

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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December, 2007 Volume 21, No. 5

A Note From The Board

By Bill Bauer - Bauer Berry Farm, Champlin, MN

Recently I have been concerned about hearing and reading troublesome words and phrases creeping into our American vocabulary. Words and phrases such as “peak oil”, “global warming”, (or “global climate change”), “non-sustainable”, “energy crisis” and (you fill in your word or phrase here). These words are bothersome because they have the potential to affect every person on earth and particularly those of us assigned to produce the food for the 6.3 billion humans currently occupying the planet. Let’s briefly examine the relevance of just a few of these words.

If we are to believe even half of what scientists are telling us about these bothersome words and phrases, (and I do), then we have a lot of thinking ahead of us. We need the best and brightest thinkers to help answer some of my questions. For those paying attention, I’m sure many more timely questions could be generated to add to the discussion. For example, if we indeed have reached peak production of our most called-upon energy source, oil, it is a no-brainer to conclude that as supply diminishes, price will rise. At what price can we no longer afford to farm? At first blush that appears to be an exceptionally stupid question, since no one has learned the art of doing without food. But in the process of brain-storming, no idea is unworthy of discussion, regardless of how incredulous it sounds. I have often pondered the thought of not having the opportunity to buy diesel fuel for the three tractors we use on our fruit and vegetable farm, high cost notwithstanding. What will be the posture of our government when farmers pass the cost of high energy on to American consumers accustomed to a decades-old policy of cheap food? Will legislation be written to provide bona-fide farmers low-cost fuel? What about commercial fertilizers? That’s another oil derivative we can hardly do without. We tried substituting cow manure from a nearby beef farm for commercial fertilizer one year and you could hear the stink city folk surrounding our urban farm made! A trip back in time to the good ‘ole days is one they did not want to experience.

Note from Board continued on page 2

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Norine Larson to Conduct Workshop on Employee Relations Can teens and seniors work together?

Innovation is necessary in today’s market if you are to find and train sufficient qualified people to work on your farm. The problem of finding good part-time workers continues to increase. You have to look to new sources of recruitment and new training methods to build a productive workforce out of a variety of generations.

Senior citizens are now regarded as our fastest growing population. They are also the healthiest, most active group of seniors our country has ever seen. Raised under the influence of the depression, this generation is known for its great work ethic. They are people you want for wonderful part-time workers. They are also great partners with today’s young people, now labeled as Generation Next who come to the workplace with little knowledge of a work ethic. Their success as working partners depends on the clever manager who trains them together with a specific plan that moves them from curiosity to understanding to respect of each other.

This session will give you usable hints to understand, recruit and hire both of these populations as well as the tools for a training program to turn them into productive partners.

Norine Larson, with advanced degrees in adolescent education, has worked with young employees and their employers for over 30 years. She has written curricula on the subject, and as a consultant she has developed corporate training programs as well as a series of best-selling training videos.

As the part-time employee pool tightened over the past few years, Norine began to focus on the largest employee pool in the country – retirees. She has now developed techniques that effectively partner teens and seniors in the workplace. Norine believes that hiring multi-age employees presents a challenge that can be both fun and rewarding. Her presentation on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 will give you the tools to make you believe the same.

We have been growing fruits and vegetables for over three decades on our farm, and we know from experience that the climate is changing. I refuse to be lured into the argument about why it's changing, but ask any farmer with a history, and he/she will tell you it's more difficult to deal with the weather and it's most certainly less predictable. 'How hot and dry can Minnesota summers become?' is one of my favorite questions. How much irrigation water will there be to go around when so many urban neighbors are installing the latest irrigation technology so they can raise their annual crop of green grass, only to collect it and cart it away to the compost center? Many Minnesota communities had watering bans in the summer of 2007. Will this occur again in 2008, despite the record rainfall this past September and October? These questions disturb me because I can't answer them and the impact of the potential harmful results is serious. Moreover, it would be irresponsible of me to ignore them.

I take some solace in knowing that organizations around the globe, including the MFVGA, have among their members some of the best and brightest thinkers who share my concerns. There really is strength in numbers and we need to include every member of every organization in our effort to come up with fresh innovations required to solve, or at least mitigate, the issues created by these problematic, pesky, and troublesome words that one hears too often these days. Your membership is crucial for the common good. If you haven't yet renewed your 2008 membership, please do it today. And while you're at it, get your farming neighbor to do the same. We need you, we need each other, and we all need organizations like the MFVGA.

Dr. Henry (Hank) Taber to Speak on Peppers and Melons

Dr. Henry (Hank) Taber will be joining us for the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference in February to talk about sweet bell pepper production with an emphasis on colored peppers during the "Specialty Crops" session. He will also share information on his work with growing melons using plastic mulch during the "Pumpkins and Vine Crops" session. Both sessions will be on Tuesday afternoon, February 12, 2008. A copy of the full program can be found on pages 3 and 4.

Hank Taber is a Professor in the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State University. Dr. Taber's research is in earliness techniques, microirrigation practices and mineral nutrition with the commodity vegetables. Through the Extension Service he also assists commercial vegetable producers in production techniques (cultivars, soil management, irrigation, earliness techniques, etc.) of vegetable crops.

Census Gives Farmers A Voice In Their Future

2007 Census of Agriculture Coming Soon

St. Paul, Minnesota – America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to make their voices heard and help shape the future of agriculture for years to come.

That opportunity will come to their mailboxes in the form of the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

"The Census of Agriculture provides information that is not available anywhere else – information that benefits agricultural producers and their communities in myriad ways," said Doug Hartwig, Director of the Minnesota Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

"For instance, policy-makers factor Census data into decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. Community planners use Census to target needed services to rural residents. Companies rely on Census data when determining where to locate their operations. And farmers themselves can use Census data to help make critical decisions about their businesses," he explained.

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site.

"We're committed to making this Census the best count ever. It's about the future of agriculture and rural communities in our state," Hartwig said. "Regardless of how large or small their operation is or what kinds of products they produce, Minnesota farmers and ranchers will help themselves and their communities by filling out the Census of Agriculture and returning it promptly," he added.

"We want farmers and ranchers to know: the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future and their responsibility."

For more information about the 2007 Census of Agriculture, please contact the NASS Minnesota Field Office at 651-296-2230 or visit www.agcensus.usda.gov online.

**Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and
Vegetable Growers Conference
February 12 & 13, 2008
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

Sponsored by the
Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
in cooperation with the
University of Minnesota Extension Service
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
USDA – RMA Community Outreach &
Assistance Partnership Program

Tuesday morning – February 12, 2008

8:45 – 10:00 OPENING SESSION

8:45 – 9:00 Welcome / Announcements
9:00 – 10:00 Keynote Presentation by Dr. Allen Levine, Dean
of the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural
Resource Sciences: CFANS Initiatives and the
Fruit and Vegetable Industry

10:00 – 10:30 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW

10:30 – 12:00 NUTRITIONAL MARKETING

10:30 – 11:00 Genetic Profiling & Nutrition
11:00 – 11:30 Marketing Local, Organic Produce to Minnesota
Grocers: What Are They Buying? –
Gigi di Giacomo, Senior Fellow, Endowed Chair
in Agricultural Systems, University of Minnesota
11:30 – 12:00 Practical Marketing – Ray Clark, Leafy Greens
Council

12:00 – 1:15 LUNCH in the Trade Show Area



Tuesday afternoon – February 12, 2008

1:15 – 4:30 SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION

1:15 – 2:15 Year in Review – Grower participation
2:15 – 3:00 Grower Profile – Afton Apple Orchard,
Hastings, MN
3:00 – 3:30 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW
3:30 – 4:00 Cold Hardy Kiwifruit – Bob Guthrie
4:00 – 4:30 Small Fruit Variety Update – Dr. Jim Luby,
Univ. of Minn. – Dept. of Horticultural Science

1:15 – 4:30 SESSION II: SPECIALTY CROPS

1:15 – 2:15 Sweet Bell Pepper Production with Emphasis on
Colored – Dr. Henry Taber, Iowa State University
– Dept. of Horticulture
2:15 – 3:00 Herbs – Matt Eisinger, Dehn’s Garden, Inc.
3:00 – 3:30 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW
3:30 – 4:00 Cut Flower Varieties –
4:00 – 4:30 Cut Flower Marketing

1:15 – 4:45 SESSION III: PUMPKINS & VINE CROPS

1:15 – 2:00 Perimeter Trap Cropping – Dr. Jude Boucher,
Univ. of Connecticut
2:00 – 2:45 Diseases of Squash and Other Cucurbits –
Michelle Grabowski, Univ. of Minn. Extension
2:45 – 3:15 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW
3:15 – 4:00 Growing Melons on Plastic Mulch – Dr. Henry
Taber, Iowa State University – Dept. of
Horticulture
4:00 – 4:45 Varieties – Terry Nennich, Univ. of Minn.
Extension

1:15 – 4:30 SESSION IV: HIGH TUNNEL PRODUCTION

1:15 – 2:00 Nutrient Management – Dr. Shengrui Yao, Univ.
of Minn., NCROC & Dr. Carl Rosen, Univ. of
Minn. – Dept. of Soil, Water & Climate
2:00 – 2:30 Organic Production – Terry Nennich, Univ. of
Minn. Extension
2:30 – 3:00 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW
3:00 – 3:30 Fertigation Systems for Drip Irrigation –
Jerry Wright, Univ. of Minn. Extension
3:30 – 4:30 Our Experiences with High Tunnels –
Grower Panel

4:45 MFVGA Annual Business Meeting
5:15 Social Hour in the Trade Show Area
6:30 Minnesota Grown Banquet

Wednesday morning – February 13, 2008

- 8:00 – 9:15** **OPENING SESSION:**
Emergency Response Planning
 Dr. John Shutske, Professor and Extension
 Agricultural Safety Specialist, University of
 Minnesota
- 9:15 – 10:00** **BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW**
- 10:00 – 12:00** **SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION**
 10:00 – 11:00 Taking the Next Step – A Different Way to
 Produce Strawberries – Dr. Emily Hoover and
 Steve Poppe, Univ. of Minn.
 11:00 – 11:30 What Berries Can Do For You...Nutritionally
 Speaking – Dr. Jim Luby, Univ. of Minn. –
 Dept. of Horticultural Science
 11:30 – 12:00 Pesticide & IPM Update – Dr. Thaddeus
 McCamant, Northland Community & Technical
 College
- 10:00 – 11:30** **SESSION II: ASPARAGUS**
 10:00 – 10:30 Asparagus 101 – Terry Nennich, Univ. of Minn.
 Extension
 10:30 – 11:00 Insects – Dr. Bill Hutchison, Univ. of Minn. –
 Dept. of Entomology
 11:00 – 11:30 Disease Identification and Management in
 Asparagus –
 Michelle Grabowski, Univ. of Minn. Extension
- 10:00 – 12:00** **SESSION III: SWEET CORN ROUNDTABLE**
Participants:
 Dr. Vince Fritz, Dr. Bill Hutchison,
 Dr. Carl Rosen, Terry Nennich
Topics:
 Population, Rootworm, Earworm, Varieties &
 Canopy Density, Biodegradable Mulches
- 9:45 – 12:00** **SESSION IV: APPLES**
 9:45 – 10:30 Year in Review – Grower participation
 10:15 – 10:45 Overview of New Apple IPM Manual –
 Dr. Thaddeus McCamant,
 Northland Community & Technical College
 10:45 – 11:15 To Be Determined
 11:15 – 12:00 To Be Determined
- 12:00 – 1:15** **LUNCH in the Trade Show Area**

Note: As far as we know, this educational program will be presented as printed. However, there may be some changes. If you have any questions, call the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400. Program updates can also be found on the MFVGA website at www.mfvga.org.

Wednesday afternoon – February 13, 2008

- 1:15 – 4:30** **SESSION I: LOCALLY-GROWN/ORGANICS**
 1:15 – 2:00 Marketing Organic Apples – Dr. Chengyan Yue,
 Univ. of Minn., Dept. of Horticultural Science
 2:00 – 2:45 Minor but Troublesome Vegetable Pests –
 Dr. Jude Boucher, Univ. of Connecticut
 2:45 – 3:00 **BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW**
 3:00 – 3:45 Bees & Colony Collapse Disorder – Dr. Marla
 Spivak, Univ. of Minn. – Dept. of Entomology
 3:45 – 4:30 Weed Management – Milt Haar, Univ. of Minn.
 Extension (SWROC)
- 1:15 – 4:30** **SESSION II: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
 OPTIONS**
 Why Wind Energy? – Lisa Daniels,
 Executive Director, Windustry
 Introduction to Wind Development
 Know Your Wind
 Know Your Land
 Know Your Business Structure
 Know Your Economics
 Know Your Options
 Legal Issues in “Farming the Wind”
 General Energy Conservation Tips
- 1:15 – 4:30** **SESSION III: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS –
 Can Seniors and Teens Work Together?**
 Workshop led by Norine Larson on how to work
 with teenagers and senior citizens and how the two
 groups can work together.

