintain strong relationships and communications," says Shutske.

2. Review all potential hazards in your operation. These include facilities, equipment, storage and other areas where injuries or an intentional breach of biosecurity could occur. Consider mechanical, chemical, biological and other types of hazards. Set priorities for making changes by looking at the probability each type of trouble will occur, and the potential severity of the problem. This will help you decide what change are most needed and how to allocate time and money.

"Changes to farmstead security don't have to be costly," says Shutske. "Simply closing and locking gates where there are multiple access driveways on and off a farmstead can dramatically improve security. Local law enforcement and emergency preparedness officials often have the expertise to help you evaluate your situation."

3. Plan and communicate with people inside and outside your operation. These include your family, your employees, your suppliers, your customers and other industry leaders.

"Since Sept. 11 we recognize more than ever that good communication and accountability are keys to preventing an intentional incident," says Shutske. "We also know that good planning and communication help alleviate stress. Unresolved stress is a known risk factor in many farm work-related injuries."

While preparedness and prevention take time and money, Shutske says the payback can be great. Efforts to improve safety can lead directly to lower insurance rates and other health-related costs.

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Websites with resources on prevention of intentional threats are at:

http://www.extension.umn.edu/administrative/disasterresponse/terror2.html

http://www.mda.state.mn.us/commissioner/antiterror.htm

http://www.afia.org/img/assets/1108/biosecurity2.pdf.

Websites on farm safety and injury prevention are at:

http://safety.coafes.umn.edu/

http://safety.coafes.umn.edu/livestock.html

http://safety.coafes.umn.edu/confinedspaces.html.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A4,E4,B1,D1,P3,S2 shut0823

Source: John Shutske, (612) 626-1250
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Aug. 27, 2002

POST is more than a new 'buzzword' for positive out-of-school time

It doesn't take hundreds of scientific studies to discover that kids need nurturing and quality time when they're not in school.

The trick is getting beyond the talking stage and reaching kids who are most at risk. But a new initiative called "POST" (positive out-of-school time) has the ambitious goal of reaching all Minnesota youth.

"No agency or school can meet this challenge alone," says Pam Stevens, the Howland Family Endowed Chair in Youth Leadership Development at the University of Minnesota. "Partnerships across local organizations and regional institutions are critical," she says. "So is advocacy—people coming together to push for their agenda.

"This could be getting the school district to open schools for evening activities or getting the city council to allocate city funds to support after-school programs. People must work together across organizational boundaries," she says.

POST is a top priority of the University of Minnesota's Extension Service. About 60 staff members throughout the state will be working on the out-of-school program, says Dale Blyth, associate dean of the Extension Service and director of the Center for 4-H Youth Development. "The goal is to ensure that all Minnesota youth are positively engaged in their own learning and development," Blyth says.

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It will take a "blurring of the boundaries between formal school and community programming" to make POST work, says Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the U of M Humphrey Institute. In an article he's written, Nathan quotes a public high school teacher who says, "There is not enough time in most public schools... to process and play with knowledge.

"Out-of-school time is what kids refer to as the real world—where you actually do something with the knowledge that you have," the teacher says. "POST, if structured with flexibility, can be the transition time for students to incorporate new knowledge or skills into playful (and purposeful) activity."

POST is just getting started, but soon there will be tip sheets for parents and community leaders and training sessions for youth workers, school personnel, volunteers and community leaders. Also planned is a website with practical information on positive out-of-school time.

More information on POST is available in a free publication from the U of M Center for 4-H Youth Development. Call (800) 444-4238 to request a copy of the Summer, 2002 issue of "The Center" magazine.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1

marczak8132

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

August 30, 2002

(Third in a series on complementary and alternative medicine)

If you're considering acupuncture, be a smart consumer

As more and more people turn to complementary forms of health care, consumers need to seek out reliable sources of information, says Marilyn Adams Maiser, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Take acupuncture, for example. You may find the service offered in clinics and hospitals, and it may be covered by your health insurance company if used as part of a medical treatment plan.

Acupuncture has grown in popularity in the United States during the past two decades, according to the National Institutes of Health, Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). A Harvard University study published in 1998 estimated that Americans make more than five million visits per year to acupuncture practitioners. NCCAM says acupuncture is being "widely practiced--by thousands of physicians, dentists, acupuncturists, and other practitioners--for relief or prevention of pain and for various other health conditions."

Acupuncture originated in Asia well over 2,000 years ago as a treatment used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). It is commonly practiced today throughout the world. Yet here in the U.S., it's considered an alternative form of treatment, in place of conventional medicine. It is also used, along with conventional care, as a complementary treatment, often performed by trained medical doctors.

So where do you start if you're considering complementary or alternative treatments, including acupuncture? Follow these five steps to avoid a bad experience:

--Start by doing your homework (see the list of information sources at the end of this article). Use reliable information sources to check potential benefits and risks.

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--Talk things over with your doctor. It's important to let him or her know if you're considering acupuncture so it can be coordinated with the rest of your medical care. Your doctor will want to rule out life-threatening conditions such as cancer, heart disease and acute infections.

--Make a plan. Decide how long you'll try the treatment. Then assess how effective it's been. There's no use continuing a therapy that isn't working for you.

--Learn how to choose a qualified acupuncturist. They're not all the same.

--Check with your health insurance company's member services department to find out whether or not your policy will cover this treatment.

Maiser says reliable sources of information for health care consumers include these organizations and their websites:

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture.

Mayo Clinic, www.mayohealth.org or www.mayoclinic.com/, then search for acupuncture or complementary.

American Medical Association Report 12--on alternative medicine, http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/2036-2523.html.

American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, http://www.medicalacupuncture.org/acu_info/faqs.html.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, V7, H2 adams8292

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 4, 2002

Preventive health care for lawns usually works better than treatment

One of the keys to a healthy lawn is to prevent problems before they occur. Prevention is usually easier and more effective than treatment, says Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"A healthy lawn can out-compete most weeds, survive insect attacks and fend off most diseases—before these problems become unsightly," says Beckerman. She recommends the following preventive health care steps for lawns:

--Develop healthy soil. Find out about your soil by having a soil test performed. The University of Minnesota Soils Testing Lab performs such a service.

--Choose a grass type appropriate for Minnesota.

--Mow high, often and with sharp blades. Never remove more than one-third of the grass blade at each mowing.

--Don't mow wet grass.

--Water deeply but not too often.

--Dethatch and aerate as needed. Early fall is a good time for these tasks.

--Set realistic goals. Grass is a living organism, not a carpet.

The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on lawn care, gardening and insects between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-

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4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee for insect, plant or ornamental plant disease problems, which can be billed to a major credit card. Lawn samples require two photos and have a $10 fee.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bckrm903

Source: Janna Beckerman, (612) 625-7022
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September. 4, 2002

Regional workshops on teaching 'Positive Parenting' set for this fall

Where can professionals who work with parents turn for help with teaching good parenting skills? To the University of Minnesota Extension Service and its award-winning curriculum, "Positive Parenting."

This fall, a team of experienced Extension educators is offering professional development workshops that prepare professionals and trained volunteers to teach Positive Parenting. The program uses proven, research-based methods to teach parenting skills.

Each complete curriculum package includes a video, background materials, lesson plans and reproducible handouts. Dual tracks are offered. The "Positive Parenting I and II" is for use with parents of children from birth up to 12 years of age. Lesson topics include physical punishment, limits, consequences, listening, anger, challenging behaviors, parenting tools, attention, respect, responsibility, monitoring and siblings.

The "Positive Parenting of Teens" track and curriculum is for use with parents of early adolescents, 10 to 16 years of age. Lesson topics include parenting teens today, perception, development, communication, conflict, discipline, teen decision-making and friends/peers.

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Workshops will be held in the following communities:

- Sept. 26, St. Paul [Teens]
- Oct. 7, Grand Rapids [Teens]
- Oct. 10, St. Cloud [Teens]
- Nov. 1, Andover [Teens]
- Nov. 14, Moorhead [Teens]
- Nov. 14, Rochester [choice of I/II or Teens]
- Nov. 15, Shakopee [Teens]
- Nov. 15, New Ulm [choice of I/II or Teens]
- Nov. 19, Thief River Falls [Teens]

Each workshop runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The training cost is $65, including lunch, and pre-registration is required. Curriculum packages range in price from $250 to $445. For more details and registration information, visit the Positive Parenting web site at http://www.extension.umn.edu/positiveparenting or contact the curricula coordinator at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul at (612) 624-1791 or robrecht@che.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F1 como8302

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September. 4, 2002

Making good tillage decisions now can help reduce soil erosion

Take advantage of the lull before fall harvest to plan for tillage operations this fall. For starters, be site selective with tillage, advises Gyles Randall, University of Minnesota soil scientist at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca. For example, avoid tillage on more erosive parts of fields.

"We're actually seeing more aggressive tillage--leaving less surface residue--now than we did 10 years ago in many fields," Randall says. "Tillage equipment is being pulled deeper and faster, thus burying more residue, especially if there are disks on the implement."

A good place to start reducing tillage is on corn ground going to soybeans next year, Randall says. Soybeans can easily be no-till drilled or planted in wider rows into standing corn stalks. Fall tillage of soybean ground is not necessary unless you're incorporating manure or knifing in anhydrous ammonia; both practices do some tillage.

Strip tillage of soybean ground for next year's corn is a good alternative to no-till in Minnesota, Randall says. "If you're considering strip-till, try to lease a strip-till unit this fall and try it on your own land," he advises.

The corn-soybean rotation provides very little protection from erosion during April through June, when our most intense thunderstorms occur. Randall says, "This

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means we need to implement practices to prevent erosion in this highly erosive crop rotation, especially on soils with slopes greater than four percent."

"We must remember that soil erosion does more than reduce the quality and productivity of soil," Randall says. "It also contributes significant sediment and phosphorus to surface waters, causing eutrophication and serious water quality concerns as well."

This is an excellent time to visit your NRCS office, become acquainted with conservation practices and seek technical and financial assistance supported by the Farm Bill. "It's not too early to start because the process may take time," Randall says.

Conservation practices including grass waterways, buffer strips, and contour strips planted to grass perennials are excellent erosion control measures. Randall says they're even more effective when combined with reduced or no tillage on the more erodible portions of the landscape.

History tells us the productivity and quality of some of the finest and most productive soils in the world have been compromised greatly by soil erosion and passive concerns toward soil stewardship, Randall says.

"It's time we take the consequences of erosion seriously," Randall says. "Otherwise, future generations will only be able to read historical accounts about the rich, highly productive soils we enjoy instead of experiencing them like we have."

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F4, P1 randall932

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 4, 2002

University of Minnesota has fact sheet on 'Keeping Farm Children Safe'

Each year, hundreds of children are hurt or killed while playing or working on a farm. Most of these incidents could be prevented, according to John Shutske, farm safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Farm accidents and deaths involving children may seem unpredictable and random," says Shutske. "But in fact, they are very predictable. They happen when a child is doing something that is beyond his or her mental, physical or emotional ability."

As they grow, all children pass through a series of developmental stages that take them from toddler to teenager. "By understanding the stages of a child's growth and development and by providing careful supervision and training that's right for each stage, parents and other adults can protect farm kids," says Shutske.

Shutske is the author of a fact sheet entitled "Keeping Farm Children Safe" that was produced by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The fact sheet contains a chart describing characteristics of typical developmental stages of children from toddlers to young adults. The chart also lists risks that farm kids at each stage may take and appropriate protective measures.

"Keeping Children Safe" is on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/DA6188.html. You

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can get a printed copy from your county office of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call the Extension Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item number 06188.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,C1,E4,F2 shut0831

Source: John Shutske, (612) 625-9733
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 4, 2002

Note to editors, broadcasters: The 59th annual observance of National Farm Safety and Health Week is Sept. 15-21. There is additional farm safety material on the Internet at http://safety.coafes.umn.edu/mediainfo.html.

Minnesota farm workplace death toll rose to 30 in 2001

The following commentary is from John Shutske, farm safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service:

During calendar year 2001 in Minnesota, 30 people died in the farm workplace, up from 22 the year before. Minnesota is a bit unique in that we count all persons who die as a result of contact with farm hazards such as machinery, grain bins, manure pits or livestock. This includes children, who are excluded in national occupational fatality rate comparisons whether they are working or not. We don't have many kids playing or working in coal mines or on construction sites. So, when national rates of work-related injuries and deaths are calculated, children are excluded.

In 2001, six of our 30 fatalities were children below the age of 16. This includes kids who were playing around the farm or watching their parents, siblings or grandparents work.

It's important to recognize that this is not just an issue of children's safety, although that gets much of the media coverage. For example, this year, as of the end of July, we have recorded 11 fatalities. Of these, five were above the age of 65.

While we have made good progress in reducing the farm death rate over the past 10 years in Minnesota, we still have much work to do. At a national level, in the year 2000, agriculture again took over first place as the most dangerous industry. This was after several years when we had had a death rate slightly below the mining industry.

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Agriculture hasn't necessarily become much more dangerous. It's just that other industries have become safe more quickly.

We have some real challenges ahead. When I first started working in this field 17 years ago, we were mainly concerned about the safety of farm families. The main targets of our programs were men and women in their 40s and 50s, who made up the largest segment of those likely to be involved in an accident. We also placed a lot of emphasis on the safety of children who lived and worked on farms.

While these groups are still very important, we have a range of new issues. The population of "principal farm operators" as defined by USDA continues to age. The age of the average farm operator identified in the 1997 Census of Agriculture is more than 10 years older than the average worker in all other jobs in Minnesota. Older farmers are at serious risk because of issues related to reaction time, falling and fatigue related to the aging process.

Another relatively recent phenomenon here in the Midwest is the influx of workers who speak a variety of languages including Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese and Hmong. As the livestock industry continues to consolidate and farms get larger and more dependent on hired rather than family labor, the nature of safety issues also changes. Preliminary results from a recent study of dairy farm operations with employees in Wisconsin found that more than half of the employers wanted worker safety training materials in a language other than English.

We see similar requests in Minnesota for materials and educational programs in several languages. Twelve year ago, when I began working in Minnesota, that was very uncommon.

Producers, particularly in the livestock industry, are also increasingly concerned about issues such as worker's compensation insurance costs, compliance with labor safety regulations, health insurance, and security measures to protect their operations, their herds, and the health of the public.

We face challenges as a result of the state and federal budget situations. These include deficits and budget cutbacks for educational programs and initiatives to protect

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farmers, their families and the new generation of farm workers. Economically, farm injuries and deaths are a $4.6 billion-a-year problem. Yet the federal government only spends $20,000 per year per state on farm family and farm worker safety and health education, and many states spend nothing.

Answers

--Continued development and implementation of safer equipment, facilities and production systems.

--Increased commitment on the part of producers and employers to safety. This means more than simply "thinking safety" and trying to use "common sense." It means deliberate, specific actions to eliminate the hazards commonly implicated in farm injuries and fatalities. It also means spending some money in many cases.

--Increased recognition that farm injuries and deaths are a huge economic problem and a renewed commitment to support educational programs that can be delivered locally to farmers, family members and hired agricultural workers.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,C1,E4,F2 shut0830

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 6, 2002

Evaluating feedlot pollution hazards will be subject of workshops

Using a computer model to evaluate animal feedlot pollution hazards will be the subject of October workshops in Freeport and Faribault, Minn. The workshops will be Oct. 2-3 in Freeport at Charlie's Café and Oct. 9-10 in Faribault at Truckers Inn.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency are offering the workshops in cooperation with individuals from three other agencies. The workshops are designed for those who need to assess pollution hazards from existing livestock open lots, including engineers, technicians and county feedlot officers.

The two-day workshops will incorporate both classroom and field activities to provide comprehensive training on the Feedlot Evaluation (FLEval) computer model. The workshops, which will showcase the new EXCEL version of the model, are designed for both experienced and inexperienced FLEval users. Workshop participants will learn to understand and assess pollution from open feedlot runoff. They will also learn to run the FLEval program and to understand its limitations in assessing pollution potential.

The workshop fee is $115 per person, and advanced registration is required. Registration forms and additional information on the workshop are on the Internet. Go to http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/manure and click on "FLEval Training."

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Registration information is also available from Barb Oliver in the U of M Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering at (612) 625-7024. For technical questions about the workshop, contact David Schmidt at (612) 625-4262.

# # #

Web,V2,B1MN,D1MN,P3MN,S2MN,T2MN,69,78 schmt829

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Sept. 6, 2002

Positive out-of-school experiences make a difference for young people

How young people spend their out-of-school time has huge consequences—both positive and negative. If the choices are good, they can find exciting ways to have fun and build caring relationships. Kids can learn by doing, gain self-confidence and contribute to the community.

But if we ignore the out-of-school time issue, young people have limited positive options and may make unhealthy choices, says Dale Blyth, associate dean of the University of Minnesota Extension Service and director of the Center for 4-H Youth Development. A new initiative called POST (for positive out-of-school time) is a top priority of the Extension Service. About 60 staff members throughout the state will be working on the POST initiative.

The Ramsey County 4-H program is an example how the POST program could work on a statewide basis. For several years, it has reached under-served youth in targeted urban neighborhoods with accessible, high-quality programs.

"Each program is developed from 'the community up,' rather than from 'the program down,'" says Jennifer Skuza, an Extension Service community youth development educator. Skuza says young people and adults help plan the programs so they reflect the communities they serve.

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One of the programs is youth teaching youth (YTY), where teenagers are prepared to teach and lead 4-H activities in their neighborhoods. YTY creates learning and leadership opportunities that would not otherwise be available.

A common challenge in youth programming is attracting and retaining adolescents, but YTY excels at this. "The program is extremely popular," Skuza says. More than 20—the maximum capacity--participate every year.

Ramsey County 4-H schedules younger children to meet weekly in the community centers on days when there's no other programming. Also, the YTY groups meet weekly to prepare for their leadership and teaching roles.

Then during school breaks, the two groups come together and the older youth lead the activities and teach sessions. "Programs are expanded during school breaks since there are unoccupied hours and in many cases, fewer programs and services available," Skuza says.

POST is just starting, but soon there will be a website, tip sheets for parents and community leaders and training sessions for youth workers, school personnel, volunteers and community leaders. More information on POST is available in a free publication from the U of M Center for 4-H Youth Development. Call (800) 444-4238 to request a copy of the Summer, 2002 issue of "The Center" magazine.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1 marczak8262

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Sept. 10, 2002

Brazil could overtake U.S. in food production, U of M economist says

Brazil may replace the United States as the world's breadbasket unless the U.S. solidifies its agricultural research and redesigns its farm programs. So says G. Edward Schuh, Regents' professor at the University of Minnesota.

"When I talk to U.S. farmers, I tell them their future competition will likely be with Brazil," Schuh says. "We have let our support for agricultural research decline in this country, while Brazil continues to support its agricultural research. And technological advances in Brazilian agriculture have been phenomenal in recent years."

Agricultural scientists in Brazil have learned how to make more effective use of tropical (cerrados) soils, Schuh says, and the country has hundreds of millions of acres of them. "This land is cheap and you can triple and quadruple yields with only modest investments in lime and phosphorus fertilizer," Schuh says. "The government needs to invest in the physical infrastructure to open up these vast areas, and it is doing that."

The recent decline in the value of Brazil's currency is an added stimulus to the competitiveness of Brazil's agricultural sector. Schuh says, "The shock of the collapse of the Argentine peso and political uncertainty about the upcoming presidential election have already caused the value of Brazil's currency to decline.

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"Interestingly enough, Brazil's producers are holding their large crop off the market in anticipation that the value of the currency will decline even further as the election becomes closer."

Schuh says it's in this country's best interests to help Brazil through its recent currency crisis. "Although a weak currency is good for Brazil's export sectors, it is not good for the economy as a whole since it causes per capita income to decline," Schuh says.

"An increase in per capita income is what drives the Brazilian market for our exports to them," Schuh says. "And there is a large population of people in Brazil who would be a strong market for U.S. products if their incomes were to rise."

But if we do lose our competitive advantage in agriculture to Brazil or other countries, "it will be largely our own fault," Schuh says. For example, the U.S. is still more efficient than Brazil at keeping soybean operating costs low. "But when you factor in land costs, the competition is a lot tougher," Schuh says. "The value of current farm subsidies is capitalized into the value of land. This drives total production costs up, with the danger that the U.S. is pricing itself out of the market."

From a legislative standpoint, the U.S. needs to change the way it addresses the chronic income problem in agriculture, Schuh says. "To address the chronic income problem of farmers, we need to disconnect the income supplements from the use of land," he says. "In that way, the benefits will no longer be capitalized into the value of the land, which drives up costs."

Schuh says more attention should be given to rural development, or the expansion of nonfarm activities in rural areas. If that happens, more farmers could live

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on their farms, hold productive off-farm jobs and remain productive citizens in their home communities.

"For years, human capital has been drained out of small rural communities," Schuh says. "If we would take the money currently being used to subsidize counter-productive commodity programs and invest it in developing rural communities, it would do much more to help lower-income farmers. Moreover, it would do it on a sustainable, longer-lasting basis."

Dwindling agricultural research dollars also weaken the U.S. competitive edge, compared to Brazil and other countries. States are not committing public dollars for agricultural research as they used to, and even private sector research has declined over the past 12 years. The decline in public support is especially important, Schuh says, "for much of it is critical to the sustained increase in productivity this nation needs."

International agricultural research has taken even a larger funding hit. "International funds from the U.S. going to research and development fell to virtually nothing during the 1990s," Schuh says. "As a nation, we benefit significantly from these investments."

Schuh is the director of the Freeman Center for International Economic Policy in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

# # #

Web, A2, V2, V4, F4 schuh8222

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 13, 2002

Conservation tillage deserves a new look as sky-blue water turns brown

The following commentary is from George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service:

Some of our sky-blue water turned brown during the past two growing seasons. Fueled by heavy rains over much of the southern part of the state, soil loss has been substantial. Most crop growers clearly understand the importance of keeping the highly fertile topsoil on the landscape.

Research has shown that using some type of conservation tillage system will reduce soil loss. Yet adoption of the systems that have the greatest potential for reducing soil loss has been slow, at best. Over the years there have been several explanations for the slow adoption rate. Many are no longer valid, and it's time to take a new look at planting systems that will minimize soil loss in the corn-soybean rotation.

Conservation tillage can be described as any practice that leaves a certain percentage of crop residue on the surface after planting. The three generally accepted conservation tillage systems used in the northern and western corn belt are no-till, ridge-till and strip-till.

Results from several studies that have compared various tillage systems lead to the general conclusion that yields are reduced slightly with no-till when soils are cold and wet early in the growing season. There is also a general conclusion from the studies that the lowest amount of risk is associated with ridge-till and strip-till planting.

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The switch from conventional planting to conservation tillage requires some changes in our thinking about fertilizer use. Recommended nitrogen rates to achieve the expected yield do not change. However, broadcast applications that remain on the soil surface are not a good option. Research has shown that broadcast N that remains in contact with crop residue is subject to loss, probably through volatilization. Thus, fertilizer N applied in a conservation tillage system should be placed below the crop residue.

For application of phosphate, potash and other immobile nutrients our thinking needs to shift from broadcast to banded applications. Most ridge-till farmers place the band in the center of the ridge 4-6 inches deep in the fall of the soybean year. This deep band is used effectively by young corn plants and eliminates the need for starter fertilizer. Also, phosphate and potash rates can be reduced considerably with banding when compared with broadcast applications for conventional planting.

Banding phosphate below the soil surface reduces the potential for movement of phosphorus from the landscape into surface waters, where the phosphorus can increase algae populations and thus reduce water quality.

Conservation tillage also improves the economic bottom line. In a survey in the summer of 2001, several ridge-till farmers were asked via personal interviews to provide their production costs for corn and soybeans, as well as their yields for each crop. Neighbors who farmed a similar number of acres with conventional tillage were asked the same questions.

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Average corn yields for the conventional and ridge-till planting systems were 144.9 and 149.0 bushels per acre, respectively. For soybeans, the average yield was 41.5 bushels per acre for conventional and 43.7 bushels per acre for ridge-till.

While yields were similar, there were major differences in cost of production. The conventional system had a corn production cost of $1.94 per bushel, compared with $1.52 for ridge-till. For soybeans, production cost with conventional tillage was $4.13 per bushel, compared with $3.69 for ridge-till. In general, ridge-till production costs were lower for fertilizer, herbicides and fuel.

In the past, some growers have expressed a perception that conservation tillage is best suited to small equipment. However, Iowa and Minnesota crop producers use 16-row ridge-till planters and cultivators successfully. Ridge-till and strip-till planting does not limit equipment size. As with conventional tillage, choice of equipment for conservation tillage is an individual grower decision that is influenced by many factors.

When evaluated from agronomic, environmental and economical perspectives, the adoption of conservation tillage planting systems is a win-win situation for everyone.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,C4,F4MN rehm905

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 13, 2002

Beef carcass merit program can benefit cow-calf producers

Beef cow-calf producers can learn about the feedlot performance and carcass value of cattle from their herd through an upcoming beef carcass merit program. Applications are due Oct. 25 for the program, which the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Foundation Feeders of Spring Grove, Minn. are conducting.

"Value-based marketing is inching ever more into today's beef cattle marketplace, and it's not going to go away," says regional Extension educator Steve Drazkowski.

Cow-calf producers who take part in the beef carcass merit program select a representative five or ten-head group of calves from their herd and have them custom-fed and marketed. Producers receive a detailed set of carcass quality, profitability and performance data on their animals.

"Producers can use the information they learn about their animals to aid in genetic selection and marketing," says Drazkowski. "Those who have herds with good performance and carcass data can use that information to leverage higher market prices."

Program brochures and entry forms are available through county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They're also available by going to http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/wabasha/ on the Internet and clicking on the

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"publications" icon at the bottom of the page. For further information, contact regional Extension educators Steve Drazkowski at Wabasha at (800) 385-3103 or Bill Halfman at Caledonia at (507) 725-5807.

During this past year's carcass merit program, 56 steers were enrolled from eight farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The steers gained an average for 3.8 pounds per day in the feedlot, with a range of 3.0 to 4.8 pounds per day. Carcass weight ranged from 667 to 931 pounds and averaged 836 pounds. Rib-eye area ranged from 9.2 to 17.2 square inches, with an average of 13.1 square inches. Yield grade ranged from 1.24 to 4.1, with an average of 2.8. The animals graded 44.8 percent choice, 46.4 percent select and 8.9 percent standard.

# # #

Web,V2,B1MN,X1,Z4 draz909

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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Sept. 13, 2002

Black walnut trees in cities not apt to make you rich

Walnut trees in towns and cities probably aren't going to make the owner rich from selling them for lumber or veneer.

There are several reasons why it's hard to find a buyer for walnut trees in urban settings, says Meagan Keefe, forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

--The risk that there may be objects imbedded in the trunk that can cause injury when removing and processing the tree. "This is the biggest reason why most buyers won't purchase urban walnuts," Keefe says. For example, there could be an old eye screw from a hammock in the trunk that the current owners aren't aware of.

"If the tree is large enough for the owner to consider selling it for lumber, it could very well have foreign objects from 25 to 50 years ago," Keefe says. "And the owner would have no way of knowing about them."

--Trunk diameter as measured four and one-half feet off the ground. Keefe says most buyers look for trees with a diameter of more than 18 inches.

--Tree height. A buyer will look for trees that would have logs with a height of eight to 10 feet. And in most cases, more than one log is necessary to interest a buyer.

--Freedom from defects such as crookedness, branches, holes, bumps, cracks, scars and insect or disease damage. Keefe says trees with a large diameter and long

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trunk that's free from most defects have the greatest potential for being a valuable lumber or veneer tree. And trees grown in an urban setting usually don't have these characteristics.

An urban tree doesn't have to compete with surrounding trees for light, and therefore will often have a shorter trunk with many branches low to the ground. This gives the tree little if any merchantable height. Urban trees are also more likely to have been injured or subject to disease than a tree grown in the forest.

--Difficulty and cost of coming to harvest only one or two trees in an urban setting. Most urban trees grow close to houses, power lines and other structures that make if difficult and time-consuming to harvest them.

So sitting back and enjoying its shade is probably your best option if you have a black walnut tree. But if you think it may be valuable for lumber or veneer, contact the Extension Service Forest Resources office at (612) 624-3020 or treeinfo@umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F8 keefe9112

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 17, 2002

(Fourth and last in a series on complementary and alternative medicine)

Therapeutic massage benefits the entire body

By Marilyn Adams Maiser

Massage is popular, although it's not new. It was widely used in Chinese, Arab, Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Roman cultures 4,000 years ago. During the Renaissance, it spread throughout Europe, and Swedish massage developed in the early 1800s.

So what do we need to know about massage to make good decisions before spending our money? Let's start with a statement from "Essentials of Complementary and Alternative Medicine," by Wayne Jonas, M.D. and Jeffrey Levin, Ph.D., M.P.H. (1999): "Most diseases are exacerbated by stress. And given that massage therapy alleviates stress, receiving massages should probably be ranked with diet and exercise on any list of health priorities, as it was in India around 1800 B.C."

Massage therapy reduces stress, improves sleep and mood and reduces pain. Jonas and Levin say, "Clients normally show immediate effects, including improved mood state and decreased anxiety and stress hormone levels. Longer-term changes (after 4 to 6 weeks of treatment) include a decrease in depression, improved sleep patterns, lower stress and enhanced immune function."

Further, clinical studies show increased air flow in children with asthma and decreased blood glucose in children with diabetes after a month of massage, and significant weight gain in premature infants given 10 days of massage.

Methods vary, but the common thread is that massage stimulates circulation and promotes relaxation. You may have heard it referred to as therapeutic massage, bodywork, touch therapy, relaxation technique or some specific methods such as Thai massage, Ki-Shiatsu, Ayurvedic, Rolfing, Esalen, Feldendreis and deep tissue massage.

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Massage therapy is used mostly for the general reduction of stress and pain, but is also advised for these conditions:

- Pain reduction during pregnancy and labor, for burn and fibromyalgia patients, and for those suffering muscle soreness from exercise.
- Alleviating depression and anxiety for adolescents with bulimia and patients with chronic fatigue syndrome.
- Stress reduction related to job stress (also for elderly people suffering from touch deprivation).
- Improved immune function in HIV positive adults.

Jonas and Levin say massage therapy seems to affect all body systems. It facilities breathing, enhances digestion, lowers blood pressure, increases circulation, reduces stress hormones and improves immune function.

So what's the bottom line? Therapeutic massage is not a cure, but it can benefit your overall well being. Here are some tips for health-wise consumers:

- See your doctor for regular check-ups and to have serious illnesses ruled out.
- Ask if massage therapy might help your situation and if it might be harmful. If you have approval, ask for a referral to a qualified practitioner or clinic.
- If you have no referral, check out the practitioner's credentials. In Minnesota, a massage practitioner should be a certified massage therapist (CMT).
- Find out if your health insurance policy covers massage when it is part of your treatment plan (for example, as part of a physical therapy referral).
- If you are interested in using massage as preventive care, ask your health insurance company if it offers an optional "alternative medicine" policy that might include such care.
- Make a plan with your doctor for how many times you will be treated before you assess its effects. Trust your own experience. You should know after several treatments whether or not it is helping you.
- To document changes, keep a journal of your symptoms before starting therapy.
- Your doctor should receive progress updates from your therapist.

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- Massage therapists will take a physical and medical history, but they do not diagnose clients. Physicians diagnose and refer you for treatments.
- No matter what you do, never stop taking prescribed medications until you have talked it over with your doctor and gotten approval to do so.

Always check with your doctor before trying alternative therapies or changing medications. More information is available from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at www.nccam.nih.gov and the Mayo Clinic site at http://www.mayoclinic.com/search/searchresults.cfm

# # #

(Marilyn Adams Maiser is a regional health and nutrition educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Waconia)

Web, V2, V4, V7, H2 adams9172

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Sept. 17, 2002

Southeastern Minnesota farmers: don't even think of applying N in fall

It's an annual ritual that needs to change: Each fall during soybean harvest many southern Minnesota farmers plan to fall-apply nitrogen for next year's corn.

However, fall application of N is not recommended in the seven-county area (Dakota, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona) of southeastern Minnesota.

"If you farm in this seven-county area, don't even think about fall applying N unless you want to increase the risk of polluting your drinking water or decreasing profits," says Gyles Randall. Randall is a University of Minnesota soil scientist at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca

Randall says fall application of N produces a greater risk of nitrate leaching to the ground water in this Karst area because of high average annual precipitation and well-drained, permeable soils.

Research in Goodhue County has shown that 60 percent of the nitrate-N in the top five feet of the soil profile in mid-November was not found the following May, Randall says. And in Olmsted County studies, nitrate-N concentrations in the soil water at the five-foot depth after harvest were 50 to 70 percent greater with fall-applied N compared to spring applications.

With fall application, grain yields were not consistently affected, although Randall says in wetter years yields were seven to 10 bushels per acre lower,

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Recent research comparing spring applications of anhydrous ammonia, urea and UAN (28% urea-ammonium nitrate solution) in Olmsted County has not shown a consistent yield difference among these three N sources.

# # #

Web, A4, V2MN, P1, 19, 23, 24, 28, 55, 84, 90 randall9172

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Sept. 20, 2002

In a new farm economy, cooperation upstages competition, efficiency

By Richard A. Levins

In my beginning economics classes, we spend the first half of the semester studying perfect competition and free market economies. Then our text introduces the subject of "imperfect markets" by listing virtually every industry, from aluminum to software to chewing gum. A remarkable statement follows: only wheat farming "falls within our strict definition of perfect competition;" all others "fail the competitive test."

Inquisitive undergraduates often ask why, then, did we spend so much time studying a world that the text cannot find? What about the world that they will inherit? It's a good question, especially in light of the outrage over Enron, WorldCom and their kin. Employees sent packing by the thousands, billions of dollars tucked away in places not frequented by auditors, and pension plans up in smoke could not have been imagined by Adam Smith as he put his trust in an invisible hand over 200 years ago.

The question my students ask is also a good one for farmers to think about. Are our traditional approaches to risk management and staying profitable still relevant? I think so. But I also think that the years ahead will challenge us to consider market power more than we have in the past. We must think not only of how profits are made, but also of how they are distributed in the modern agricultural economy.

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Globalization and economic power

Today's farmer faces new challenges. One is globalization, and the other is a power shift away from farmers and owners to those who manage the global economy. Both can work to keep farm product prices low.

Almost 200 years ago economist David Ricardo provided an enduring story of how everyone can benefit from international trade. But today we have moved beyond international trade and into an age of pure globalization. Transnational corporations move capital across borders with ease, deciding today to make shirts in southeast Asia and tomorrow to make automobiles in Mexico.