**Send your registration form in today for the
 Upper Midwest Regional
 Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference.**

*Registrations received before
 January 18, 2008
 qualify for the “Early Bird” Drawing –
 A gift certificate for
 a night at the Kelly Inn.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TRADE SHOW HOURS:
Tuesday – Feb. 12: 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday – Feb. 13: 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

February 12 & 13, 2008 – St. Cloud, MN

All educational sessions will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center.

Sponsored by: *Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, USDA-Risk Management Agency, Community Outreach & Assistance Partnership Program*



Attendee's Name (Please print)

Attendee's Name (Please print)	Full Registration Conference & Trade Show (Tuesday & Wednesday) February 12 & 13			Tuesday Night Banquet	One-day Registration Circle One			Trade Show Only	Total
	First member* from farm/company	Each additional mbr. from farm/comp.	Non-member (Per person)	Per person	First member* from farm/company	Each additional mbr. from farm/comp.	Non-member (Per person)	Per person	
	\$85.00	\$20.00	\$160.00	\$25.00	\$65.00	\$20.00	\$90.00	\$10.00	

*Member registration rates are available to members of the MFVGA. Pre-registration is encouraged. There will be an additional \$10.00 per person charge for those registering at the door. Registration forms must be received in the MFVGA office by Friday, February 8th to be considered pre-registered.

Individual or Farm Name _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

(_____) _____ Phone _____

What is your primary crop? Vegetables Berries Apples Other _____

Tuesday and Wednesday registration includes admittance to all educational programs, trade show and a copy of the *Proceedings* book. It does not include the Tuesday banquet. Trade show only registrations do not include admittance to the educational sessions or a copy of the *Proceedings* book.

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Please indicate method of payment:

Check (payable to MFVGA) VISA® MASTERCARD®

Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Return this form with payment to:

MFVGA
15125 W. Vermillion Cir., NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304



**Beginning Grower Workshops
February 11, 2008
St. Cloud Civic Center – St. Cloud, MN**



Sponsored by the
**Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
University of Minnesota Extension Service
USDA – Risk Management Agency
Community Outreach & Assistance Partnership Program**

The Beginning Grower Workshops are designed for people thinking about starting or expanding a commercial berry operation or producers looking to add a high tunnel component to their vegetable operations. The workshops are for people with no experience in farming, people transitioning from other types of agricultural production and people already in commercial production who are looking for a good review of the basics.

Beginning Berry Production

- So, You Want to Start a Berry Farm.... Introductions and Goals
- Location, Location, Location – Soil, water, drainage, etc.
- Assessing and Accessing Your Market
- Being a Business – Accounting, licenses, permits, tax numbers, etc.
- Getting Ready for Planting – Pre-plant preparation, variety selection, planting tips, setting up a field
- Strawberry Production Basics
- Raspberry Production Basics
- Blueberry Production Basics
- Marketing Tips & Tricks – Grower Panel
- Question & Answer Session

Getting Started in High Tunnel Production

- Getting Started in High Tunnel Production – The Why’s and How’s
- Using Drip Irrigation in High Tunnels
- Pricing Your Product: Do I sell too cheap?
- Soils and Plant Growing Media – Managing and Amending Soils for Productive Yields in High Tunnels
- Planting Options for High Tunnels
- Markets, Labor and Other Unexpected Issues
- What Has Worked and Problems Encountered in the High Tunnel

More information on the topics and speakers will be included in the February newsletter.

The Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 12 & 13, 2008 at the St. Cloud Civic Center. We encourage you to review the schedule in this newsletter and attend those sessions also. Scholarships are available for the Beginning Grower Workshops and the main conference. For more information contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or mfvga@msn.com.

Beginning Grower Workshop Registration Form:

Name _____

Farm Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Names of Additional Participants:

Method of payment:

- Check (payable to MFVGA)
- VISA MASTERCARD

Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Berry Workshop _____ @ \$60 = _____

High Tunnel Workshop _____ @ \$60 = _____

Return this form with payment to:

**MFVGA
15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304**

There will be an additional \$5 per person charge for those registering at the door.

Peddling Your Pickles Safely?

Learn about the requirements of the Minnesota "Pickle Bill" legislation related to the sale of home processed / canned foods:



- pH meters & testing
- Labeling
- Recommended recipes
- Equipment
- Sanitation

February 11, 2008 – St. Cloud, MN (St. Cloud Civic Center)

February 27, 2008 – Staples, MN (T Maxwell's Restaurant)

March 13, 2008 – Farmington, MN (Dakota Co. Ext. Office)

9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Look for more information on page 9

Space is limited, register today!

Peddling Your Pickles Registration Form:

Name: _____

Farm name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Other attendees: _____

Sign up for:

Feb. 11 – St. Cloud _____ @ \$40.00 _____

February 27 – Staples _____ @ \$40.00 _____

March 13 – Farmington _____ @ \$40.00 _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please indicate method of payment:

Check (payable to MFVGA) VISA MASTERCARD

Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Return this form with payment to:

MFVGA

15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304

Instructors are University of Minnesota Extension Educators in Food Science.

Sponsored by:

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension
SERVICE



These institutions are equal opportunity providers.



Order Your Minnesota Grown Bags Early

MFVGA is planning the sixth annual order of the Minnesota Grown bags. Originally designed to hold a dozen ears of sweet corn without tearing, more than one million of these bags have been used by a wide variety of Minnesota Grown producers to hold a wide variety of Minnesota Grown products.

The bags are a heavy 1 mil white plastic t-shirt style bag printed with a dark green "Minnesota Grown" logo that includes the "Fresh From Your Neighbor" tag line. The bags are 23" x 7" x 12" and the bags are recyclable. Bags must be ordered in increments of 1,000. The bags can be customized to include your farm name, market name, etc. The minimum for customized orders is 5,000 bags. You have the option of having the bags drop-shipped directly to you for an additional charge, or you can pick them up at a location in the Twin Cities area.

If you have ordered bags in the past or have expressed an interest in the bags, you will receive an order form. The order information will include pricing and ordering deadlines. Please note, in order to ensure timely delivery, your order must be received by the order deadline. This is a group order which means MFVGA compiles the individual orders and places one large order with the manufacturer in early spring. We plan for bags to arrive in early May. MFVGA does not stock an inventory of the bags, so if you are interested in using the bags next year, you need to place your order by the deadline.