This is no longer a story about countries acting in their mutual interests. Rather, it is one of multinational corporations searching the globe for cheap labor, for cheap farm products and for the least restrictive environmental and social regulations.

In the world of most economics texts, power is shared by a competitive market and a powerful government that regulates that market. But to be truly global, a corporation must be very large. That size gives the multinational corporation the power to compromise the authority of both government and competition.

Managers of very large corporations can bring far more cash to bear on the political process than any single farmer could imagine spending. As corporations become global, we also see threats to competition. It is often said that a free market economy is driven by personal self-interest, but regulated by competition. But as corporations approach the size of countries, there are so few players in the economic system that competition cannot exercise the control it once did.

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In the new economic order, farmers have increasingly depended on public subsidies. We are beginning to see that full participation in a global economy is at odds with a goal of maintaining wealth in the hands of farmers and landowners. The question is, "what do we do about it?"

Some new directions

Traditional farm management practices and government programs don't adequately address either globalization or the loss of economic power to global corporations. Rather, we try to make the best of bad situations and to seek the highest of relatively low prices. Failing that, we try to give farmers enough cash to compensate for the losses the new economy has brought them. The present structure of the agricultural economy challenges us to do more.

Farmers on one hand must deal with multinational firms to sell their products and buy many of their inputs. But farmers continue to identify themselves with one country or another, and to see salvation either in competition with their domestic farm neighbors or with farmers from other countries. This may have worked in the past, but it will not work in the future.

We must all work together to think of strategies that rely on global cooperation, not competition, to be successful in the global economy. Farmers must act together, not against each other, to build economic power to make the rules of the economic game more favorable.

Is it only a dream to imagine a global farmer network that builds economic power, rather than global competition that reduces that power? Perhaps so, but I am

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encouraged that my recent articles on collective action, and particularly collective bargaining, have found a wide audience among farmers.

Our current strategies for dealing with a 20th century farm economy took many years and many creative minds to forge. The search for effective strategies for the new century will likewise challenge us for years to come. I am confident that as we develop those strategies, we will not hear the words efficiency and competition as often. In their place, we will hear of cooperation, collective bargaining and of farmers reclaiming their market power.

(Richard A. Levins is an agricultural economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He can be reached at dlevins@apec.umn.edu or (612) 625-5238).

# # #

Adapted from a recent keynote address Levins gave at the "Risk and Profit 2002" conference in Manhattan, Ka. He has also written "An Essay on Farm Income," with more details on farmers building market power. It is available at no charge at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu or by calling the Waite Library at (612) 625-1705.

Web, V2, V4, A2, A4 levins9192

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People in small communities must cooperate to solve sewage problems

Everyone generates wastewater, but we don't usually talk about it around the dinner table or when we get together with friends. Most of us aren't very concerned about wastewater treatment until the problem hits home: bacteria in the drinking water, lakes turning green in summer or the smell of sewage on warm days.

Water is not "used up." When we're through with it, it becomes wastewater—commonly called sewage—that must be cleaned up before it's returned to the environment for reuse. In one way or another, all water is recycled.

Thousands of small communities face serious wastewater treatment challenges, says Ken Olson, an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service who specializes in on-site sewage treatment. Olson says when a community faces wastewater treatment issues, a successful outcome often depends more on the communication process the community follows than on the treatment technologies available.

"Finding the appropriate technical solutions to a community's wastewater problems is the easy part," Olson says. "Working together as a community is the challenge."

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To help small communities, Olson and co-workers have written two new publications. One is titled "A Quick Guide to Small Community Wastewater Treatment Decisions," which you can read on the Internet at www.bae.umn.edu/septic. The other is a more detailed, 140-page version called "Small Community Wastewater Solutions: A Guide to Making Treatment, Management and Financial Decisions."

Either publication can be purchased with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for item 07734 (Complete Guidebook) or 07735 (Quick Guide).

You can also find more information on wastewater treatment at www.septic.coafes.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V4, V5, C4, T2 olson9192

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 27, 2002

Horse hay quality impacted by weather, plant maturity when cut

Horse owners looking for hay this fall will find plenty of variation in the quality of this year's crop. Weather conditions caused a lot of problems for hay growers this year, says Maribel Fernandez, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"The stage of forage plants at cutting is the most important factor affecting the nutritional content of hay," says Fernandez. "Nutritional quality drops as forage plants mature. Grasses mature faster than legumes such as alfalfa and clover. Thus, the nutritional quality of grasses drops faster. If you are going to buy mature hay, it will be better the more legumes it has in it.

"Indicators of maturity include stem size and softness as well as the presence of seed heads or flowers. If you see plenty of mature grass seed heads when you open a bale, it will be low in nutrient content."

Much of this year's hay is from mature forage plants, says Fernandez. Fields were often too wet for producers to get in and cut hay, so plants kept on growing and maturing.

"Depending on the type of horses you want to feed, this may or may not be a problem," says Fernandez. "Animals with high nutrient requirements need to get more concentrated nutrients from hay. Alfalfa cut in the flower stage that has kept most of its leaves is still a very good option, as long as it's not moldy. Mature idle horses will actually be better off with more mature hay, even if it's a grass mix."

The other big factor affecting hay quality is the weather just before and during cutting, and also during drying and baling. "This is particularly important in the hay market this year," says Fernandez.

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Hay that received light rain right after cutting has lost some of its nutrients, says Fernandez. This hay can be used for animals with low nutrient requirements, such as idle adult horses that aren't pregnant or lactating.

Reject hay that feels damp, warm or steamy, says Fernandez. And be especially careful not to buy hay that's moldy. "Hay should smell sweet and not musty, dirty or moldy," she says. "Buy hay that has been in a well-protected shed or barn for at least two weeks. Before you load bales, open one or two and look and smell for mold. If hay is dry and not moldy, you can expect that it won't start molding at your place."

Fernandez says hay that has conditioners such as propionic acid or calcium carbonate is okay for horses, and those materials prevent mold. She also suggests spraying diluted molasses on hay once it's in the feeder if you need to make it more appealing to horses.

Leaves on forage plants make up 80 percent of the nutritional value of hay, according to Fernandez. Leaf retention is highest when handling and weathering are minimized.

"If you need to meet high nutritional requirements for your horse, the best strategy is to use a lab nutrient analysis of the hay," says Fernandez. "This is particularly important if you buy a truckload of hay to use throughout a period of time. It's a good idea to analyze each new load of forage, even if you always buy from the same farm. Ask for an equine test, since horses have different digestive systems than cattle, and use forages differently."

Forages in horse nutrition will be a topic at a Horse Care and Nutrition Fall Conference coming up Oct. 26 at Hugo, Minn. For more information about the topic or the conference, call Maribel Fernandez at the Wright County Extension Office at (763) 682-7394.

# # #

Web,V2,H6,Z3 fern0923

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 27, 2002

Applying fall nitrogen for corn too early is likely to be a costly mistake

Getting in a hurry to apply nitrogen for next year's corn crop is likely to be an expensive mistake. There's a high risk of losing nitrogen that's applied too early, says soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. And the risk is even higher in years such as this when soil moisture levels are high.

"Fall-applied nitrogen needs to stay in the ammonium form throughout the fall, winter and early spring," says Rehm. "Once it's converted to the nitrate form in the soil, the risk of loss through leaching or denitrification is substantial."

The key to preserving nitrogen in the ammonium form is to apply it after the soil temperature drops and stays below 50 degrees F, says Rehm.

"The key weather factor is not the date of the first 50-degree soil temperature," Rehm points out. "Soil temperature can easily move above and below 50 degrees for one or two weeks. Therefore, it's important to be aware of the average last date when the soil temperature is higher than 50.

"For most of central Minnesota, a constant soil temperature of 50 degrees or less doesn't occur until mid-October. This date extends until after Oct. 28 for a large part of southern Minnesota.

"Therefore, in order to keep loss of fall-applied nitrogen to a minimum, it's absolutely essential to delay fall applications until mid- to late October for much of

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Minnesota. This delay is especially important in years such as this when the moisture level in the root zone is high."

Rehm recommends following best management practices (BMPs) for nitrogen application. This means no fall nitrogen application in southeastern Minnesota or where soils are sandy.

A U of M Extension publication entitled "Best Management Practices for Nitrogen Use Statewide in Minnesota" has more details. It's on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC6125.html and includes a list of related publications on fertilizer management. Printed copies are also available for a nominal charge from county Extension offices in Minnesota. Ask for item FO-06125. Or, you can order a copy from the Extension Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900.

Some producers believe the way to make up for fall nitrogen loss is to increase the application rate. "This argument is flawed," says Rehm. "From an economic perspective, there's no justification for applying more than needed. Doing so adds to the cost of production while not increasing yields. This practice also increases the potential for nitrogen loss due to leaching, which negatively impacts environmental quality."

# # #

Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4MN rehm0925

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 27, 2002

Agronomist: Consider cutting alfalfa in October

Harvesting alfalfa in October is not a common practice in Minnesota. But it's likely to be profitable for some growers this year, according to Paul Peterson, forage agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Wet weather and tough harvest conditions made it difficult to put up high-quality hay and haylage in much of the state this summer," says Peterson. "Many livestock producers are short on high-quality forage."

Thanks to warm weather and ample rainfall in September, many alfalfa fields produced abundant growth, says Peterson.

Traditionally, producers have been reluctant to cut alfalfa in the fall because of concern about the stand surviving the winter. "Our increased understanding of genetic and management factors affecting winter survival enables us to now be much less conservative about fall cutting," says Peterson. "That's especially the case when we face the prospect of a shortage of high-quality forage and strong prices."

Peterson says October alfalfa harvest is worth considering if there is a foot or more of growth and several factors are in the "low risk" category. That means you have a modern, winter-hardy, multi-disease resistant alfalfa variety on a good alfalfa soil with adequate potassium.

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"Healthy, well-managed alfalfa plants are not very susceptible to winter injury when cut in the fall, especially if that cutting is close to the time of the first killing frost," says Peterson. "The risk is further reduced if stands have not been cut frequently earlier in the season. In other words, if the fall cut is only the third cutting of the season, the risk of winter injury is minimal."

Peterson says alfalfa stands typically begin to lose yield potential after their third year anyway. Thus, where high-quality forage is a priority, damage to stands more than three years old should generally not be a major consideration in the harvesting decision.

Wet soil, on the other hand, is a risk factor. Fields that are very wet going into the winter have a higher risk of winter injury if a fall cutting is taken, says Peterson.

"If you're of a conservative bent or in an area where snow tends to blow off fields with short stubble, you may want to leave strips of uncut alfalfa to help catch snow," he adds.

Getting hay dry enough to bale can be a challenge in the fall, notes Peterson. Using preservative or harvesting alfalfa as haylage are options. Grazing is another option, but precautions to prevent bloat are necessary.

# # #

Web,V2,D1MN,F4MN petr0927

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 27, 2002

Landscape plants benefit from fall watering, winter wind protection

Trees and shrubs that become too dry in the fall are less likely to survive the winter. It's important to water landscape plants thoroughly as we head into winter, according to Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Spruces, pines and other conifers can be dried out by harsh winter winds, especially if fall weather is dry," says Beckerman. "Symptoms show up the following spring, such as purple Colorado blue spruce or reddish brown white pines and red pines. But by that time, there is no way to 'cure' the problem."

While watering bigger plants , don't forget perennials sheltered under eaves or trees. "Hostas that aren't watered going into winter may not be back next spring," says Beckerman.

She also recommends protecting vulnerable trees from drying winter winds. You can install a simple windbreak or cover the trees with plastic "tree guards." "Anything that encourages snow accumulation, or heavy mulching in the absence of snow, will help protect plants against low temperatures and drying winds," she points out.

The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on plant and lawn care and gardening between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-

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4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bkrm0926

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

September 27, 2002

Fall garden clean-up can head off plant disease problems next spring

Turn it, burn it or bag it—but get rid of diseased plant debris from your garden this fall. That will help prevent disease problems next spring, according to Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Most disease organisms can survive the winter on garden debris if it's not properly destroyed," says Beckerman. "And the wet growing season made this a bad year for plant diseases. The abundant moisture incited normally minor diseases to epidemic levels and encouraged new diseases to develop."

Before beginning your garden clean-up, Beckerman suggests writing down notes on what did and didn't work during the past growing season. You can also write down which plants need to be divided in the spring and which need to be moved.

"Make notes about problems and research potential solutions over the winter," says Beckerman. "If your gardening consists of annuals and vegetables, evaluate which varieties did well and which you should consider replacing."

As soon as crops are harvested, pull up and dispose of all plant material, including roots, says Beckerman. After a hard freeze, remove and compost all disease-free, but frost-blackened, tender annuals. After weeds and plant debris have been removed, till and turn the soil to a depth of 6-8 inches.

"Tilling buries any remaining infested plant debris so that it can be consumed by soil microorganisms," says Beckerman. "You can encourage this process by adding

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compost to the soil. Compost introduces billions of microorganisms that are eager to eat plant pathogens. Compost also improves the soil structure and nutrient profile."

A word of caution—don't compost diseased plants. In Minnesota, compost rarely reaches the temperatures necessary to kill most plant pathogens, says Beckerman.

Rotating crops in the garden is a good strategy for managing soil-borne diseases, Beckerman points out. She suggests growing a diversity of crops and rotating their locations in the garden every few years. Rotate between families—for example, replace tomatoes with beans but not with potatoes, since potatoes and tomatoes belong to the same family.

"Remember to accurately identify which pests you have and what crops they attack," says Beckerman. "Ideally, rotate susceptible crops with non-susceptible ones. If that's not possible, you can use resistant varieties to minimize losses."

Answers to gardening, plant care and lawn care questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

# # #

Web, V2,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bcrm0925

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Oct. 1, 2002

Use common sense when dealing with head lice

"There's a lot of misinformation out there on how to deal with head lice," says Jeff Hahn, entomologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Hahn says anyone can become infested—the presence of head lice is not the result of unclean conditions.

Follow label directions carefully when using registered head lice treatments. Don't use dubious methods such as kerosene, pet shampoos or insecticides not recommended specifically for head lice treatment.

And don't over-apply any insecticide product, Hahn says. Repeated use of a shampoo or lotion in the hope that it will eliminate head lice won't improve its effectiveness. But it will put the child or adult at greater risk due to increased exposure to insecticides.

"It can be challenging to eliminate head lice," Hahn says. "You must be persistent and patient. Use caution regardless of the treatment method and always keep the individual's safety as a top priority."

Hahn has written a fact sheet on head lice. You can find it at www.extension.umn.edu, and then click on "living."

# # #

Web, V4, F3 hahn9262

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 1, 2002

Fall is not the time to prune fruit trees

One of the best things you can do for your fruit trees this fall is to leave their branches intact. Fall is not the time to prune fruit trees, says Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"In climates such as ours, pruning should be done in the spring just as the buds begin to swell," says Beckerman. "Freezing injury and dieback can occur if fruit trees are pruned in fall or early winter."

That doesn't mean fruit trees need no attention during the fall. Beckerman recommends removing fallen fruit and hanging, dried out and possibly diseased fruit that can serve as a source of disease next year.

Fruit trees are also likely to benefit from protection against mice, rabbits and deer. Beckerman recommends wrapping tree trunks up to the expected snow-line with hardware cloth that has quarter–inch openings. Be sure to remove the wrappings in the late spring to protect the stems and crowns of the trees as they continue to grow.

The University's Yard and Garden Clinic has experts to answer questions on plant and lawn care and gardening between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area. There is a $5 fee, which can be billed to a major credit card.

The clinic is one of the services available through Yard and Garden Line. Also available are free recorded messages 24 hours a day from Info-U. And at no charge, callers can request a return call from a Master Gardener volunteer in their county.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bkrm930

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 1, 2002

Protect rose bushes through winter by 'tipping' or 'mounding'

If you grow roses in Minnesota, it's a good idea to "tip" or "mound" your bushes this fall. Both approaches to providing winter protection for roses have their advocates. The important thing is to do one or the other, says Janna Beckerman, plant pathologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Shrub and rugosa roses don't require the additional attention. However, "if you grow the hybrid teas or floribunda groups of roses and fail to protect them, you probably won't have any roses when spring arrives next year," says Beckerman.

"Be sure to wear heavy gloves when tipping roses," she cautions. "Tipping should begin around mid-October. Make a trench extending out from the base of the bush, making sure the trench is deep enough to accommodate the plant. You can put more than one bush in a trench if you make it large enough.

"Next, tie the canes together, loosen the soil around the plant with a spading fork, and gently tip the bush into the trench. Then cover the plant with the remaining soil from the trench."

After the ground is frozen, Beckerman recommends covering the plant with a three- to five-inch layer of leaves. A week later, add a 12-inch layer of hay. In the spring, around April 1, reverse the process, raising the plants and replacing the soil around them.

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Mounding provides slightly less protection but is less labor intensive, says Beckerman. In mid-October, tie the canes together and mound the base of each rose bush with six to eight inches of soil. Place wire netting around the entire bed and fill with three feet of leaves, preferably oak. Cover the leaves with hay to prevent them from blowing away. Don't cover the leaves with any type of waterproof covering.

Remove the soil mound next spring around mid-April and water the plants thoroughly, says Beckerman.

Answers to gardening, plant care and lawn care questions are available from the U of M Yard and Garden Line. Call (612) 624-4771 in the metro area or (888) 624-4771 from outside the metro area.

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Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,G1 bckr929

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Oct. 1, 2002

Expansion in Minnesota grain processing requires new markets

More grain is being processed in Minnesota, and shipments to Mexico have increased substantially in the last five years, according to a new University of Minnesota study.

More soybeans are being processed in Minnesota, and that keeps more dollars in the state and adds jobs. But not all of the extra soybean meal used for livestock feed can be marketed in Minnesota. And that means out-of-state markets need to be developed, says Jerry Fruin, marketing specialist with the U of M Extension Service.

It's the same story with corn: new ethanol plants are creating more of the distilled dry grain solubles (DDGS) livestock feed product than can be used in Minnesota. "So that means we need to find new out-of-state markets for two feed products-- soybean meal and DDGS, " Fruin says.

Fruin and colleague Doug Tiffany have written a report titled "Where Does Minnesota's Grain Crop Go?" The paper analyzes their study of Minnesota elevator grain shipments for the period from July 1999 to June 2000.

They found about seven percent of the state's grain shipments went to Mexico. "This is a market that has developed since the signing of NAFTA and did not exist 10 years ago," their report says. Other highlights:

- Total value of Minnesota grain elevator shipments at 1999-2000 farm prices was $2.1 billion. In dollar figures, soybeans accounted for 1.109 billion, corn for $711 million and wheat 258 million. However, total farm value of Minnesota crops is substantially higher than $2.1 billion since much grain is fed or sold through channels other than elevators.
- Minneapolis and Mississippi River ports constituted the most important destination for all grains shipped from Minnesota country elevators, with 27.5

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percent of total shipments. This includes elevators in the Twin Cities rail switching areas, and river ports including Savage, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Red Wing and Winona. Most of this grain ultimately ends up in barge shipments to the Gulf of Mexico ports for exports.

- Shipments by rail to export ports in the Pacific Northwest were second largest with 17.8 percent of all shipments. Final destinations are primarily Pacific Rim countries such as Japan and Korea.
- Minnesota processors were the third largest destination with 17 percent. This includes flourmills and corn and soybean processing plants.
- Duluth-Superior received 10.7 percent of total county elevator shipments. Most grain is shipped out the St. Lawrence Seaway, either in oceangoing vessels or transferred to oceangoing ships in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Soybeans are now a major grain shipped from the Twin Ports, up from very low levels of 10 years ago.
- Mexico received seven percent. Shipments are generally in trains of 50 or more cars and go directly to processors or feedlots in Mexico.
- Other important destinations were Chicago and rail destinations beyond, Kansas City and destinations beyond, and southwest feed markets—all with from three to five percent of total shipments.

You can read the report at http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/mn/p02-09.pdf. For more detailed information, contact Jerry Fruin at (612) 625-8720, fruin001@umn.edu, or Doug Tiffany at (612) 625-6715, tiffa001@umn.edu.

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Web, A2, V2MN, V4MN, F4 fruin9242

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October 3, 2002

Don't be in a hurry to sign up for new Farm Program

Don't be in a hurry to sign up for the new Farm Program, says an economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Changes are still being made in the program, so patience is likely to be the best strategy in the short run," says Kevin Klair. "If you sign up early, you may not have access to all the pertinent information, and you could need to change your sign-up later."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a major change to the new Farm Program on Oct. 2 regarding the calculation for oilseed acres. The average oilseed acres planted from 1998 to 2001 will now simply be added to existing crop base acres. This will increase the eligible oilseed base for producers who raised 100 percent corn one year and 100 percent soybeans the following year. It may also increase the eligible oilseed base for producers of alfalfa and other non-program crops.

"This change will allow many producers to add more oilseed base acres than the original calculation allowed," says Klair. "Therefore, all producers should rerun the Farm Program software to determine their best sign-up option."

Unless you are short on cash flow and need the government payments immediately, waiting until November or December to sign up may be a good strategy, says Klair. "Waiting until the dust has settled and the program is more stable will save you time, and therefore, money," he adds.

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Klair says if you want to sign up for cash flow purposes, remember that you will only receive an additional two cents per bushel for corn and six cents per bushel for wheat over what has already been paid for 2002. Soybeans, however, do have a 44-cent payment upon sign-up. For those who do sign up, U.S.D.A. says payments should begin to arrive in late October.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,A4,A2MN,F4MN klair1003

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 7, 2002

Analyze options when choosing Farm Program base acreage

(First in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

By Fraser Norton, University of Minnesota Extension Service

The federal 2002 Farm Program provides landowners and producers a onetime opportunity to enroll. This enrollment will determine the level of payments they will receive from now until the end of the 2007 crop year. The owner or owners of a farm have until April 1, 2003 to elect an option that establishes the base acreage for the farm.

"Corn is king" in the new Farm Program, and you will want to choose the option that gives you the most corn base acres. Corn acres pay the best, followed by wheat, soybeans, barley and oats, in that order. Corn will pay about two and one-half times as much as soybeans. You will also want to keep any wheat base you might have. However, you will generally want to replace barley base and always replace oats base with eligible soybean acres.

The five options are:

--Option 1: Retain the current 2002 Production Flexibility Contract (PFC) acreage with no oilseed additions. This option can be used by farms that currently have a 100 percent corn and/or wheat base, or in cases where the 1998-2001 planting history is such that payments are not increased.

--Option 2: Retain the 2002 PFC acreage and add eligible oilseed acres up to the level that will require no offsetting of current PFC base. This option fits farms that currently have a good corn or wheat base with no barley or oats base acres. The oilseeds can be used to "top up" the base acres.

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--Option 3: Retain the 2002 PFC acreage and add eligible oilseed acres to the extent that the maximum PFC acres are offset. This option will be appropriate for farms that currently have a reasonable corn or wheat base and have a 1998-2001 planting history that will allow replacing barley or oats base acres with oilseeds without reducing the better-paying corn or wheat base acres.

--Option 4: Update all base acres to the 1998-2001 planted history of covered commodities. This is the only option that allows owners to update their existing program yields to their proven yield history from 1998 to 2001. It's important to remember that updated yields will only apply to the countercyclical payments, because direct payment will always utilize the existing PFC yields. This option will also be useful for farms that don't currently have a good corn and/or wheat base.

--Option 5: Retain the 2002 PFC acreage and add eligible oilseed acres to the extent that the additional oilseed acres will be somewhere between the minimum and maximum allowed in Option 2 and Option 3, respectively. This option is appropriate for farms that currently have a good corn or wheat base, but that also have barley or oats base that could be replaced by oilseeds.

Each farm is unique. Running the data for each farm through the Base and Yield Update Option Analyzer at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/farmbill/tools.asp is a sound strategy when choosing an option.

For complete details about the new Farm Program, contact your county Farm Service Agency office. For help in your decision-making, contact your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

(Fraser Norton is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Luverne, Minn.)

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,A4 nort1001

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Oct. 7, 2002

Fall nitrogen applications in southern Minnesota are risky

Applying nitrogen in the fall in southern Minnesota means risks for both the farmer and the fertilizer dealer.

The primary risks are agronomic, economic and environmental, says Gyles Randall, a University of Minnesota soil scientist at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca.

"Fall application of N has become more risky in recent years due to increasingly warm fall temperatures and greater rainfall," Randall says. For the farmer, fall application of N means increased risk of yield and profit loss and greater potential for nitrate loss to ground and surface waters.

On the other hand, Randall says fall application is generally advantageous from a logistical perspective because of time and labor advantages to both the dealer and farmer. In addition, in fall there are more favorable soil conditions with less compaction compared to spring, and fewer storage issues for the dealer.

Agronomic, economic and environmental risk potential decreases with later application dates, Randall says, but there are still risks when N is fall-applied even at soil temps below 50 degrees F.

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Based on-long term data from Waseca and Lamberton, Oct. 29 is the average date when soil temps at the six-inch depth stay below 50 degrees until spring. At Morris, this date is Oct. 15.

In plots at Waseca, anhydrous ammonia (AA) applied on Oct. 31, 2001 when soil temperature at the six-inch depth was 46 degrees yielded 185 bushels per acre, whereas AA applied April 17, 2002 yielded 200 bushels per acre.

The 16-year yield averages for late October applications of anhydrous ammonia at Waseca are 147 bushels per acre when N-Serve was not used, 155 bushels per acre when N-Serve was used, and 158 bushels per acre when AA was spring preplant applied without N-Serve.

"These data support the use of N-Serve when fall-applying AA in south central Minnesota," Randall says. "If farmers are to fall-apply N, anhydrous ammonia is the product of choice in south-central Minnesota while urea is also suitable for western Minnesota. Broadcast and deep-band applications of urea late in the fall have performed poorly compared to AA in numerous studies at Waseca."

No fall applications of N are recommended in Dakota, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties due to the permeable nature of the soils and high annual rainfall.

# # #

Web, A4, V2MN, P1, 19, 23, 24, 28, 55, 84, 90 randall1042

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Oct. 9, 2002

Take advantage of parent-teacher conferences

Parent-teacher conferences following mid-term grades are a good opportunity for parents to find out how their children are doing and what they can do to help.

"Perfect" report cards are great, but many of them have both good and not-so-good news. If your child falls in the latter category, begin with a positive attitude, says Joan Sprain, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Stillwater

Don't punish or demean the child, since this only reinforces poor self-esteem and underachieving behavior. Set high, yet realistic goals. For example, a "C" grade could be cause for celebration if the subject was challenging but your child tried hard.

The "All Parents are Teachers" program that Sprain helps coordinate cites some research results that can help your work with the students in your family:

--Self-esteem and school performance improve when parents and teachers give verbal support, praise children's efforts and let them know they care about them.

--Talking with children about schoolwork and school functions has a strong relationship with student achievement.

--Similarly, parents who are involved in meaningful and ongoing ways with their children's schooling (both at school and at home) enhance student achievement.

More information is available at http://www.parenting.umn.edu/apat/ .

# # #

Web, V2, V4, C1, F1

sprain1072

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 11, 2002

Get your trees ready for winter

Abundant rainfall in much of Minnesota means many homeowners can forego watering their trees this fall.

However, soil conditions are dry in southwestern Minnesota and trees in that area should be watered, says Gary Johnson, urban forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Late fall tree care tips include watering (if needed), mulching and wrapping the trunks of young trees with burlap or plastic cloth. Wrapping can help protect trees from animals, an errant snowblower thrust or temperature damage (sun scald or frost cankers).

Wrapping should be loose enough to allow air between the wrapping and tree trunk. And don't leave wrapping on for more than a year—it invites insect and disease problems.

You can find more details on tree care on the U of M Forest Resources Extension home page at www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension. In addition to the website, you can also contact the Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020 or by e-mail at extfor@forestry.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1 johnston1082

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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October 11, 2002

Hog market will be topic at Oct. 22 swine research update in New Ulm

This fall's hog market and a look at what's ahead will be the subject of a swine research update Oct. 22 in New Ulm. The event will be from 3-5:30 p.m. at Turner Hall, Second Street South and State Street in New Ulm. The University of Minnesota Swine Center, the U of M Extension Service and the Minnesota Pork Producers Association are sponsors.

The event is designed for pork producers, swine veterinarians and allied industry representatives. The featured speaker will be Brian Buhr, U of M Extension economist. His topic will be "Surviving This Fall's Prices and Planning for the Future."

Pre-registration for the event is not required. However, to help facilitate preparations, those planning to attend are encouraged to contact Lynn Leary at (612) 624-2719 or leary001@umn.edu.

# # #

Web,V2MN,S2MN,08,X5 swan1011

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 11, 2002

Warm grain temperatures encourage insect growth in stored grain

By Bill Wilcke and Colleen Cannon, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Insects are most likely to show up in stored grain when the weather is warm and the grain has been held over from the previous year. Grain temperature is the main factor in the development of stored grain insects. When grain temperature is between 60 and 90 degrees F, insects grow and reproduce rapidly. Insects develop slowly or not at all when grain temperature is kept below 60. In the upper Midwest, it's fairly easy to aerate grain to keep it below 60 degrees in fall and winter, but it's a challenge during the summer.

Other factors that can contribute to stored grain insect problems are:

--Insect populations in or near the bin when the new crop is added. Some stored grain insects don't fly very well or very far. Often, many of the insects that enter new crop grain come from the old grain and dust in the grain storage and handling facility.

--Broken grain kernels and other fine material in the grain. Fine material is a problem because some insect species can only feed on broken kernels, and because fine material tends to accumulate in concentrated areas that are difficult to aerate.

--Moldy grain in the bin. Some insects actually feed on mold. Also, mold growth produces hot spots that attract insects.

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The best strategies for managing insects include:

--Cleaning bins and handling equipment thoroughly before harvest to remove the old grain, grain residue and dust that can be the source of insect infestation.

--Cleaning grain before storage to remove broken kernels and other fines. If this isn't feasible, fill bins in a way that minimizes concentration of fines under the bin fill spout. This may mean using grain spreaders to distribute fines, moving the fill spout frequently during bin filling, or withdrawing some grain from the bin through the center unloading sump during bin filling to remove fines that accumulate in the center of the bin.

--Aerating grain as needed during cool weather to keep grain temperature at 20-30 degrees F during winter months and 50 degrees F or less at other times.

Several insecticides are registered for treatment of empty bins and some are registered for use on stored grain. Before using insecticides, though, compare the cost for insecticide treatment with other insect management options, and make sure potential buyers will accept grain that has been treated with an insecticide.

If you find insects in stored grain in late summer and want to sell it or keep it through the winter, you might consider running it through a grain cleaner. This can remove broken kernels and some of the insects, reduce insect populations and improve grain storability. It won't remove all the insects, but it may reduce populations enough to allow sale of the grain, or at least buy some time for other insect management options.

If average outdoor temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees, fumigating grain is an option. However, it should only serve as a last resort. Grain fumigation is

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costly, and the chemicals are potentially hazardous to humans. Also, because fumigation provides no residual protection against insects, it is only a temporary control measure. If the insect problem is due to grain that's warm or moldy or contains fines, insect populations will rebuild soon after the fumigant dissipates.

Most insects go dormant at around 40 degrees F, and many will die if the grain temperature stays low for an extended period of time. The lower the temperature, the faster insects die. Therefore, running aeration fans is an effective insect control strategy when the weather is below 60 degrees at least part of the day. If necessary, run aeration fans only at night to cool the grain to around 40 degrees during the fall. If the grain will be stored through the winter, aerate it again as the weather gets colder to reduce grain temperature even more.

If grain is cooled to well under 30 degrees F, it may be a good idea to aerate again in late winter to bring it back up to 30 to 40 degrees. This is to avoid excessive temperature differences between the inside and outside of the bin during warm spring weather.

The time required to cool a bin of grain depends on the airflow per bushel the fan can provide. A rough estimate of the number of hours a fan needs to run to cool a bin of grain can be found by dividing the number 15 by the airflow delivered by the fan, expressed in cubic feet per minute per bushel of grain in the bin (15 divided by cfm/bu).

Many storage bins have fans that can provide 0.1 cfm/bu, which means that about 150 hours (15 divided by 0.1) of fan operation is necessary to completely cool the

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grain. Long-term weather records for southern Minnesota show that, on average, there are about 100 hours when the outdoor temperature is below 60 degrees F during August. There are 150 hours when the temperature is below 50 degrees F in September, 200 hours when the temperature is below 40 degrees in October, and 350 hours when the temperature is below 30 degrees in November. This information can be useful for deciding what fan size might be appropriate for a desired aeration management strategy. It can also indicate what grain temperatures may be achievable with an existing fan.

For more information about managing stored grain and selecting fans, go to the U of M Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department's postharvest website at www.bae.umn.edu/extens/postharvest. You can also get more information from Bill Wilcke at (612) 625-8205 or Colleen Cannon at (612) 625-4798.

(Bill Wilcke is a U of M Extension engineer and Colleen Cannon is a U of M Extension entomologist).

# # #

Web,V2,A4,F4MN wilc1007

Sources: Bill Wilcke, (612) 625-8205; Colleen Cannon, (612) 625-4798
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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October 15, 2002

Should you try transplanting that tree or shrub?

It's a good time to transplant trees or shrubs in the fall when leaves are falling. But is it worth the hassle and chance of transplant failure when it's easier to just buy a new tree or shrub?

"That's a good question," says Gary Johnson, urban forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Johnson says you may want to transplant if the plant has sentimental value, historical significance, is a unique species or a beautiful specimen.

But transplanting isn't a good idea if the tree or shrub is in bad shape, unhealthy or unshapely. A new site isn't the answer.

It's important to note the difference between transplanting and planting, Johnson says. With transplanting, the majority of the tree or shrub's original root system is cut off during the process. But when you plant, theoretically no roots are lost.

"Autumn, especially through mid-autumn, is an excellent time to transplant many trees and shrubs in Minnesota because the roots are growing aggressively," Johnson says. He says spring is also an excellent time for transplanting, especially if it can be done between ground thaw and leaf emergence.

Smaller trees and shrubs transplant more successfully. They're younger and recover from the transplant shock faster and easier. In addition, Johnson says there's a

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better chance that you'll be able to transplant a larger percentage of the roots if the plant is smaller.

If you have a tree that's just too big to move, several Minnesota companies specialize in transplanting large trees and shrubs. But Johnson says they're busy, and it would be smart to contact them at least one season—spring or autumn— before you want to transplant.

On a longer-term basis, you can improve chances of a successful transplant by building up the health of the plant first. If you're planning on moving the plant in spring, start with the health program the preceding autumn or summer.