Samples of the bags and order forms will be available at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN on February 12 & 13, 2008. Samples can also be requested from the MFVGA office. **You must be licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo to order the bags.**

We are currently finalizing pricing, etc. If you are interested in the bags and want more information, please contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or mfvga@msn.com and you will receive information when the details are available. If you contact the office via e-mail, please reference the "MN Grown bags" in the subject line.

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN
February 12 & 13, 2008

Beginning Grower Workshops Beginning Berry Production Getting Started in High Tunnel Production

St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN
February 11, 2008

"Peddling Your Pickles Safely?"

St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN
February 11, 2008

Accommodations are available at:

Best Western – Kelly Inn 320-253-0606

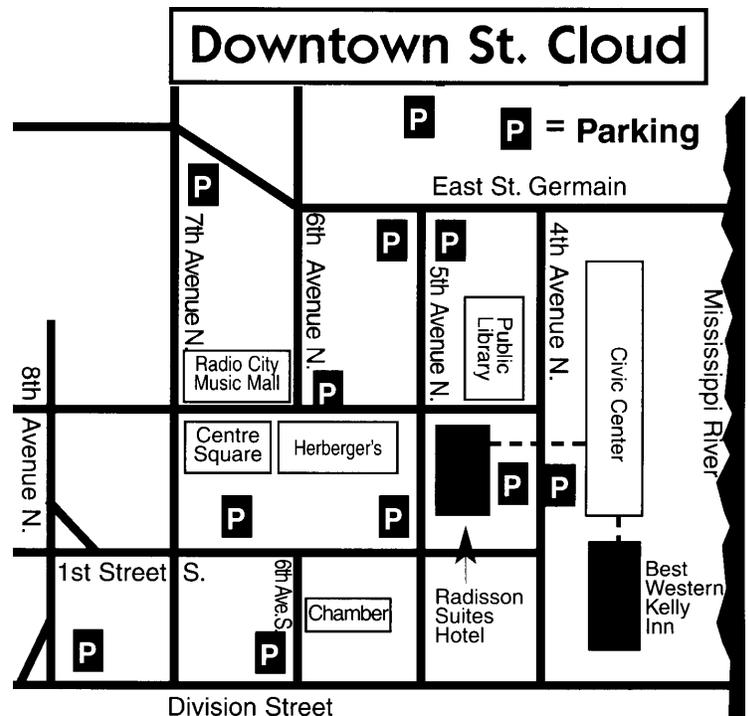
Single Rate - \$78 Double Rate - \$84

There is direct access to the Civic Center from the Best Western-Kelly Inn.

Mention "Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers" to receive conference room rates.

The Radisson Suites Hotel 320-654-1661

The Radisson Suites Hotel is connected by a skywalk to the St. Cloud Civic Center.



Are you “Peddling Your Pickles Safely?”

The “Peddling Your Pickles Safely” workshops are for people interested in processing and selling their home-canned foods at local farmers’ markets. The “Pickle Bill,” as passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2004, has very specific requirements for products that can be sold.

These workshops will address the following “Pickle Bill” questions:

- What food safety issues are critical from harvest to processing?
- What is the Pickle Bill legislation?
- What types of home canned foods meet the requirements?
- Can your kitchen pass inspection on sanitation?
- What is acceptable home food processing and equipment?
- How do I select and document recipes?
- How do I label my product?
- What are the acid levels of vegetables, fruits and pickled products?
- How do I use a pH meter for testing? What types of meters are there?
- How do I calibrate a pH meter? How do I test my product?

These are important questions and each person who is selling home processed products must have current and accurate information on these topics. Conducting the workshops will be Deb Botzek-Linn, Carol Ann Burtness, Lou Ann Jopp and Dr. Joellen Feirtag, University of Minnesota Regional Extension Educators in Food Science. The importance of good agricultural practices from planting to harvest will also be discussed.

Three “Peddling Your Pickles Safely” workshops are planned. Workshops will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN on Monday, February 11, 2008, in Staples, MN on February 27, 2008 at T Maxwell’s restaurant and in Farmington, MN on March 13, 2008 at the Dakota County Extension Office. Plan now to attend the workshop closest to you and get the information you need to “Peddle Your Pickles Safely.” Registration information for the February 11th workshop can be found on page 7.

A separate workshop covering jams and jellies is planned for the last week of March in St. Cloud. An advanced workshop for people interested in learning more about pH meters and testing procedures is also being planned. Details on the advanced workshop will be sent to those who have attended the “Peddling Your Pickles Safely” workshops.

A brochure with complete information on all the workshops will be mailed in January. Information will also be posted on the MFVGA website at www.mfvga.org. If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn Johnson at 763-434-0400.

The workshops are sponsored by the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the USDA-Risk Management Agency. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

Dr. Allen Levine to Give Keynote Presentation on February 12th



Dr. Allen Levine is the Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota. He will be sharing information with us on new CFANS initiatives and how those initiatives will impact fruit and vegetable production and consumption.

Dr. Levine’s expertise and interests span several departments at the University of Minnesota. Prior to this position, Dr.

Levine was Head of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition. He was the Associate Director of Research and a Senior Career Scientist at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. He is also Director of the Minnesota Obesity Center, a National Institutes of Health funded collaborative research group of over 55 federally funded investigators from the University, the Mayo clinic, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Health Partners, and Hennepin County Medical Center.

Dr. Levine is a Professor in the Departments of Food Science and Nutrition, Psychiatry, Neuroscience, Medicine, and is a member of the nutrition, food science, and the neuroscience graduate faculties at the University of Minnesota.

MFVGA Policy on Conference Registration Cancellations and Refunds:

MFVGA will refund registration fees for the 2008 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in full if the MFVGA office is notified before Monday, February 4, 2008. If the MFVGA office is notified after February 4, 2008, but before February 8, 2008 75% of the registration amount will be refunded. No refund will be issued if registrations are cancelled after February 8, 2008.

Strawberry & Raspberry Plants

MFVGA is planning a group order of strawberry and raspberry plants for the 2008 growing season. If you are on the berry plant order mailing list, you will automatically receive additional information and an order form for the coming year. We are currently working on the pricing and forms will be sent out as soon as details are finalized. Please note the deadlines and place your orders early to guarantee that you will be able to get the plants you request. Certain varieties have been selling out very early.

If you would like to be added to the berry order mailing list, call the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or send an e-mail to mfvga@msn.com.

Conference Scholarships Available

A limited number of scholarships are available for the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference to help defray the registration fees for commercial growers and students attending the Tuesday and Wednesday educational sessions. Scholarships may also be requested for the Beginning Grower workshops to be held on February 11, 2008. The MFVGA scholarship fund was established with dollars from the USDA-Risk Management Agency and our Special Crops Grant. Scholarships cannot be applied to trade show admittance.

Scholarships will be used to pay a portion of the registration fee. Scholarships will be available to commercial fruit and vegetable growers who have not attended the conference in the last five years. A limited number of scholarships are also available to high school and college students currently studying horticultural science.

Completed scholarship applications for the 2008 conference must be received in the MFVGA office and approved before January 26, 2008. Scholarship applications will not be accepted with at-the-door registrations. Scholarships will be awarded to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

For additional information and an application form, contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or e-mail your request to mfvga@msn.com.

2008 Trade Show Exhibitors

The following exhibitors have already signed up for the 2008 Trade Show held in conjunction with the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. The Trade Show will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 12 & 13, 2008. More exhibitors and additional exhibitor information will be included in the February 2008 issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Ag Resource, Inc.
Agro-K Corporation
CSI Chemical Corp.
Emma Krumbes Pie & Bread Co.
Johnny's Selected Seeds
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture – IPM Program
Minnesota Grown
Olson Power & Equipment, Inc.
Rispen Seeds, Inc.
Roeters Farm Equipment, Inc.
Seedway, L.L.C.
Stark Brothers Nurseries & Orchards
Stokes Seeds, Inc.
UAP Distribution, Inc. – Big Lake, MN
UAP Distribution, Inc. – Galesville, WI
USDA-NASS, Minnesota Field Office

EXHIBITORS: Sign up today so your information will be included in the February newsletter. Contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or mfvga@msn.com for an application for exhibit space.

ERP Workshops Planned for Spring 2008

Floods and drought in 2007, tornadoes in 2006, fresh spinach E-coli O157:H7 in 2006 -- You never think it will happen to you until it does.

If an unexpected natural disaster or an emergency happened, as a grower or farmers' market manager, would you know what actions to take? Would your employees know what to do? What would happen to your family? Your business?

As growers and markets, we benefit from consumer interest in locally produced vegetables, fruits, and other food products. Consumers have increased their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables thanks to health promotion efforts. We know our customers prefer locally-grown products and are increasingly willing to support our efforts to bring fresh and wholesome products into their homes and communities.

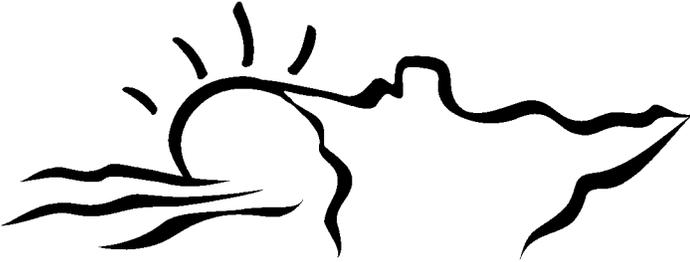
We also face a variety of hazards and risk-filled situations such as natural weather-related disasters, employee or personal injuries, fires, theft, vandalism, or product tampering. Some disasters trigger additional damage and bad outcomes like power outages; damage to equipment, buildings, or plants; or injuries to employees or customers.

Emergency Response Planning (ERP) is a grower-centered/manager-centered process to help you identify the types of supplies and other things you need to take appropriate action in certain situations, the key actions that need to be taken in those situations and important people who can assist. Emergency Response Planning can help you keep an event from becoming a disaster that could potentially ruin your business.

Boost your ERP "IQ." Learn how to protect yourself, your business and your assets from emergencies and disasters. Attend one of the MFVGA Emergency Response Planning workshops to learn about developing your own business emergency plan. The workshops include fun activities and many opportunities for participation. You will leave with a baseline plan that will be immediately useful for your business. Your insurance company will also be happy that you have a business emergency plan!

The Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association will sponsor three Emergency Response Planning workshops in the spring of 2008. The workshops will be led by John Shutske and Michele Schermann, Agricultural Safety Specialists from the University of Minnesota. John and Michele developed the curriculum and workbook for the workshops through a partnership agreement with MFVGA and the USDA Risk Management Agency with funding provided by the USDA Risk Management Agency.

Dates and locations are still in the works. Watch for more information and a registration form in the February newsletter.



MINNESOTA GROWN

Fresh From Your Neighbor

Sign Up Now for the 2008 Minnesota Grown Directory

'Tis the season to make sure your farm or market is going to be included in the 2008 *Minnesota Grown Directory*. No less than 180,000 copies will be printed and the new pay-per-click campaign has dramatically increased the number of consumers searching the on-line version of the Directory. We will also be adding a non-metro advertising campaign to increase consumer awareness of the Directory outside the 11-county metro area.

The cost of advertising in the Directory is still just \$40 per listing. Coupled with the \$20 license to use the Minnesota Grown logo, the \$60 investment in Directory advertising is an amazing bargain! If you weren't listed in the 2007 edition you can contact Brian Erickson at 651-201-6539 for an application by mail or register on-line at www.minnesotagrown.com (just click on the blue "members" box on the left side of the page).

Save the Date!

The Minnesota Grown Program is thrilled to be able to provide members with the opportunity to hear an exciting presentation from internationally acclaimed author, speaker, and management advisor Joe Pine. Mr. Pine and his partner James H. Gilmore wrote *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Harvard Business School Press, 1999). This best-selling book demonstrates how goods and services are no longer enough; what customers want today are experiences – memorable events that personally engage each customer. Published in ten languages, the book shows how businesses can create value by embracing theatre as an operating model to stage unique experiences. Realizing that in a world of increasingly paid-for experiences people no longer accept the fake from the phony, but want the real from the genuine, Pine & Gilmore recently published their next book, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*. Pine also wrote the award-winning *Mass Customization: The New Frontier in Business Competition* (Harvard Business School Press, 1993).

Mark your calendars today to join us for this presentation on March 11, 2008 at the Continuing Education & Conference Center on the U of M's St. Paul Campus. Registration details will be mailed to all Minnesota Grown members and posted in the Members section of minnesotagrown.com as soon as they are available.

Pay-per-click results

"Pay per Click" (PPC) advertising is an exciting new tool being used by the Minnesota Grown Program for the first time this fall. Early results are amazing! Our pay-per-click advertising began on September 1st and in just two months we've received over 30,000 click-throughs from our sponsored links on Google, Ask and Yahoo. That means that over 30,000 people have searched for one of the key words we picked (i.e. "apples", "local foods", "wineries", "farmers markets", "CSA farms") and have clicked on our ad to search the on-line *Minnesota Grown Directory*. In addition to the key categories shown below, we have sponsored links for buffalo, elk, beef, pork and poultry. A Christmas tree PPC campaign was added in November.