Fertilize if the plant is nutrient-stressed, and don't allow it to be water stressed (keep the soil uniformly moist). Control any insect pests or diseases and prune out any dead wood or weakly attached branches. Mulching will lessen the need for constant watering and keep the soil warmer into late autumn (for best root growth).

Also, root-prune the plant at lease one season before the move. Root-pruning woody plants encourages a more compact and dense root system.

More details on transplanting, including root pruning, which species do best when transplanted in spring or fall, and a list of companies that transplant large trees and shrubs is available in a more detailed article that Johnson wrote. You can find it at www.extension.umn.edu, and then click on "Yard and Garden Line News."

# # #

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 15, 2002

Hunters can take steps at home to keep food safe, prevent disease

Hunters bringing home wild game to put on the table can take positive steps to keep the meat and other food safe and prevent disease. Bill Schafer, food scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, lists the following general disease prevention steps:

--Wear gloves and protective clothing when field dressing game and working with carcasses.

--Avoid cross-contamination. Don't let ready-to-eat foods touch fresh meat or be contaminated by unwashed equipment or surfaces that have been in contact with fresh meat.

--Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling fresh meat.

--Do not consume the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes from deer. Use boneless cuts of deer meat.

-- Cook meat to recommended temperatures: ground meat—160 degrees F; steaks and roasts--145 degrees F, except bear—160 degrees F; game birds, breast—170 degrees F, whole—180 degrees F, stuffing 165 degrees F.

--Pre-cook meat to 160 degrees F before making jerky.

--Freeze raw or cooked game meats in food-use freezer bags for long-term storage.

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--Use a researched method with a pressure canner to can game meats. A University of Minnesota Info-U article on "Canning Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Wild Game" is at http://www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/nutrition/BJ626.html.

Other websites with information on wild game and food safety are at: http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FNTR2/MF2176.PDF , http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FNTR2/MF2177.PDF , and http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/jerky.htm.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,F7,H8 scha1015

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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 15, 2002

Safe field dressing of deer reduces disease risk, enhances meat quality

Deer hunters hope to bring home safe and wholesome venison while avoiding exposure to diseases such as chronic wasting disease and more importantly, those caused by "bad" bacteria. Safe field dressing is a key to achieving these goals, says food scientist Bill Schafer of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"It's important to field dress deer as soon as possible to ensure rapid loss of body heat, slow growth of potential disease-causing bacteria and maintain overall meat quality," says Schafer.

Schafer has these recommendations for safe field dressing of deer:

--Do not harvest or handle any deer that appears to be sick or very thin.

--Wear heavy rubber or latex gloves while handling animals and field dressing.

-- Use a plastic tablecloth to prevent meat from coming in direct contact with the ground.

-- Use knives and equipment dedicated to field dressing. Clean frequently between cuts to prevent bacterial contamination. Use clean water, pre-moistened wipes or alcohol wipes.

- Do not cut into gut or intestines. These contain the potentially "bad" bacteria. Cut off and discard any meat that comes in contact with the contents of intestines.

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--Avoid cutting through the spinal column and other bones, if possible. Remove the deer head last if it's to be saved.

--Stop and report to a local conservation officer if you find unusual or abnormal growths or lesions in the intestines.

--Rapidly chill the carcass by inserting ice packs or clean milk jugs full of ice into the body cavity and tying the cavity shut with string. If ice is not available, allow adequate cool air circulation into the cavity and keep the carcass out of direct sunlight.

--When you arrive at home or camp, refrigerate the carcass below 40 degrees as soon as possible. This helps prevent spoilage and maintain meat quality.

-- Wash hands and equipment well.

--Soak cleaned utensils in a 50/50 mix of chlorine bleach and water at 70 degrees F for one hour. Then rinse with water.

Further information on safe field dressing of deer is available on the Internet at http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/uk100.html and http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FNTR2/MF2176.PDF . A publication on chronic wasting disease can be reached from http://www.extension.umn.edu/living.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,F7,H8 scha1014

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 15, 2002

Updating yields for new Farm Program requires production evidence

(Second in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

By Gary Hachfeld, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Landowners enrolling in the new federal Farm Program have an opportunity to update farm crop yields with the Farm Service Agency. The updated yields apply to the counter-cyclical payment portion of the program under Base Option 4 only. Production evidence is necessary to update yields and verify number of bushels, pounds or hundredweight produced.

For production that is sold, stored or disposed of commercially off the farm, evidence must show the producer's name, commodity, buyer or storing facility, transaction or delivery date and quantity. The production can be substantiated through LDP records, CCC loan records, warehouse receipts, warehouse ledgers, warehouse load summaries, settlement sheets, scale tickets or weight slips. The production evidence should be accompanied by other evidence such as a sales document or computer-generated document that's from a licensed warehouse and shows the required information.

Production used for seed may be considered acceptable if both of the following apply: 1) The producer certifies in writing that the commodity was used for planting, the seeding rate, and the number of acres planted. 2) The local FSA Committee determines that : a) the quantity used for seed is reasonable; b) the evidence is satisfactory and represents the applicable farm; c) it is customary in the area to use farm-grown seed to produce that specific crop.

Acceptable proof that production was used on the farm as livestock feed will be limited to existing FSA records or crop insurance records. Evidence can include records on file with FSA of measurement by FSA or a crop insurance representative, or

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producer LDP. If measurements were made but records were not filed to indicate the grain was to be fed, the information is acceptable only if other production records dated after the measurement date are not submitted.

If the producer filed records with FSA or their crop insurance representative showing the grain was to be used as feed but no measurement was done or no LDP taken, the local FSA committee can assign a yield using three similar farms. Without records or measurements, the producer will be assigned 75 percent of a county average yield.

For fed hay or silage, production evidence will include 1) LDP records; 2) crop insurance records including loss adjustment or appraisal records; or 3) the assigned yield by the local FSA office and committee.

The local FSA committee will review the production evidence and determine if information submitted is reasonable. The landowner must be able to provide actual production evidence any time during the six-year Farm Program period.

For complete details about the new Farm Program, contact your county Farm Service Agency office. For help in your decision-making, contact your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

(Gary Hachfeld is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at St. Peter, Minn.)

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,A4 hach1001

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 15, 2002

Lamb, wool producer conference at Rochester will be Dec. 6-7

Marketing lamb to ethnic communities and ewe productivity will be among the topics at an upcoming sheep producers conference in Rochester. The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers annual conference will be Dec. 6-7 at the Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester.

The conference is for experienced shepherds and beginning sheep enthusiasts. It has educational presentations designed for commercial producers, seedstock producers and hand-spinners of wool. It also includes a trade show with equipment vendors and crafts.

Conference topics will include how the 2002 Farm Program affects shepherds, coccidiosis and pneumonia in lambs, designing a breeding program, preventing abortions, scrapie, tail docking and ewe productivity. There will also be sessions on marketing options, marketing lamb to ethnic communities, and cooking with lamb. There will be a producer panel on seasonal lambing, a panel on wool, a University of Minnesota sheep research update and an "ask the vet" session.

Among the speakers will be Bill Head and Jonathan Wheaton of the University of Minnesota, Mike Caskey and Dale Carter of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program, Dave Thomas of the University of Wisconsin, veterinarians Larry Goelz and Holly Neaton, and producer John Essame.

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Conference activities include a fleece competition, wine and cheese social, banquet and auction, door prize drawings and a Silver Bell luncheon. There will be a youth program Dec. 7 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Conference registration information is on the Internet. Go to http://www.mlwp.org and click on the "conference" link at the bottom of the page. Room reservations at the hotel should be made by Nov. 14 by calling (866) 597-9330. Additional information on the conference program is available from Jeremy Geske at (651) 463-7704 or geske002@umn.edu.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,S1,X6,55 gesk1001

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 18, 2002

Minnesota farmer is contender for national award

Carmen Fernholz, a farmer from Madison, Minn., is a contender for a new national prize, the Patrick Madden Award for Sustainable Agriculture. The $1,000 award by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program will be presented Oct. 26 in Raleigh, N.C.

SARE is funded and administered by USDA's Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), according to Bill Wilcke, coordinator for SARE's North Central Region. SARE advances farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities, says Wilcke, who's also an engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Fernholz has perfected a profitable, environmentally sound grain production system on his 410-acre farm. He began farming in 1972 on 80 acres of marginal cropland. Over the decades, he increased his acreage to 410, and improved the soil with terracing, contour farming, controlled drainage and tree plantings. Today, he raises organic grain crops (barley, oats, wheat, flax, corn, soybeans and alfalfa) and about 1,000 hogs annually. He devotes 53 acres to prairie restoration, including permanent wetlands and nesting areas.

When faced with choices to stay profitable, such as getter bigger, Fernholz chose to trim inputs, change to organic crop farming and revamp his marketing strategies.

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' en if you don't sell as 'certified organic,' you generally have significantly fewer dollars expended to produce a crop," Fernholz said. "You enhance the profit potential that way. And if there is a premium, you're that much farther ahead."

Fernholz spearheaded an effort to bring a collective bargaining and marketing agency for organic producers (OFARM) to Minnesota and the upper Midwest. It provides seven farmer cooperatives representing more than 1,000 family farmers the means to gain a fair price for their products.

"The OFARM organization is an example of Carmen's commitment to agriculture as a whole, not only the land he farms," said Helene Murray, executive director of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), which Fernholz helped found.

Fernholz was one of the first holders of the U of M School of Agriculture Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems, which is managed by MISA on behalf of the College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Fernholz is one of six finalists for the Madden Award, named for SARE's first director, Patrick Madden, a pioneer in the movement toward a strong, independent agriculture for all growers. The award recognizes a stellar producer who has explored ways to make farming more profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities and who has served as an effective educator.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, A4, F4, P1, S2, 37 fernholz10172

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 18, 2002

U of M study looks at Farm Bill impact on cash rental rates

(Third in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

The new federal Farm Bill will not generate windfall profits for agricultural producers, according to a University of Minnesota financial analysis. And the Farm Bill will not generate profits to support substantially higher cash rental rates, the same analysis indicates.

Dale Nordquist, associate director of the U of M Center for Farm Financial Management, and Gary Hachfeld, regional Extension educator at St. Peter, conducted the study. To assess the impact of the Farm Bill on cash rents, they used historic crop yield and expense information from a cross-section of southern Minnesota farms. They coupled this with expected government program receipts. Then they projected per-acre crop income and expenses and the amount left to pay cash rent.

Some of Nordquist and Hachfeld's conclusions are:

--The average southern Minnesota producer can break even at $97 per acre cash rent if yields and expenses remain constant with 1998-2001 averages. This is almost exactly equal to the actual average cash rent in southern Minnesota over that period.

--The Farm Bill does effectively protect from down-side price risk.

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--Corn base is generally worth slightly more than soybean base when bidding on rental land.

--The percentage of the whole acreage covered by program base is a key factor in rental value.

The analysis by Nordquist and Hachfeld is limited to southern Minnesota. However, the factors they studied also affect other regions. "Renters need to carefully weigh the income potential of rental land, including government program payments, when bidding on rental properties," they write in a report on their study. "Landowners need to understand the provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill and involve themselves in the sign-up decisions. These decisions will impact the value of their land and the ability to garner rent well into the future."

The report on the study is on the Internet for viewing or downloading at http://www.cffm.umn.edu/Pubs/cashrent2002.pdf. It's entitled "Cash Rental Rates and the 2002 Farm Bill." For more information on the study, contact Nordquist at (612) 625-6760 or dnord@umn.edu, or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360 or hachf002@umn.edu.

For complete details about the new Farm Program, contact your county Farm Service Agency office. For help in your decision-making, contact your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A2,A4 nord1017

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 18, 2002

Little CWD risk for deer hunters, especially if safety steps are followed

Chronic wasting disease has not been found so far in wild deer in Minnesota. And there's no scientific evidence the disease can be transmitted to humans, says food scientist Bill Schafer of the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Center for Animal Health and Food Safety. However, says Schafer, it's always a good idea for hunters to use sound food safety procedures to protect themselves.

Chronic wasting disease is a fatal brain disease of deer and elk. It's caused by an abnormally shaped protein called a prion.

"Prions have never been found in muscle meat, even in infected deer," says Schafer. "There is no evidence CWD can be transmitted to humans. The World Health Organization made this conclusion after reviewing available scientific information. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has found no evidence that prion-related disease in humans occurs more often in hunters and consumers of wild game than in the general populations. No disease in people has been found after 16 years of monitoring affected areas in Colorado."

Schafer says it's also unlikely that CWD or a similar prion-disease would spread to foxes, wolves or birds that might feed on deer. And there are no reported cases of natural transmission of CWD to livestock.

Nevertheless, sound safety procedures are always in order to prevent any possible exposure to CWD and other diseases, says Schafer. He cites steps hunters can take to protect themselves:

--Do not harvest, handle or consume any wild animals that appear to be sick or very thin.

--Wear heavy rubber or latex gloves when dressing carcasses.

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--Use knives and equipment dedicated to field dressing.

--Remove loins as boneless cuts. Do not split the backbone.

--Minimize handling of brain and spinal tissues. Don't saw or cut through the spine or skull, or else remove the head last.

--Do not consume the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen or lymph nodes from deer and elk.

--Wash hands and equipment thoroughly.

"The CWD risk to Minnesota hunters is extremely small, if there is any," says Schafer, "especially if the protection recommendations are followed."

If interested, hunters can have their deer tested for CWD. This is separate from the DNR state sampling plan. After a deer is registered, hunters may take a deer or deer head for sampling to one of the 98 participating veterinary clinics in Minnesota. A list of these is available on the DNR website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mammals/deer/cwd.html. Contact the clinic listed in your area to determine the fee charged for this service. Samples collected will be sent by the clinic to the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for testing. Hunters will be notified of results by mail. Time to receive results will depend on the backlog of samples submitted.

A University of Minnesota Extension Service website has a publication with frequently asked questions (and their answers) on chronic wasting disease. The publication can be reached from http://www.extension.umn.edu/living. Printed copies are available from county Extension offices throughout Minnesota.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,F7,H8 scha1018

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 22, 2002

U of M land rental decision software incorporates Farm Bill provisions

The latest upgrade to the University of Minnesota's FairRent software can help farmers incorporate 2002 Farm Bill provisions into land rental decisions.

FairRent was developed by the U of M Center for Farm Financial Management. It's designed to help producers enter into the maze of considerations that make up a land rental decision and exit with a well thought-out plan.

"There is little doubt that the 2002 Farm Bill complicated the thought process for land rental decisions," says Kevin Klair, U of M farm management economist. "Both producers and landowners are asking whether the Farm Bill justifies higher land rents. To answer this question, you must be able to determine direct payments and factor in loan deficiency and counter-cyclical payment thresholds."

The latest FairRent version incorporates the 2002 Farm Bill into the land rental analysis. "The user will need to supply the Farm Service Agency base acres and yields for government crops, as well as local loan rates," says Klair. "FairRent will take it from there. You will be able to determine how the Farm Bill impacts land rental decisions for both cash and share rent."

The software includes sensitivity tables that look at what can happen when prices and yields don't meet or exceed expectations. These tables will incorporate loan

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deficiency payments and counter-cyclical payments at lower price levels for a more accurate analysis. The software output also includes a new page that provides a complete summary of projected government payments, broken down per acre and for the parcel as a whole.

The price of FairRent is $95. For more information, write the Center for Farm Financial Management, 130 Classroom Office Building, 1994 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, call (800) 234-1111 or go to http://www.cffm.umn.edu on the Internet.

# # #

Web,V2,A2,A4,F4 nord1021

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 25, 2002

Software on U of M website can help with Farm Program decisions

(Fourth in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

By Tim Arlt, University of Minnesota Extension Service

When you're ready to decide on your farm's base and yield options for the new federal Farm Program, computer software on a University of Minnesota Extension Service website can help. The "Base and Yield Options Analyzer" (BYA) is at http://www.extension.umn.edu/farmbill.

The BYA is the official U.S. Department of Agriculture online software to help farmers and landowners decide which participation option is best for their situation. Texas A & M University developed the software.

Once you have plugged your numbers into the BYA and obtained a report, go to Table 1 of the report. This is the "No Risk Analysis" table. It has three columns and five options, with three yield choices under Option 4. The middle column shows the direct payments for each option if prices are high and you receive no counter-cyclical payments. This is the minimum payment you will receive under the 2002 Farm Program. The right-hand column shows the direct and counter-cyclical payments if prices are low. This is the maximum you can receive.

By comparing the two columns, you can see the effects of updating base and yields. This should help you decide whether or not you want to update.

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Whether to base your decision on direct payments or counter-cyclical payments depends on your outlook for prices over the next six years. If you expect high prices, so you won't receive much in counter-cyclical payments, you may want to put more emphasis on direct payments. On the other hand, if you expect low prices, resulting in large counter-cyclical payments, then you may want to give more weight to total payments. The BYA report doesn't decide this for you, but gives you some data to help you decide.

The next three tables of the BYA report provide specific information on the bases and yields for each of the options in Table 1. Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 show all the data you entered so that you can check for mistakes and make corrections. Table 9 uses price information from the input form to show the breakdown of payments over the six years for each of the options. Don't spend a lot of time on this table, but note that some of the options will pay out more than others. This table is dependent on the price information you entered and will reflect payments based on your predictions. Entering low prices will force the maximum counter-cyclical payments and give you an idea of the maximum you will be paid over this time period.

For complete details about the new Farm Program, contact your county Farm Service Agency office. For help in your decision-making and running the computer software, contact your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

(Tim Arlt is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Owatonna, Minn.)

# # #

Web, V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,A4 arlt1018

Source: Tim Arlt, (507) 444-7689
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 25, 2002

Now is a good time to prune oak trees

Pruning oak trees is one of those things you don't want to put off until next spring. Every year, oak wilt kills large numbers of oak trees in Minnesota.

Late fall and winter—from November through March—is the safest time to prune oak trees to avoid oak wilt disease. And now is also a good time to prune most other trees, according to forestry specialists with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. You can find more information on oak wilt, pruning and other tree care tips at http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension.

For details on oak wilt, see the U of M Extension Service publication titled "Oak Wilt in Minnesota." It's also available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. And for a nominal charge, you can order it by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for item 03174.

Another publication from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service gives you even more details. It's called "How to Identify, Prevent and Control Oak Wilt." You can find it at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/oakwilt/index.htm.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V8, G1 oakwilt10242

Source: Forest Resources Extension, (612) 624-3020, treeinfo@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 25, 2002

It works better to help people change instead of forcing change

If you want to help people change—say your spouse or children—use the "carrot" instead of "stick" approach.

"Don't try to make people change," says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Instead, get people involved, provide support and try to help them control the change.

"People don't resist change—what they resist is being changed," Danes says. The change that's part of everyday, normal life is called "normative" change. On the other hand, "non-normative" change is unexpected and is often referred to as a crisis.

There are two basic ways we respond to change, Danes says. The "reactive" response views change as a loss. People respond, adapt, adjust and eventually conform.

But with the "proactive" approach, we view change as opportunity. We assume change will help us thrive. We plan for change, integrate it into our daily lives and embrace it.

Take an example of two people who both get a pink slip at work. Person A with the reactive approach views it as a loss—both initially and while trying to adapt, adjust and conform.

Person B who takes the proactive approach will initially see the job loss as indeed a loss. But person B quickly starts making plans—for things such as a different job,

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different lifestyle or possibly a home-based business to take advantage of the opportunity.

In a family, business or organization setting there will be pressure to keep the status quo since people don't want to be changed. On the other hand, Danes says those who passionately want to change are often impatient for it to begin.

"Disagreement and conflict in the change process is normal and inevitable," Danes says. "Change often means three steps forward and one backward as we progress."

More information on change, opportunity and resilience is available on the "Rural Minnesota Life" website at www.ruralmn.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F1, F2, F3 danes10242

Source: Sharon Danes (612) 625-9273, sdanes@umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 29, 2002

Phosphorus boosts soybean yields in 2002 NW Minnesota study

Applying 90 pounds of phosphate fertilizer per acre boosted soybean yields five and one-half bushels per acre in a 2002 University of Minnesota study on a farm near Crookston. Russ Severson, U of M regional Extension educator at Crookston, conducted the study.

Previous research on phosphorus fertilization for soybeans in northwest Minnesota had not shown a positive yield response. However, new soybean varieties with higher yield potentials have been developed for the region over the past ten years.

The 2002 study took place at the Ron Peterson farm northeast of Crookston. The soil was a Ulen loamy fine sand with an Olsen phosphorus level of seven parts per million. Rates of 0, 15, 30, 45, 60, 75 and 90 pounds of phosphate fertilizer were applied prior to planting. The soybean cultivar Legend 009 was seeded in 22-inch rows.

"Soybean yields increased from 37.6 bushels per acre with no added phosphorus to 43.1 bushels per acre with the addition of 90 pounds of phosphate," Severson reports. "Protein concentration increased from 31.8 percent with no added phosphorus to 33.8 percent with the addition of 90 pounds of phosphate."

Severson says additional trials are needed on other varieties and soil test levels to confirm the need for phosphorus fertilization to increase soybean yields and protein levels.

# # #

Web,V2,F4MN,Z1 sevr1028

Source: Russ Severson, (218) 281-8695
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

October 29, 2002

Washing garden produce helps reduce chances of lead contamination

"Always wash vegetables" is good, common sense food safety advice. And it will minimize health risks from soils that may be contaminated with lead.

At high concentrations, lead is potentially toxic, says Carl Rosen, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Rosen has written a publication called "Lead in the Home Garden and Urban Soil Environment" that tells you how to minimize health risks from soils contaminated with lead.

There are two major sources of lead contamination, Rosen says. The first is lead-based paint when paint chips from old buildings mix with the soil; the second is from auto emissions.

Lead in paint and gasoline isn't used much anymore. "But once lead has been deposited in the soil, it moves very little and can persist for a long time," Rosen says. "Lead contamination of soils from lead-based paint and from auto emissions continues to be a concern."

Plants don't take up much lead through their roots, so there's more of a potential problem from "external" lead on unwashed garden produce than from actual uptake by the plant. "This is especially true for root crops such as carrots," Rosen says.

Higher concentrations of lead are likely to be found in leafy plant parts (such as lettuce) compared to fruity parts (tomatoes or beans). If your garden is close to busy

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streets or highways, remove outer leaves of leafy crops, peel all root crops and thoroughly wash the remaining produce in water containing vinegar or soap.

There are also some precautions you can take to minimize absorption of lead by plants. They include maintaining soil pH above 6.5 percent, adding organic matter and locating your garden as far away from busy streets and older buildings as possible.

It's important to prevent young children from eating soil that's contaminated with lead, since they absorb about five times more lead in their intestines than adults do. Covering bare soil with sod or other materials will suffice.

You can have your soil tested for lead if you suspect high levels of lead. The U of M Soil Testing Laboratory is one of several Minnesota labs equipped for analyzing soils for lead content. Call (612) 625-3101 for more information on lead testing.

If the soil tests higher than 100 ppm, children under the age of six should have a blood lead test. You can find more details in Rosen's publication at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG2543.html.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F7 rosen10252

Source: Carl Rosen (612) 624-7711, rosen006@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

Nov. 1, 2002

Shirley Anderson-Porisch receives Extension Service award

Shirley Anderson-Porisch, a regional educator in southwestern Minnesota with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, has received a top award from that organization. Anderson-Porisch, Marshall, Minn., received the Dean and Director's Award to Distinguished Field Faculty at a recent statewide meeting in St. Cloud.

Anderson-Porisch has been a faculty member with the U of M Extension Service for over 27 years. She was recognized for her "wide-ranging, innovative programs in family living, gambling education and financial management that have helped hundreds of people in southwestern Minnesota change their lives." She was lauded for "getting things done" and for her leadership in teamwork.

She has been an Extension educator in Lyon County since 1973. She has also been a cluster program leader for six counties in southwestern Minnesota since 1993 and was the acting statewide leader for home economics programs in the late 1980s.

Anderson-Porisch graduated from high school in Elk Point, S.D. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in home economics education from South Dakota State University, Brookings.

# # #

Web, V2MN, A4, F2, F3, Z6 And-Porisch
Source: Shirley Anderson-Porisch (507) 537-6702, ander308@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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Nov. 1, 2002

Shoreland education team receives top award from U of M Extension

A shoreland education team has received the Dean and Director's Distinguished Extension Team Award from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The award was presented at a statewide meeting in St. Cloud in late October.

The eight-person team tackled a statewide problem that has been growing since the 1960s—deterioration of Minnesota's shorelands bordering lakes and rivers.

The team organized educational efforts to reach shoreland owners, recreational lake users and other groups such as realtors, contractors, landscapers and local government authorities. They developed a "Shoreland Design" curriculum and trained a network of lakeshore residents to become shoreland volunteers.

The team also developed a statewide education plan, produced a website and CD, and set up demonstration sites. The team was recognized for reaching thousands of citizens and volunteers with critical water quality information. Almost 100,000 square feet of shoreland was revegetated to protect water quality, improve habitat and decrease runoff and erosion.

Team members included Extension educators Mary Blickenderfer, North Central Research and Outreach Center, Grand Rapids; Eleanor Burkett, Cass County; Cindy

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Hagley, Minnesota Sea Grant program, Duluth; and Barb Liukkonen, U of M Water Resources Center in St. Paul.

Other team members were Julie Klocker, former Extension educator in Sherburne County now with the Sauk River Watershed District; Terri Port-Wright, Master Gardener in Carlton County; and Ron Struss, metropolitan watershed education coordinator with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, T1, T2 shoreaward

Source: Gwen Gmeinder (612) 625-6795, g-gmei@umn.edu
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November 1, 2002

Minnesota Cattle Feeder Days set at Morris, Slayton, Ormsby, Rochester

Risk management will be a main topic at the 2002 Minnesota Cattle Feeder Days scheduled at four locations in December. The events will be Dec. 10 at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris, Dec. 11 at Legends Grill in Slayton, Dec. 12 at the Town House Restaurant in Ormsby and also Dec. 12 at the Elks Club in Rochester. The events at Morris, Slayton and Ormsby will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the program at Rochester will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Topics and speakers will be:

--Strategies to enhance risk management in the current beef cycle, John Lawrence, economist, Iowa State University Beef Industry Center;

--Feedlot facilities design and management, Dave Kesteloot, nutrition consultant, Hubbard Feeds;

--Grain processing in beef cattle diets, Galen Erickson, feedlot nutritionist, University of Nebraska (Morris and Slayton only);

--Implant strategies for dairy and beef steers, Hugh Chester-Jones, animal scientist, University of Minnesota;

--Results and implications of the National Fed Beef Quality Audit, Deb Roeber, Extension pre-harvest beef management specialist, University of Minnesota;

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--University of Minnesota research updates, Alfredo DiCostanzo, beef cattle scientist, University of Minnesota (Morris, Slayton and Ormsby only).

--The registration fee is $25 per person. Further information and registration details are available through the contact person for each site. They are Kirby Hettver at Morris, phone (320) 589-7423; Philip Berg at Slayton and Ormsby, phone (507) 825-6715; and Steve Drazkowski at Rochester, phone (651) 565-2662. The Minnesota Cattle Feeder Days website is at http://www.ansci.umn.edu/beef/cattlefeeder/2002cfd.html.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,B1,X1,45,51,55,80,88 cttlfd02

Source: Alfredo DiCostanzo, (612) 624-1272
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 5, 2002

Soil nitrogen test may show opportunity to save money on fertilizer

You may be able to save money on nitrogen fertilizer for next year's corn crop by collecting a soil sample this fall and having it tested for nitrogen. The soil nitrogen test works well in southwestern, western and northwestern Minnesota, according to soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Most crop producers are reporting excellent yields for the 2002 growing season," says Rehm. "Environmental conditions that produce good yields are also favorable for mineralization of soil organic matter. This mineralization can release significant amounts of nitrate nitrogen into the soil."

Rehm says nitrogen is very transient in soils and quantities measured are highly affected by environmental conditions. "There is no reason to expect that measured nitrate-nitrogen levels following soybeans will remain constant over time," he points out.

For intended crops other than sugarbeets, Rehm recommends sampling soil from the top six inches and from six to 24 inches. If sugarbeets are planned for next year, collect soil from depths of zero to six, six to 24 and 24 to 48 inches.

"If nitrate-nitrogen values are higher than expected you can reduce nitrogen fertilizer rates and lower costs without reducing yields," he says.

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Rehm has written an article with further details entitled "Soil Nitrate: Fall 2002." It's on the Internet at

http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases/mncn100.htm.

A U of M Extension Service publication on soil nitrogen testing is entitled "A Soil Nitrogen Test Option for N Recommendations with Corn." It's on the internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC6514.html. Printed copies are also available for a nominal charge from county Extension offices in Minnesota. Ask for item FO-06514. Or, you can order a copy from the Extension Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900.

# # #

Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4MN,Z1,Z6,Z7 rehm1031

Source: George Rehm, (612) 625-6210
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November. 5, 2002

Many rural residents face tremendous changes

Change—both "normal" and unexpected--is a fact of life for all of us. "Change is all around us, but we're seeing tremendous changes in rural areas," says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Many rural residents face major changes in their communities, businesses, schools and churches. "The challenge is to manage change and view it as an opportunity instead of a danger to be avoided," Danes says. She says it's critical to develop five characteristics to enhance your resilience or energy level as you deal with change. These include being positive, focused, flexible, organized and proactive:

--Positive people develop the ability to view life as challenging, dynamic and filled with opportunities. Danes says they appreciate the dangers and threats in change, but aren't overwhelmed by them.

--Focused people determine where they're headed and stick to that goal so that barriers along the way don't become overwhelming.

--Being flexible means being open to different options when faced with uncertainty. Flexible people recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses and know when to accept internal or external limits.

--Organized people develop structured approaches to managing ambiguity. They set priorities and recognize when to ask others for help.

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--Resilient people are proactive, Danes says. They work with change rather than defend against it and draw important lessons from change-related experiences.

"But there are some things that we always see with change," Danes says. "There is always pressure to keep things the way they are. When people make a change in their personal or work life, others will question and sometimes challenge that change."

"This behavior is normal and you should expect it," Danes says. "People naturally feel more comfortable when things remain the same."

More information on change, opportunity and resilience is available on the "Rural Minnesota Life" website at www.ruralmn.umn.edu. You can also go to www.extension.umn.edu/family and find a publication that Danes has written titled "Change: Loss, Opportunity and Resilience."

The publication is also available from county offices of the University of Minnesota extension Service. Or, for a nominal charge. you can order one by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for publication number 07421.

# # #

Web, V2, V4, F1, F2, F3 danes10282

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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November 8, 2002

Minneapolis mayor will speak at Nov. 14 River Summit

Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak will give the keynote address at the Second Annual River Summit on Thursday, Nov. 14, at 9 a.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Over 200 volunteer stream monitors, natural resource professionals and policy-makers from around the Twin Cities metropolitan region will attend, says Kevin Proescholdt of the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. Proescholdt says participants will learn about the health of metro area streams and celebrate the region's rivers.

Other speakers at the event include KARE-11 TV personality Belinda Jensen, who will emcee the event; Hastings High School graduate Adam Hoffman, who will describe his monitoring experiences during his high school years; singer/songwriter John Kruth from New York, who will share his music at the event; and environmental scientist Casandra Champion of the Metropolitan Council, who works professionally in stream monitoring.

Participants will also attend one of several break-out sessions, where they will have an opportunity to learn in more detail about rivers in specific watersheds. Each break-out session will report back to the entire group in the final session of the River Summit.

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The River Summit is sponsored annually by the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Partnership (VSMP), a program of the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center. VSMP supports and coordinates volunteer stream monitoring throughout the metropolitan area. Nearly 1,900 volunteers participate in VSMP's network of stream monitors, working through county programs such as those run by the Hennepin Conservation District or the Dakota County Environmental Education Program.

Stream monitors adopt a specific site at which to monitor, and return to that site at least twice a year to take additional measurements. Some types of monitoring measure water chemistry factors, while others focus on biological factors.

Many of VSMP's volunteers conduct biological monitoring. They collect and identify the macroinvertebrates found at monitoring sites, since these organisms have different tolerances to pollution. The type and distribution of macroinvertebrates found at each site can therefore provide good indicators of water quality and stream health.

The River Summit runs from 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center, 1301 Second Ave. South, in downtown Minneapolis.

The U of M Extension Service Water Quality Program is part of the Water Resources Center. Check www.extension.umn.edu/water for more information on water quality programs.

# # #

Web, V7, C4, T2 watersum

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 12, 2002

Editors: A digital photo of Donna Rae Scheffert is available by e-mail. Call (612) 625-3168 or e-mail jk@umn.edu to request a digital photo.

Donna Rae Scheffert receives top faculty award from U of M Extension

Donna Rae Scheffert of Northfield, leadership development specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, recently received a top award from that organization. Scheffert received the 2002 Distinguished Extension Campus Faculty Award at a conference in St. Cloud.

Scheffert, who joined the U of M Extension faculty in 1981, was cited for consistently providing outstanding contributions to Extension programs on campus and across the state.

As a member of a team on facilitating group and public issues, she has helped design, teach and evaluate a volunteer facilitator program with direct teaching to more than 450 people. She has coached others as they facilitate groups and has co-published a curriculum series of eight units on this topic.

She has also designed, taught and evaluated a 12-hour workshop on enhancing ethical leadership. She has taught this workshop to more than 500 people at numerous locations in Minnesota and other states and countries. The curriculum is based on affirming and building shared values of respect, honesty, caring, responsibility, citizenship and justice/fairness.

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She is the originator and a design team member for the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts statewide leadership program. She has planned, taught and evaluated this program with eight two-day sessions on topics such as visionary leadership; ethics, economics and the environment; communication and conflict; and contextual leadership.

She has taught graduate courses in group process facilitation skills, leadership assessments, strategies for teaching adults, leadership for the common good and adult education ethics.

She was also cited for her ability to develop educational processes that honor diverse viewpoints, respect various learning styles and fully engage learners.

Scheffert began her career with Extension as an educator in Dodge County in 1981. She received a B.S. degree in home economics education from Mankato State University in 1981 and an M.S. degree in continuing studies from Mankato State in 1987. She is nearing completion of a Ph.D. degree in adult development and education at the University of Minnesota.

# # #

Web,V2MN,A4,E1,69 schef1104

Source: Gwen Gmeinder, (612) 625-6795
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 15, 2002

Thanksgiving: many people won't set an abundant table

While Thanksgiving Day tempts some of us to eat too much, many world citizens have the opposite problem. And the next 20 to 30 years will be a severe test of whether world food demands can be met—especially in poor countries.

"Scientific and technical efforts must increase if growth in food production is to keep pace with population growth," says Vernon W. Ruttan, Regents Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota.