The first two months of our PPC campaign resulted in 31,109 total click-throughs to www.minnesotagrown.com at a cost of less than \$0.18 per click.

Here's a look at the specific ad variations we ran during September and October:

- Apples: 21,842 clicks 10¢ per click
- Fall fun (hayrides, farm tours, etc.): 3,418 clicks 26¢ per click
- Local foods (CSA's, farmers markets, etc): 773 clicks 46¢ per click
- Wineries: 3,298 clicks 30¢ per click

Free Marketing Materials Available!

One of the advantages of being licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo is the free stickers, price cards and other promotional materials. Ordering can be done on-line at www.minnesotagrown.com or by calling us at 651-201-6510.

If there is something that you'd like added to the line of POS materials, please let us know. We plan to add a couple of new items over the next several months and would love to hear your suggestions!

Cost-share

Receive up to \$100 by simply including the Minnesota Grown logo on your new bags, labels, tags or boxes. We can provide your printer with artwork of the logo in whatever file format they require and reimburse you for a portion of the plate charges, design charges and other one-time fees associated with printing. Call Paul at 651-201-6510 for details.

Minnesota Grown information is supplied to MFVGA by Paul Hugunin (651-201-6510) and Brian Erickson (651-201-6539) from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Ag Marketing Services Division. If you have any questions about Minnesota Grown, contact them at the numbers listed above.



NOTICE TO NON-MEMBERS

In return for receiving the MFVGA newsletter, we ask a \$10 donation per year to cover printing and mailing costs.

Thank You!

PLEASE NOTE:

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please let us know.

U of M GLEANINGS

Dr. Cindy Tong
Dept. of Horticultural Science
University of Minnesota

Most growers seem to know how to raise the crops they want to grow. Marketing what one grows is more difficult. Anybody who has tried to sell what she or he has grown quickly finds out that one can't just put stuff out and expect customers to start offering money for produce. In a society where food is not scarce, marketing can be very complicated.

If you listen to Minnesota Public Radio, you may have heard interviews in February and October with Dr. Brian Wansink, director of the Cornell Food and Brand Laboratory. He's well-known for having written a book called "Mindless Eating", about why people eat more than they think they're eating. Before that book was published, though, Wansink authored a book called "Marketing Nutrition". According to the book's introduction, Wansink got into the field of consumer behavior because he wanted to learn how to get people to eat more vegetables. Wansink spent summers on his uncle's farm, and at the end of summer, his uncle would treat the kids to dinner and a movie. One year, there was no movie treat, and when asked what it would take to bring this treat back, Wansink's uncle said that more people would have to eat corn so that they could afford to take the kids to the movies.

According to "Marketing Nutrition", the Five-a-Day program has not been very successful at getting Americans to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Americans know that eating fruits and vegetables is good for human health. They just prefer buying and eating other foods. Hence, emphasizing the nutritional benefits of eating fruits and vegetables alone is not enough to increase sales of these products.

Wansink claims that to get people to eat more fruits and vegetables, one of the things marketers need to do is segment their customers and learn what is important to each of these segments. For example, from a survey of 770 people, Wansink and Lee found that compared to the "average" person, people who love to eat vegetables like to try new recipes, entertain at home, enjoy spicy foods, think they cook nutritiously, and enjoy an occasional glass of red wine with dinner. People who love to eat fruit, on the other hand, often eat dessert with dinner, spend little time cooking, avoid new recipes and entertaining, and enjoy an occasional candy bar.

Therefore, an advertising campaign aimed at vegetable lovers might include recipes or wine suggestions to accompany different vegetable dishes. Advertising geared towards fruit lovers might emphasize the lusciousness of particular fruits or their convenience as snacks.

Wansink claims that another thing marketers could do to get people to buy fruits and vegetables is to gear advertising towards the "gatekeeper" who controls most of the food decisions for the household. This person is the one who buys almost everything that is eaten at home, primarily makes their children's lunches, and influences family restaurant orders by making suggestions or through example. If you primarily market your produce at a Farmers Market, it might be fairly easy to determine who this gatekeeper is. If you sell to a restaurant chef, then the chef is the gatekeeper. If you sell to a broker, then you probably have no direct way of influencing ultimate sales or gatekeeper choices.

The two marketing tactics mentioned above may increase sales, but probably mainly to the already "converted". How can we convince meat and potato eaters to eat more kale and blueberries? Marketing campaigns that emphasize that fruits and vegetables are "naturally low in calories" AND good for human health may increase sales to the "nonconverted". By now, most Americans have probably heard of our country's obesity epidemic and would rather be thin than not. Advertising that addresses this epidemic might be effective combined with nutritional information. For example, the United States Potato Board has initiated a Healthy Mr. Potato Head® campaign, but also uses an advertisement of a red potato with a nutritional label and a measuring tape around a thin "waist".

Pennsylvania State University researchers recently reported at an Obesity Society meeting that a study they completed found that people who ate apple slices 15 minutes before a lunch consumed 187 calories less than people who ate nothing, applesauce or apple juice with added fiber. The applesauce and apple juice were equal in calories (125) to the apple. Eating the apple slices before lunch resulted in a net decrease of only 62 calories, but these results have been dubbed by the news media as a new "apple diet". Wansink claims in "Mindless Eating" that eating 100 calories a day less than usual or expending 100 calories more than usual could lead to a 10 pound loss in weight over the course of a year. This rate of weight loss might be too slow for some people, but following this diet does not lead to a feeling of deprivation, which can derail a lot of dieters. Apple growers could use the data from the Pennsylvania State University study to help increase sales to people trying to lose weight. Instead of telling people that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away", tell customers that "an apple before meals keeps the calories at bay"!

Risk and Risk Management

(A Risk Management Agency Fact Sheet)

What is Risk?

Every business and every person faces risks each day, but what is risk? People have different attitudes about risk. Some will wager a week's pay at a casino, while others will hide their money under a mattress. A person's aversion to risk is a key factor in the extent to which they will try to manage their risks. In general terms, people often think of risk as the chance of something bad happening. "Bad" and "chance" are two key elements of risk. In financial terms, risk is the possibility of financial loss.