"The most difficult challenges will occur during the next two or three decades," Ruttan says. After that, the world's population growth rate is expected to slow substantially by 2050. Still, world food demand could double in the next 50 years, Ruttan says.

"Both population and income in many of the world's poorest countries will continue to grow rapidly," Ruttan says in an article published in the fall, 2002 issue of "Journal of Economic Perspectives."

Thus far, technical advances and productivity growth in rural areas have lowered poverty rates, Ruttan says. Productivity growth has also released resources to the rest of the world economy and contributed to lower food prices in both rural and urban areas.

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Declining food prices have buoyed the buying power of wages in many countries, Ruttan says, and "this has helped reduce industrial development costs in some emerging economies."

"In the 1950s it was not difficult to anticipate sources of increased agricultural production over the next several decades," says Ruttan, who published a paper on that topic in 1956. "Advances in crop production would come from increased irrigation, improved fertilizer and crop protection chemicals and new crop varieties. Advances in animal production would come from improved genetics and animal nutrition."

"But it's much harder to anticipate the next 50 years. The ratio of grain to straw is already high in many crops and there are severe physiological limits to increasing it more," Ruttan says. "There are also physiological constraints to increasing the efficiency with which animal feed produces animal products."

"In areas with the highest levels of agricultural production—western Europe, North America and east Asia—the constraints are already here. Yield increases from incremental fertilizer application are falling, and reductions in labor input from larger machinery are declining as well."

Agricultural research in high-producing countries is yielding diminishing returns, Ruttan says. The "easier" productivity gains have already been made. And he's skeptical that advances in molecular biology and genetic engineering, while powerful, will solve the problem.

Applications of genetic engineering in developed countries will be slowed by concerns about possible environmental and health impacts. "One effect of these

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concerns has been to shift biotechnology research away from agriculture to industrial and pharmaceutical applications," Ruttan says. "And this shift will delay biotechnology-related agricultural development in less developed countries."

What's needed, Ruttan says, is stronger agricultural research programs. "The erosion of agricultural research capacity in the international system will have to be reversed," Ruttan says. "Capacity in the developed countries will have to be at least maintained, and it must be strengthened in developing countries. Agricultural, environmental and health researchers must also work together more closely."

Institutional innovation in governments, universities and research centers is the key to meeting world food demands in the next half-century. "And it won't be easy," Ruttan says. "The design of institutions capable of achieving compatibility among individual, organizational and social objectives remains an art rather than a science."

"Institutional design is like driving down a four-lane highway looking out the rear-view mirror," he says. "We are better at making course corrections when we start to run off the highway than at using foresight to navigate the transition to sustainable growth in agricultural output and productivity."

# # #

Web, V2, V4, V5, V7, A2, P1 ruttan862

Source: Vernon W. Ruttan (612) 625-4701, vruttan@umn.edu
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November 15, 2002

Survey shows south central Minnesota farmland cash rents to hold steady

Farmland cash rental rates for 2003 in south central Minnesota appear to be steady to up slightly compared with actual 2002 rates. That's the indication from a 10-county survey by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The survey represents over 2,600 responses from landlords and farm operators in the ten counties.

"Most counties showed an increase of one percent or less in expected rental rates for 2003 compared with 2002," says Kent Thiesse, regional Extension educator at Mankato.

Counties included in the survey are Blue Earth, Carver, Faribault, Le Sueur, McCleod, Nicollet, Renville, Scott, Sibley and Waseca. Over 330,000 acres of tillable farmland are under cash rental agreements represented in the survey results. There was enough data from several of the counties to break the rental trends down to the township level.

"The results of this annual survey are meant to indicate trends in land rental rates and not to fix or set rates," Thiesse points out.

In 2002, the highest average rental rates the survey found in the region were $111.45 per acre in Nicollet County, $109.59 per acre in Faribault county and $109.39 per acre in Waseca County. Rates for individual farms in the region ranged from $50 to $160 per acre.

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Thiesse says land quality, available drainage and local demand for land are big factors that determine local rental rates. In Blue Earth County, for example, well-tiled land rents for an average of $6.00 per acre higher than the county average of $105.23 per acre. Land with very poor drainage is discounted $10-15 per acre. Some higher rental rates may also include the use of facilities owned by the landlord, such as grain bins or machinery storage.

Results from the survey are included in an annual "Land Rental Survey Booklet." The booklet contains projected 2003 rental rates for the ten counties and actual rates paid in 2002. It also has rental trend data for flexible leases, share rental arrangements, rental agreements with family members, and information on the impact of tile drainage on rental rates. It contains historical land rental trend data, a cash rent worksheet for 2002, a list of factors influencing cash rental rates, sample rental contracts, flexible lease agreements and information sheets on government farm programs. Information on property tax adjustments, agricultural drainage and building rentals is also included.

A free copy of the 2002-2003 "Land Rental Survey Booklet is on the Blue Earth County Extension Service website at http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/blueearth/. A printed copy of the booklet is available from the Extension office in any of the ten counties surveyed for $3 per copy. The booklet is available by mail for $5 per copy. For more information, call (507) 389-8325.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2,A4,F4MN thie1114

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Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 22, 2002

Game bird hunters can take steps to reduce risk of disease exposure

Hunters of wild turkeys, ducks and other game birds can take steps to reduce the risk of exposure to potential disease agents, including the West Nile virus. Bill Schafer, food scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, recommends the following precautions when hunting game birds:

--Apply insect repellent to your clothing and skin if mosquitoes are still active.

--Wear latex, rubber or plastic gloves when handling and cleaning birds.

--Prevent exposing your skin to blood from the birds.

--Avoid cutting yourself while dressing birds.

--Wash your hands and equipment after handling and processing birds.

Schafer also recommends cooking meat from game birds to an internal temperature of 180 degrees F. This temperature will kill potentially harmful "Salmonella" and "Campylobacter" bacteria that are sometimes carried in the intestines of game birds. These bacteria can cause intestinal infections, diarrhea and possible long-term complications in humans who eat food contaminated by the bacteria. Cooking to 180 degrees F also kills the West Nile virus in the meat of any bird that might be infected with the disease.

Schafer says the most common way to become infected with West Nile virus is to be bitten by a mosquito that's carrying the disease. Most people who become infected

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with West Nile virus either show no symptoms or experience mild illness before recovering. Those getting the mild illness may have fever, headache and body aches.

The disease at its most serious can cause permanent neurological damage and death. Fatal cases are more likely in people age 50 or older.

West Nile virus was found in Minnesota in July with the discovery of two infected crows, one each in Hennepin and Crow Wing counties. The first case in the U.S. was found in New York in 1999.

Further information about West Nile virus is available on the Internet at http://www.ncpmc.org/NewsAlerts/westnilevirus.html, http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/dpc/ades/wnv/wnv.htm and http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/wnupdate.htm.

# # #

Web, V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,F7,H8 scha1118

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 22, 2002

New publication outlines agricultural drainage issues

Agricultural drainage—both surface drainage and tiling—has increased crop yields on poorly drained soils.

Artificially drained soils are some of the world's most productive soils and are important for food security, says Gary Sands, water resources engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Large areas of Minnesota and other states would be too wet and unreliable for crop production if artificial drainage systems hadn't been installed.

But the environmental impacts of drainage on the hydrology of watersheds, water quality of the receiving water bodies, and the amount and quality of nearby wetlands have raised questions. A new publication from the U of M Extension Service, "Agricultural Drainage: Issues and Answers," delves into the details.

The publication was written by Lowell Busman, a water quality educator at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca, and Sands. "This is the latest publication in the Extension Service agricultural drainage publication series," Sands says. It was printed with funds from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Agriculture Development Division.

Mark Dittrich, a planner with MDA, says it's important for the agricultural sector to strike a balance between the needs of the farming community and our environmental

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responsibilities. The publication shares basic agricultural drainage information to help us work towards a common goal, Dittrich says.

You can look at the publication at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7740.html on the Internet. Or, call (800) 876-4900 to purchase a copy. Ask for number 07740.

If you're interested in more resources on drainage, check "The Drainage Outlet" at http://d-outlet.coafes.umn.edu. It's a U of M Extension Service website on artificial drainage that was also developed in part with funds from the MDA Agricultural Development Division.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F4 sands992

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 26, 2002

Remember food safety when processing or preserving wild game meat

Food safety needs to be a main focus when processing or preserving meat from wild game. LouAnn Jopp, regional educator at Buffalo with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, cites three key aspects of food safety.

"Wash your hands before, during and after handling food," says Jopp. "Use liquid or clean bar soap and rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds, then rinse and dry."

Preventing cross contamination between foods is another important safety practice. "Bacteria that can cause sickness can be spread from one food to another," says Jopp. "They can be easily spread from raw meat and poultry juices to other foods that are not cooked or are ready to eat. Knives, saws, cutting boards and plates that come in contact with raw meat should not come in contact with other uncooked or ready-to-eat food. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item."

Temperature is a third key aspect of food safety. Jopp says when meat from wild game is refrigerated, the temperature in the refrigerator needs to be 40 degrees F or lower. If the meat goes into the freezer, the freezer temperature should be 0 degrees F or lower for best quality and longer storage life.

"Temperatures in the range from 40 to 140 degrees F pose a danger for foods that need to be refrigerated," says Jopp. "This range obviously includes room temperature.

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Cooked food should be considered unsafe if it has been out at room temperature for two hours or more."

Game meat needs to be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F or higher to be safe for consumption, Jopp adds.

If you plan to preserve game meat by canning, you need to use a pressure canner. To prevent botulism, low-acid foods such as meat need to reach a temperature of 240 to 250 degrees F for a designated amount of time, Jopp points out. A boiling water bath only reaches 210 degrees at Minnesota's altitude.

If you are freezing game meat, use only food-grade containers. Properly stored venison should keep safely for 9-12 months in the freezer, says Jopp.

If you want to preserve meat by drying, such as for jerky, you need to cook the meat to 160 degrees F either before or after drying it in a dehydrator.

The U of M Extension Service has a publication entitled "Safe Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats." It's on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/nutrition/DJ0516.html#CONTENTS . Printed copies are also available for a nominal charge from county Extension offices in Minnesota. Ask for item BU-00516. Or, you can order a copy from the Extension Distribution Center at (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900.

A website with links to an abundance of food safety information for consumers is at http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/fsgadvic.html.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V6MN,V9MN,F7,H2,H8 jopp1121

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

November 26, 2002

Good operator-landlord relationship can bring Farm Program benefits

(Fifth in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

By Paul Carr, University of Minnesota Extension Service

A good relationship between a farm operator who rents land and the landowner is likely to be beneficial when implementing the provisions of the 2002 federal Farm Program. A good relationship with previous operators can also be beneficial.

The Farm Program provides that all landowners must make the base and yield decision for their individual farms unless they have signed a new power of attorney form. For many landowners, though, this may simply involve agreeing to and signing off on the base and yield decision that their tenant has chosen.

In many cases the farm operator and landlord have a good relationship and a stable rental arrangement. When this is the case the farm operator may simply do all the work preparing production evidence and working through the software to arrive at the best base and yield decision for both the operator and the landlord. Renters and landlords may choose to go this way because the 2002 Farm Program is very complicated, and even more so for landlords not usually involved in yearly production and government program decisions.

It's worth remembering that the base and yield decision that provides the most income for the operator also makes the land more valuable, thus benefiting the landlord.

Farm operators who plan to do all the work concerning the base and yield sign-up may choose to tell their landlords to simply hold on to the two letters the landlords receive from the Farm Service Agency. These include the planted acreage history report and the base and yield options letter. In such cases the landlord does not have do to anything with the letters now. The operator can then prepare for sign-up and explain to the landowner, if applicable, why one option was chosen over another when the

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landowner signs off on the base and yield decision. This way the landowner doesn't have to make a trip to the FSA office.

Some operators and landlords who have either purchased land or rented additional land since 1998 may find obtaining production evidence of any kind to be very difficult. Where there has been a change in the operator who is farming the land, the previous operator may be unwilling to provide any evidence. In such situations it will be necessary to use a "plug" yield—the county average yield multiplied by .75.

Not having production evidence may lead to the operator and possibly the landlord losing money that would have been available with production evidence. For example, if a farmer had an average soybean yield of 45 bushels per acre and the county average yield was 45 bushels per acre, a farmer with production evidence would get a direct payment yield of about 35 bushels per acre. The same farm without production evidence would receive a direct payment yield of about 26 bushels per acre.

The level of involvement each landowner will want to exercise will depend on his or her individual preference. Operators and landlords who have maintained good relationships between themselves and with previous operators will benefit more from this Farm Program than those who haven't.

University of Minnesota Extension staff are available to help either landlords or operators run base and yield analyzer software.

For complete details about the new Farm Program, contact your county Farm Service Agency office. For help in your decision-making, contact your county office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

(Paul Carr is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Blue Earth, Minn.)

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,A4 carr1125

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 3, 2002

Livestock: boon or bane for rural Minnesota?

The following commentary is from Jim Salfer, regional educator at St. Cloud with the University of Minnesota Extension Service:

Livestock have been a part of farming and a human food source since cave dwellers started domesticating wild animals for food. Today, however, some folks see livestock as an environmental problem and large livestock operations as a threat to the social structure of rural Minnesota. Conversely, supporters cite livestock as rural Minnesota's best value-added industry and an important source of jobs.

Arguments among rural residents in favor of or against livestock often become heated and emotional. Following is a discussion of some of the basic issues and some perspectives from relevant research.

--Livestock manure and water pollution. Many people believe that livestock around our lakes and rivers increase the risk of pollution. But research shows the opposite to be true. University of Nebraska scientists summarized all of the research across the country examining the effects of manure application on nutrient runoff and soil loss. There were 16 trials, including four from Minnesota. These trials showed that nutrient runoff was reduced from 2-62 percent and soil loss was reduced from 15-65 percent by the application of manure. The research also showed that runoff and soil losses declined as manure application rates increased.

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The research indicates that if manure is handled properly it reduces the risk of water pollution. The scientists believe this is because the manure improves the organic matter content and physical property of the soil.

--Livestock odor. There is obviously odor associated with livestock. However, with the newer manure-hauling equipment and incorporation of manure into the soil, the strong odor is usually limited to times when pumping and hauling are going on.

Some people believe it is their right to live in a rural agricultural area without the smell of livestock next door. While this may be true, a case could also be made that livestock producers have the right to make decisions that allow them to reach their personal and business goals. This may mean expanding their business. And farmers who can't stay in the livestock business may be able to sell to land or housing developers.

--Diversified land use and erosion protection. Livestock, especially those that graze, tend to increase crop diversity. When cows leave a farm it generally becomes a cash crop farm producing mostly corn and soybeans, regardless of the slope of the land. The land mix is no longer likely to include small grains, alfalfa and pasture. Without these soil covers, heavy rains can cause large gullies and extensive soil erosion that reduces water quality in lakes and streams.

--Economic development. Livestock increase local economic activity. University of Minnesota research has shown that dairy producers tend to buy more of their inputs and personal items closer to home than non-livestock producers do. Every 1000 dairy cows generate about $2.83 million in cash flow. Farm business management records

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show that the typical central Minnesota farm family spends over $327,000 annually, with most of that spent in the local community.

--Livestock numbers and land area for manure. The amount of land needed for manure application is sometimes cited as a concern. In 1997 we did a comprehensive evaluation of the mix of crops, animal numbers and the nutrient requirements of crops. Stearns County has by far the most livestock of any Minnesota county. However, the evaluation showed all the manure in Stearns County only provides about 28 pounds of nitrogen per acre of land in crops that use nitrogen (corn, potatoes, oats, etc.). Typically, crops need 100-150 pounds of nitrogen per acre for good yields. Thus, all of the manure can potentially provide only about 20 percent of the nitrogen needed by the crops. The numbers are similar for counties surrounding Stearns County.

--Co-existence of a large human population with livestock. Lancaster County, Pa. has about 470,000 people and a population density of 496 people per square mile. Stearns County, Minn. has about 133,000 people and a population density of 106 people per square mile. Both counties have high livestock numbers. Data from the two counties shows that livestock and people can live and thrive together.

# # #

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,A4,B1,D1,S2 salf1120

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 3, 2002

Conflict resolution easier when families spend quality time together

Families that spend pleasant, quality time together find it easier to resolve problems and conflicts. Conflicts in all walks of life are inevitable, and families aren't exempt, say educators with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

They've developed a list of 10 guidelines for handling family conflict:

1. Don't fight to win—there are no winners when you do. "You're fighting to solve the problem, not to win," say educators Diane Damerow and Sandra Syverson. Be willing to negotiate or give in when necessary.
2. Listen carefully to what the other person has to say. Everyone has a point of view and should have the chance to talk about it.
3. Be sure you understand exactly what the problem is. If you're not sure why you're having a conflict, by all means discuss it.
4. Take care of a problem as soon as it comes up—before it becomes too big to handle. Even if the problem seems small, it will only get bigger if you don't deal with it.
5. Talk about only one conflict at a time; avoid bringing up old problems.
6. Don't blame others for problems you're having with someone else. For example, if you're mad at your brother, don't yell at your best friend. You need to talk to your brother and tell him what's bothering you.

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7. Think before you speak. If you say mean or sarcastic things to family or friends, you may be hurting them—even if you were only teasing. Phrase your thoughts in a constructive way so they help, not hurt.
8. Never strike another person to get your way. Physical violence or abuse such as hitting, punching, kicking or slapping is never acceptable
9. You may want to try writing down your feelings. If the person you're having the conflict with won't discuss the problem—or if you're not comfortable talking about it—write a letter. You can decide later whether you want to mail or give it to the person.
10. And when the fight is over, drop it. Forgive and forget—don't keep bringing up the fight or hold on to your anger once an argument is over. And that's true even if the dispute wasn't resolved the way you wanted it to be.

You can find more details in the "Building Family Strengths" publication. You can read part of it at www.extension.umn.edu/family. Copies of the publication are available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service, or may be purchased with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item 07265.

# # #

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F1 damrow11222

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 3, 2002

Minnesota Dairy Days set at eight locations in January

The dairy cow of the future, robotic milking and cow health will be topics at Minnesota Dairy Days at eight locations in January. The University of Minnesota is offering the events, which are designed for producers and others interested in dairying. The program will be similar at each site.

Registration at each location will open at 9:30 a.m. The program will begin at 10 a.m. with a University of Minnesota research update. Then there will be a session on keys to success in dairying, including people considerations and cow considerations. Speakers at the various locations will be U of M regional Extension educators Lee Gross, Chuck Schwartau, Vern Oraskovich and Jim Salfer, and U of M Extension dairy scientists Marcia Endres and Jim Linn. Mike Hodgman, a veterinarian with Monsanto Dairy Business of St. Louis, Mo., will wrap up the session with a presentation on cow health.

There will be three presentations in the afternoon: lowering somatic cell counts by U of M Extension animal scientist Jeff Reneau; designing the cow of the future by U of M animal scientist Les Hansen; and an overview of robotic milking by Endres or Salfer.

A question-and-answer session will wrap up the day, with adjournment scheduled for 3 p.m.

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The Dairy Days registration fee is $25 per person and $15 for each additional person from the same farm. Pre-registration is not required; however some locations have limited space. You may register at the door, but please call the local coordinator at least a day in advance so that a meal count can be planned.

Dates, locations and local coordinators are:

--Jan. 7, McIntosh, Community Center, Gene Krause, (218) 634-1511;

--Jan. 8, Perham, VFW, Vince Crary, (218) 385-3000;

--Jan. 9, Mora, American Legion, Jim Salfer, (320) 255-6169;

--Jan. 10, Willmar, Health & Human Services Bldg., Jim Salfer, (320) 255-6169;

--Jan. 14, Edgerton, Pizza Ranch, Tim Dolan, (507) 237-4100;

--Jan. 15, Lewiston, Community Center, Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100;

--Jan. 16, Gaylord, Sibley Co. Courthouse, Tim Dolan, (507) 237-4100;

--Jan 17, Cannon Falls, Grandpa's Garage Restaurant, Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100.

The Minnesota Dairy Days website is at http://www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/dairydays/2003mndairydays.html.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,D1,25,33,34,56,60,61,77,90 dairday2

Source: Marcia Endres, (612) 624-5391
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 6, 2002

Soybean variety trial results are posted on U of M website

Results of Minnesota's 2002 State Soybean Variety Trials are now posted on a University of Minnesota website. The University's Agricultural Experiment Station conducted the variety trials and compiled the results, which are at http://www.soybeans.umn.edu/.

Soybean producers who don't have Internet access can get the variety trial results from the Internet at their county office of the U of M Extension Service. A print version will also be available soon.

"Choosing a variety is one of the most important decisions a grower makes in planning the next crop," says U of M Extension agronomist Seth Naeve. "The variety trial results can be a key resource for making the right choice. University trials are the only source for independent and reliable variety evaluation."

Yields in the trial results are reported on a percentage basis. The performance of each variety is scored relative to the average yield of all varieties in the test. This "percent of the mean" score shows which varieties yield above average (more than 100 percent) and which yield below average (less than 100 percent).

The University of Minnesota trials test conventional, Roundup Ready, soybean cyst nematode-resistant and special use varieties.

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Varieties should be judged as yielding significantly different only if their yields differ by more than the LSD, or least significant difference, says Naeve. This figure is at the bottom of the yield tables and is given as a percentage. Only varieties that yield more than five percentage points differently in a test with an LSD of five should be considered to perform differently.

Further information on the production of soybeans and other crops is available from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

# # #

Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4MN,X2 naev1205

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 10, 2002

University of Minnesota fertilizer recommendations boost bottom line

The following commentary is from George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service:

Are current University of Minnesota fertilizer recommendations accurate and up-to-date and appropriate for today's high-yielding crops? They might save some dollars for fertilizer, but will yields drop? The recommendations are based on research conducted in small plots, but will they work on a whole field?

Crop producers frequently ask University of Minnesota Extension Service personnel questions such as these. The questions are not out-of-line; they are perfectly logical.

University of Minnesota fertilizer recommendations have been compared with those of other soil testing laboratories at various locations for several years. The data strongly support the conclusion that there have been large differences in fertilizer costs. However, yields have not been reduced when University recommendations are followed.

More recently, crop producers have started to question "other" recommendations. They have compared the "other" recommendations to those from the University of Minnesota. Following are two of those comparisons.

A father and son (a U of M student) in west central Minnesota had, for several years, been concerned about fertilizer expenses for corn. They realized they had been using rates substantially higher that those in University of Minnesota

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recommendations. So they made a comparison between U of M recommendations and U of M recommendations plus 200 percent of those recommendations for phosphate and potash.

When yields were calculated for several acres used in the test, the average yield for the U of M recommendations was 155 bushels per acre. Using the U of M recommendations and adding 200 percent for phosphate and potash (the usual recommendation) produced a yield of 151 bushels per acre.

Yields were not lowered by using less fertilizer. Calculating the savings for all of the corn acres on their farm, they saved approximately $50,000 by using the lower fertilizer rate.

Another situation involved a sugar beet grower. His soil test levels for potassium and phosphorus were high to very high in many fields, so no phosphate or potash was recommended. Again, these recommendations were questioned and some field comparisons were made. There was no reduction in sugar beet yields when the U of M recommendations were followed. When calculated for the farm's entire sugar beet crop, the grower saved $77,000 on fertilizer.

University of Minnesota fertilizer recommendations are the result of a considerable amount of field research conducted over several years. These recommendations are reviewed and modified as new data come in each year. The recommendations are not the same as they were in the past. They are appropriate for the high yields in modern crop production.

Results from trials conducted in small plots and large fields lead to the same conclusion. University of Minnesota fertilizer recommendations will not harm the bottom line.

# # #

Web,V2MN,A2MN,F4MN rehm1206

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 13, 2002

On-site sewage systems can protect quality of ground, surface water

It doesn't take a centralized, municipal sewage system to treat wastewater effectively.

Smaller, on-site sewage systems that are planned and managed well can be just as effective. "They provide very effective treatment at a reasonable cost in low-density residential areas," says Ken Olson, an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that "decentralized wastewater treatment systems can provide the treatment necessary to protect public health and meet water quality standards just as well as centralized, municipal systems." However, small (individual or multi-household) on-site treatment systems need good planning and management—just as large municipal systems do.

"All communities need to make sure that all wastewater is delivered to an effective treatment facility," Olson says. "And all facilities—including home septic systems—must be well managed. Good management includes monitoring, operation and maintenance."

Olson says when a community faces wastewater treatment issues, a successful outcome often depends more on a sound decision-making process than on the treatment technologies or the financing available.

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"Finding the appropriate technical solutions to a community's wastewater problems is the easy part," Olson says. "Working together as a community is the challenge."

Olson and co-workers have written two new publications. One is titled "A Quick Guide to Small Community Wastewater Treatment Decisions," which you can read on the Internet at www.bae.umn.edu/septic. The other is a more detailed, 140-page version called "Small Community Wastewater Solutions: A Guide to Making Treatment, Management and Financial Decisions."

Either publication can be purchased with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636. Ask for item 07734 (Complete Guidebook) or 07735 (Quick Guide). You can also find more information on wastewater treatment at http://septic.coafes.umn.edu.

# # #

Web, V4, V5, C4, T2

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 17, 2002

NW Minnesota soybean production meetings set at 6 sites

Profitable soybean production in northwest Minnesota will be the focus of grower meetings at six locations in late January of 2003. Regional educators with the University of Minnesota Extension Service will host the events.

The Soybean Production Meeting dates and locations are:

-- Jan. 28, Hallock, Courthouse meeting room, 9 a.m.-noon;

--Jan. 28, Thief River Falls, Best Western, 2-5 p.m.;

--Jan. 29, Crookston, Northwest Research and Outreach Center Youngquist Auditorium, 9 a.m.-noon;

--Jan. 29, Twin Valley, Municipal Center, 2-5 p.m.;

--Jan. 30, Moorhead, Fryn Pan Restaurant, 9 a.m.-noon;

--Jan. 30, Fergus Fall, Bigwood Event Center, 2-5 p.m.

Program topics include soil fertility, variety research results, weed control, soybean aphid research results and soybean cultural practices. Presenters include U of M regional Extension educators Russ Severson, Carlyle Holen and Doug Holen and U of M Extension soybean agronomist Seth Naeve.

The Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council is providing financial support for the meetings. For additional information, contact Russ Severson, regional Extension educator at Crookston, at (218) 281-8695 or (800) 450-1751.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4MN sevr1213

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 20, 2002

Midwest Ridge and Strip-Till Conference will be Feb. 4 at New Ulm

Using the soil-saving practices of ridge-till and strip-till to grow corn and soybeans will be the focus of an upcoming conference in New Ulm. The annual Midwest Ridge and Strip-Till Conference will be Feb. 4 at the Holiday Inn in New Ulm. It will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"As in the past, this will be a program where farmers learn from other farmers," says soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He adds that along with farmers, U of M faculty will be on the program.

Rehm says the new federal Farm Program puts substantial emphasis on soil conservation. "Crop producers who use either the strip-till or ridge-till planting system may be rewarded for their conservation ethic," he adds. "Ridge-till and strip-till are excellent conservation tillage planting systems for Minnesota. Anyone interested in switching to one of these tillage systems should find this conference to be very useful."

For more information on the conference, contact Rehm at (612) 625-6210 or rehmx001@umn.edu.

# # #

Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4,X2,08 rehm1220

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 20, 2002

U of M offers beef cattle reproductive management home study course

Beef cattle reproductive management for producers with either large or small herds is the subject of a home study course the University of Minnesota Extension Service is offering this winter. The course is entitled "Reproductive Management," and includes six lessons covering the basics of reproduction for beef cattle producers.

The course is designed to provide producers with the information necessary to make decisions that will improve profitability. Lessons topics include health management for reproduction, nutrition effects on reproduction, expected progeny differences (EPDs) and genetics for improved reproduction, heifer development, synchronization, and raising versus buying replacements. An added bonus will be an appendix listing advanced reproductive technology.

The course provides an educational opportunity for those who find it difficult to attend meetings due to work schedules, family commitments or geographic location. This is the fifth beef cattle home study course offered by the U of M Extension Service.

Registrations received by the Jan. 27 deadline will guarantee course enrollment. Class lessons will be mailed to participants every 6-10 days beginning in February from the Pipestone County Extension Office.

The course registration fee is $40, and covers the six lessons, a three-ring binder, supporting reference materials and postage costs. Materials from the first four course

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offerings (Breeding Herd Nutrition, Health Management, Pasture Management and Preparing for Value-Based Marketing) are also available.

Additional information and registration forms are available from the Pipestone County Extension Office, 119 2nd Ave. SW, Suite # 2, Pipestone, MN; phone (800) 967-2705 or (507) 825-6715. There is also a registration form on the Internet at http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/pipestone/. The form is under the "Home Study Course" heading.

# # #

Web,V2,V4,V5MN,B1MN,B1IA,B1ND,B1NE,B1SD,B1WI berg1219

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension SERVICE

NEWS & INFORMATION

http://www.extension.umn.edu/News

December 31, 2002

Minnesota 4-H Foundation elects new trustees

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation Board of Trustees has elected six new trustees to serve on the board. They are Amy Becker, Minneapolis; Wayne Carlson, New Brighton; Duane Hoff, Chanhassen; Kristin Stinar, Eagan; Sandra "Sandie" Stone, Minnetonka; and Kolleen Wick, Lake Elmo.

"Each new trustee has a connection to 4-H, although it wasn't required," says Linda Smith, executive director of the Minnesota 4-H Foundation. "And each person brings an interesting perspective to the board."

Amy Becker is assistant general counsel and assistant corporate secretary for the Donaldson Company, Inc., Bloomington, Minn. She is a member of several organizations including the American Corporate Counsel Association, Minnesota Corporate Counsel Association, American Bar Association, Minnesota Bar Association, Hennepin County Bar Association and Leadership Twin Cities.

Wayne Carlson is a consultant with World-Span Educational Consulting in New Brighton, Minn. He worked at Farm Credit Bank in St. Paul during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Carlson was an assistant state 4-H leader for nearly 20 years and the acting state 4-H leader in 1981.

Duane Hoff is vice president of new business development at Musicland (Best Buy's wholly owned subsidiary) in Richfield, Minn. He is active in a variety of community organizations, including Children's Hospital, Boy Scouts and Minnesota 4-H. A native of Crookston, Minn., Hoff says his 4-H experience as a youth helped develop his leadership skills.

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Kristin Stinar is an investigative reporter for KSTP-TV, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and has won an Emmy for her role in the station's "Race for a Cure" project. Her work has also been recognized by the Minnesota Associated Press and she recently received top honors from the Society of Professional Journalists. Stinar grew up near Perham, Minn. She credits her involvement with 4-H as a youngster--particularly presenting demonstrations--as a great foundation for her career in public speaking.

Sandie Stone retired from Cargill, Inc. in 2002, after more than 25 years with the company. She has volunteered for ten years for "Family Read to Me," a program that emphasizes the importance of reading to children. She also volunteers for the Minnetonka community at Burwell House as a tour guide. Stone was a 4-H member in Wisconsin, and says her experience showing livestock helped her learn to think on her feet.

Kolleen Wick is the marketing/public relations director for The Machine Shed Restaurant in Lake Elmo, Minn. She is also a partner in "Professionally Speaking," a communication training business, and is married to Don Wick, WCCO-AM radio's farm director. The Wicks' children were raised in the 4-H tradition.

Minnesota 4-H Youth Development reaches more than 300,000 young people in every part of Minnesota--from rural areas to inner-city neighborhoods. Through 4-H, young people learn practical life skills, serve their communities and develop leadership abilities. Today's 4-H programs address issues such as multicultural relations, use of technology and wetlands conservation, along with traditional programs such as livestock management and nutrition education.

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation exists to provide all young people in Minnesota with access to 4-H youth development programs, Smith says. The foundation also aspires to be the undisputed leader in promoting and achieving philanthropy in support of youth development.

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Now is a good time for farmers, landowners to do Farm Program sign-up

(Sixth in a series on the new federal Farm Program)

By Bill Craig, University of Minnesota Extension Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is encouraging farmers and landowners to contact their county USDA Farm Service Agency office to make an appointment to sign up for the 2002 Farm Program. The sign-up will require landowners to choose one of the five base acreage and yield options available to them.

Now is a good time to do the Farm Program sign-up to get it done before the last-minute rush. There are a number of items to consider before making the sign-up choice. Some of these are:

1. Are program crop yields from 1998 through 2001 better than the 2002 production flexibility contract (PFC) yields that were established in 1985? If so, proving those yields will increase counter-cyclical payments when these payments are implemented during periods of low prices.

2. Were base acres planted to program crops from 1998 through 2001, or did the farm diversify into other crops to reduce risk from diseases such as scab? If additional acres of program crops were planted during the four-year period, it may pay to update

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base acres. However, if base acres were not planted to program crops, the farm may not even have eligible oilseed acres available to add to the base, even though oilseeds may have been planted on the farm every year.

3. Gather up production records showing crop acreage planted from 1998 through 2001. Also, list acres and crops that were prevent-planted. If oilseeds can be added to the base or if other crop yields can be updated, then visit FSA and pick up form 658-P to record production. Even though proof is not required at sign-up, every farm will be audited before the end of the program. It will be much less hectic to collect the information now rather than during the planting or harvesting season.

4. Oilseed production will be used to establish base acres and yields. Thus, it is very important to provide yield data for those crops. Plug yields (75 percent of the county average) will be used where no yield data is available, but actual production will normally be a much better choice when available. Use form 658-P to show 1998 through 2001 production.

5. Look at each tract, especially if you are producing fruits or vegetables. There may be an opportunity to divide a farm and gain base acres.

6. Landowners whose farm is combined with others into a farm unit need to look at their tract to see if it should be separated out. In some cases, landowners could gain base acres. Also in some cases, their old PFC yields were better than the 1998-2001 combined farm yields. In those cases, dividing out the tract into a new farm number would make sense.

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7. Watch for deadlines for reconstitutions too, since these will need to be completed several weeks before the sign-up deadline. Sign up early to avoid the rush.

8. The Base and Yield Update Option Analyzer calculator shows the economic consequences of each option and is available on several websites. One of these is the Farm Service Agency website at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/. The calculator is also linked to the University of Minnesota Extension Service website at http://www.extension.umn.edu. Click on the "2002 Farm Bill" icon.

County FSA staff can answer questions, but are not allowed to discuss which options to choose. However, additional help is available through county Extension offices and MnSCU Farm Business Management Programs. Several ag lenders, crop insurance agents, farm accountants, elevator managers and crop advisors were trained at 2002 Farm Bill Workshops recently conducted across the state by University of Minnesota Extension educators. Farmers and landowners looking for help with the decision process should call ahead and make an appointment with their advisor. Some advisors are charging a nominal fee for their service.

(Bill Craig is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Warren, Minn.)

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