"Bad" is the first element, and it refers to an event or outcome that is adverse, such as a crop failure. "Bad" is also relative – losing more money is worse than losing less money.

"Chance" is the second element. Risk involves uncertainty that an adverse event will occur. If something "bad" is absolutely, positively, guaranteed to happen, there is no risk because uncertainty isn't present. For example, there is no risk associated with jumping out of an airplane without a parachute. You will perish, guaranteed. It's stupid, but not "risky." Jump out of the plane with a parachute, and you'll probably live, but there's a chance you won't. Thus, most people consider sky-diving risky and jumping out of the plane without the parachute suicide. This example is extreme, but it is important to note that risk management will not help the individual intent on jumping without a chute. In business terms, a business must be economically viable and the individual must be willing to use risk management for risk management to be effective.

What is Risk Management?

Risk management, in a business context, is about reducing the cost of risk, which includes the cost of managing risk. Business, including farming, is about making profits or gains. Farmers need money to make a living for themselves and their families. To make a living, farmers must take risks, investing \$200,000 or more worth of seed, fertilizer, and herbicides and hoping for rain but not too much rain. Farming is risky; one doesn't know what the outcome will be when the crop is planted (the "chance" element), as all or a portion of the crop could be lost (the "bad" element). Because farmers take this risk, we have a plentiful food supply.

The first key concept of risk management can be expressed by the old saying "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Risk management involves asking the question, "**Is the risk appropriate for the return?**" Is the farmer venturing too much for too little gain, i.e., will the farmer make enough profit to reasonably justify the risk? The word "reasonable" is key. Across America, there are thousands and thousands of people who spend money believing they will win the lottery. The chances of winning a lottery are usually remote; hence, it is not reasonable to assume you will win the lottery.

Usually, people want a higher return on their investment in exchange for taking a greater risk. Simply put, they "**don't want to risk a lot for**

a little." Banks, for example, charge higher interest rates to customers who they believe are less likely to pay back a loan. A simple example of this concept follows.

Suppose you were to bet money on the outcome of a coin flip. You pay a dollar to play. If it's heads, you win \$1.10. If it's tails, you get nothing. Want to play this game? Probably not. If you could play this game a hundred times, on average you'd end up at the end of the game with \$0.45. Why risk a dollar for a 50-50 chance to come out 10 cents ahead or a dollar behind?

Let's change the game a little. Heads, you get \$2, tails you get nothing. Many people might play this game with a friend just for the fun of it. The chances of winning or losing are 50-50, but the effect of losing is not much. Risks are low as the outcome – even if one loses – is only to lose a dollar. Further, chances are that if you play it many times, you'll come out even. After all, you know that with a coin there's a 50-50 chance of winning or losing, and you know how much you could win or lose. Simply put, you "**know the chances of the possible outcomes.**"

Suppose the game paid \$3 if you win. Would you be more likely to play? Probably so. The odds are the same, but the payoff is more: the same risk as before but a higher expected return. If you had a chance to choose between the \$2 game and the \$3 game, you'd choose the \$3 game.

Now, suppose it's a bet for \$3 million. You pay a million to maybe win \$3 million. Most people wouldn't take this bet, even though the chances are exactly the same of winning or losing as with a dollar. It's still a 50-50 chance, but losing would be much worse. Again, simply put, most people "**don't risk more than they can afford to lose.**" In other words, they try to avoid ruin. These are the introductory guiding principles of risk management (see box).

Risk management, in a business context, is about reducing the cost of risk, which includes the cost of managing risk. No business is risk-free, and risk management won't eliminate all risks. Risk management is about 3 R's: returns, risks, and ruin.

Don't Risk a Lot for a Little

The more risk you take, the greater the reward you should expect. It doesn't make sense, for example, to play the coin-flipping game mentioned earlier if at the end of the game you've paid a dollar to net 55 cents. Are there any risk-free investments? Yes. U.S. Treasury bills are generally considered "risk-free." The U.S. Government is unlikely to default on its bills. If you buy a T-bill, you can be as absolutely certain as anyone can be that you will be paid exactly what you are owed. The dollar may not be worth as much, but you will get paid. A T-bill is about as risk-free an investment as you can find. In January 2000, a T-bill paid about a 5-percent return.

Corporate bonds aren't quite as safe, as some companies go bankrupt. If they do, however, whatever assets are left go to pay creditors, such as the bondholders, first. Bonds are debt – you are loaning the company money. You are not an owner of the company. If you're going to invest and you can buy a T-bill with a 5-percent return, what would make you buy a corporate bond that may or may not pay you back? Probably a higher rate of return. For taking a greater risk, you should want a higher return.

Risk Management continued on page 14

What about stocks? Over the past 60 years or so, stocks have returned roughly 10 percent per year. Some companies have gone bankrupt; others have grown tremendously. If a company goes bankrupt, bondholders get paid first from whatever money is left. Thus, there's a greater chance that stockholders will get nothing. Therefore, an investor should expect to make more money investing in a company's stock than in its bonds, because there is more risk for stockholders. Again, if you can obtain a 5-percent return with no risk (T-bill), would it be financially wise to invest in a stock that would only make a 4-percent return? No – why incur a higher chance of losing your money to make less than you could get with no risk? This is a key concept of risk management. In order to justify making a higher risk investment, one should expect a higher return on the investment. The more risk, the higher the chance of a loss, so the potential gains from other similar investments need to be high enough to make up for the losers.

How do the returns from farming fit into this? Averaged over all farmers, farming yields a return on equity of 2 to 3 percent. Like any average, some farmers earn much more while others earn much less. Many farmers earn less on their equity than they could make by investing in a risk-free T-bill.

1-Minute Risk Management

What

The effective risk manager assures financial solvency against the consequences of risk at the lowest possible cost.

How

Understanding financial statements provides the foundation on which a sound risk management plan can be devised and appropriate risk management tools employed.

Guiding Rules

- Don't risk more than you can afford to lose.
- Don't risk a lot for a little.
- Understand the likelihood and severity of possible losses.

Source: Mehr and Hedges, *Risk Management in the Business Environment*, Irwin Press, 1963.

Planting a crop is an investment decision. Any business person, including a farmer, should continually ask if they could use their assets to make money some other way, if financial gain is important to them. When the returns don't justify the risk, enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or cash renting their land are ways farmers can earn a less risky return on their assets.

Don't Risk More Than You Can Afford To Lose

Few people think it wise for retirees to invest their life's savings in an internet stock. If they lose, there is no opportunity to make back the loss. Few people have much patience with those who encourage senior citizens to gamble the money saved for their golden years. Thus, many legitimate investment advisors encourage their retired clients to hold "safe" investments, such as T-bills and bonds.

Yet, the casinos, horse tracks, day-trading establishments, and even Chambers of Commerce have customers and members who will gamble more than they can afford to lose. Who hasn't seen movies of the

gambler who loses, but just needs that last "score" to get even. It never seems to work out for this person. No matter how good the odds, sometimes bad stuff still happens.

No one should invest more than they can afford to lose, unless they want a drastic change in their lifestyle, because sometimes they'll lose. **Ruin is the result of losing more than you can afford.** Unfortunately, to support a family by farming, some farmers must face the possibility of ruin each year. Crop insurance helps reduce the chance of ruin by reducing the maximum amount of money they can lose. Still, in today's economic climate, ruin is a real issue for farmers.

Know the Odds

A coin toss is a 50-50 proposition. A roll of a die is a 1-in-6 event. What are the chances that this year will bring a drought? And, if it does, how much revenue will be lost? No one knows precisely, but estimates can be made based on historical data, and these estimates can be invaluable in making an investment decision. RMA has developed and is developing tools to help farmers estimate the chances of profit or loss. The odds may be in a farmer's favor, but sometimes they still lose. That is why avoiding ruin is important – it allows a farmer to keep farming. A loss doesn't put them out of business.

It is very important to realize that the odds of making a profit or of ruin change every year, and a losing year can make the odds of either much worse the next year. "Losing years" must be paid for by borrowing or by using equity built up in good years. The greater the debt or the less equity a farmer has, the harder it will be for the farmer to pay the bills if another loss occurs. Thus, it is very important that farmers understand their true financial situation, including not only preparing cash flow projections, but also preparing a balance sheet and income statement. One can have a positive cash flow and still lose money.

Putting It All Together

A good set of financial statements is critical and is a prerequisite for risk management. Financial statements describe the assets and liabilities, sources of financial risk, and the profit or loss of the business. For risk management to be effective, the business must have a reasonable expectation of making a profit (assuming financial returns are important).

Risk management cannot make a business that is fundamentally not profitable, profitable. With financial statements, a farmer can then apply these guiding principles to assess his or her risks in the context of other financial investments. Then, a farmer can analyze various risk management strategies to help bring the expected financial returns in line with the risks. Done well, risk management can help protect a farmer's hard-earned money from the risks associated with farming.

Conclusions

RMA's mission is to encourage farmers to proactively manage their risks. Farming is risky, more so than many other businesses. For taking these risks – and feeding the world – some farmers earn a good return on their investment. Others do not. By practicing risk management, farmers can gain greater control over their risks, financial returns, and solvency. (For more information, see *About the Risk Management Agency* (PA-1667-02) or visit RMA online at www.rma.usda.gov).

MFVGA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
October 1, 2007 - September 30, 2008

Farm/Company Name _____

Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Crops _____

Primary Crop _____

Names of Direct Members:
 (grower, spouse, employees, partners)

MEMBERS

Gross Sales	Dues	
Up to \$25,000	\$ 75.00	
\$25,000 - \$75,000	125.00	
\$75,000 - \$225,000	225.00	
Over \$225,000	325.00	\$ _____

Direct membership includes a subscription to one of the following periodicals. Please indicate which publication you would like to receive. Choose one.

- American Fruit Grower
- The Fruit Growers News
- American Vegetable Grower
- The Vegetable Growers News

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:
 (Dues are \$25.00 per year.)

Associate members are related agri-business firms, educators, and suppliers. \$ _____

Contributions or gifts to MFVGA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions; however, they may be tax deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MFVGA

Mail to: MFVGA
 c/o Marilyn Nysetvold Johnson, Exec. Coordinator
 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE
 Ham Lake, MN 55304
 Questions? Call 763-434-0400



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This issue of the MFVGA Newsletter is sponsored, in part, by the USDA – Risk Management Agency, Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program.

For more information on the Risk Management Agency visit their website at www.rma.usda.gov.

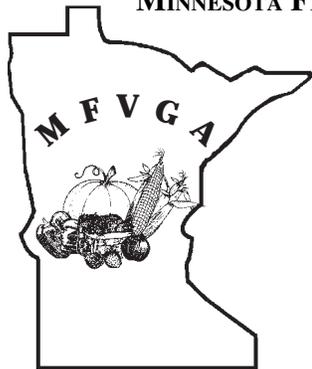
Information on the Farm Service Agency can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov.

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What Is Perimeter Trap Cropping and How Can It Work For You?



Perimeter trap cropping (PTC) involves planting a crop that pests prefer along the border of a field so that it completely encircles a cash crop like fortress walls. Trap crops are used to protect the main cash crop from a pest or complex of pests.

The trap crop can be a

different plant species, variety, or just a different growth stage of the same species as the main crop, as long as it is more attractive to the pests when they are present.

Vegetable IPM Educator Jude Boucher (University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System) is working to refine and popularize a PTC system to protect squash and cucumbers from a destructive pest of cucurbits: the cucumber beetle.

With funding from Northeast SARE, research was conducted both in replicated plots and in growers' fields to evaluate Blue Hubbard squash as a perimeter trap crop. Results clearly demonstrated the benefits of this novel pest control approach. Plots that were surrounded by Blue Hubbard had no more pest damage than conventionally managed plots, though insecticide use was greatly reduced. Ten growers that implemented PTC on their farms reduced their insecticide use by a dramatic 96%, while at the same time saving labor and increasing their gross income by \$1,100 per acre due to reduced pest damage!

Will Perimeter Trap Cropping work for your operation? What do you need to know about your crop and potential pest pressure before you plant? Are trap crops economical? Will they work for any crop and any situation? Will they work for you?

Dr. Boucher will discuss Perimeter Trap Cropping and share his IPM research with us on February 12 & 13, 2007 during the Locally-grown/ Organics and Pumpkins & Vine Crops sessions at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference in St. Cloud, MN. The full conference schedule can be found on pages 3 and 4.

DON'T FORGET!

**Upper Midwest Regional
Fruit & Vegetable Growers
Conference & Trade Show
Feb. 12 & 13, 2008**

**Beginning Grower Workshops
Feb. 11, 2008**

**“Peddling Your Pickles Safely”
Workshop - Feb. 11, 2008**

ATTENTION TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS

**The 2008 Upper Midwest Regional
Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show
will be held February 12 & 13, 2008 at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN.**

Have we received your application? Return it as soon as possible to reserve your booth(s).

If you need an application or more information, contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400.