

# MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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December 2011 Volume 25, No. 5

## A Note From The Board

By Nancy Jacobson – Pine Tree Orchards, White Bear Lake, MN

As I write this letter, my brothers are unloading bales of straw for berries, my sisters are gearing up for Thanksgiving in the bakery, and I am sorting apples for the school districts. We all can be thankful for the good weather we had this season and the public's interest in what we have to sell.

November is a nice month. There is still a lot to do, but the pressure is off. It is a great time to clear the clutter off your desk and make plans for next year. My family has always made education and networking part of our winter plans. We put the annual MFVGA conference in January on our calendars. We learn so much. The speakers give us new and exciting information. And one of our favorite parts is talking with other growers. It can affirm what you've been thinking or open you up to a completely different way of seeing the problem you have been trying to solve.

The conference is invaluable and lots of fun!! So please join us, you don't want to miss out.

Back to the sorting line. Enjoy the "slow time" and make it worthwhile.

### ★ ★ Session Spotlight ★ ★

#### **Nutrition Comes Home: Food with a Face, a Place and a Footprint**

What are the dominant trends in food production, procurement and consumption? What trends are emerging in food production, procurement and production? What are the social, environmental, economic, and health implications of new directions in food and agriculture?

Mary Jo Forbord, Healthy Eating Coordinator at the University of Minnesota, Morris, will explore these and related issues on Friday morning, January 20, 2011 during the opening General Session beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Mary Jo Forbord is a Registered Dietitian with experience in institutional food service, nutrition counseling, community nutrition and food systems. She currently works with a team of students, faculty and staff and community partners to create a food environment that fosters good health. Mary Jo and her family farm in Pope County where they rotationally graze cattle on certified organic pastures, conduct on-farm research in native prairie restoration and sustainable biomass production, and sell Prairie Horizons grass-fed beef and certified organic fruit directly to food citizens.

## SAVE THE DATES

### **Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show**

January 19 & 20, 2012

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
St. Cloud, MN

### **Beginning Grower Workshop: Your Future in Vegetable Production**

January 18, 2012

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
St. Cloud, MN

### **Beginning Grower Workshop: Beginning Berry Production**

January 18, 2012

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
St. Cloud, MN

### **Is A CSA Right for You?**

January 18, 2012

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
St. Cloud, MN

### **Food Safety / GAPs Workshop:**

#### **Write Your Own Food Safety Plan**

January 18, 2012

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
St. Cloud, MN

## Community Supported Agriculture: Is a CSA right for you?

Increased interest in local foods and strengthening the connection between producer and consumer has led to rapid growth in the number of farms offering their customers a weekly “share” from the farm. Customers pay a set fee in exchange for a weekly box filled with the farm’s bounty. The customer also assumes some of the farmers’ risk if weather conditions or pests impact production.

### Is a CSA right for you? Can you improve your CSA?

Join a discussion led by CSA producers during a full-day workshop on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at the St. Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, MN.

Some of the topics that will be discussed are:

What is a CSA and how does it work?

What are the benefits of having the CSA? Are there pitfalls? Is it something you should consider? Is there room for more CSAs?

What crops will you include in your shares? What crops will your customers expect or request?

How do you manage your crops – planting and harvesting for an even and continuous supply. How many shares can you supply? How many weeks?

Do you need special tools & equipment?

What geographical area will you serve? How do you plan drop points? Tips for rationing, packaging and delivering.

What type of shares should you offer? Summer, fall, winter or a combination?

What will it cost? How much should you charge for a share? Can your CSA make money?

Where do you find members? How much promotion/advertising should you do? What is most effective?

What “extras” are included with the shares? Newsletters, info on ways to prepare the products, etc. Will you host on-farm events? Will you ask your customers to help in the field?

Cooperative CSA – Is it an option? What are the regulations? Do you need to be bonded? When do you become a food handler? How do you network and find the right producers and product mix? Can you add processed products, eggs, meats, cheese, etc.?

Other considerations – Insurance and Mother Nature’s wrath

Planning for the future: Should you expand? Increase the number of shares? Offer additional types of shares?

What do I know now that I should have known when I started?

The agenda and information about the presenters will be included in the February newsletter.

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

St. Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center

Cost: \$75.00 per person

Registration: 8:00 – 8:30 am

Workshop: 8:30 – 5:00 pm

(Lunch is included with registration)

Sponsored by the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, USDA Risk Management Agency and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

### Registration Form: – CSA Workshop

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional registrants from this farm business:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ individuals @ \$75.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send registration form and payment to:

MFVGA

15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE

Ham Lake, MN 55304



## 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.**

The MFVGA Newsletter is published five times a year (February, April, July, October and December) in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Editorial office: MFVGA, c/o Marilyn Nysetvold Johnson, Exec. Coordinator, 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304. Phone: 763-434-0400 Fax: 763-413-9585. Please address all correspondence, advertising and membership inquiries to MFVGA at the above address. Deadlines for future issues: The first day of the month preceding publication (For example: March 1st for the April issue).

The information in this MFVGA Newsletter is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is implied.

## Wednesday Night “Bonus” Session

Join other growers on Wednesday evening, January 18, 2012 for a Farm Safety Forum. We all know the importance of farm safety practices, but sometimes we get distracted or take ‘short-cuts’ that result in band-aids or trips to the local emergency room.

We encourage you to come to this session (it’s free) and talk about your experiences and what you have learned and share your tips to help others improve their skills. We can all learn from each other. If you’ve been in the business a while – share your experiences. If you’re new to the business – there’s no better way to learn than to talk with other growers.

Michele Schermann and Cindy Tong will use the information from the forum to help develop a series of Farm Safety Briefs. Your input and stories on Wednesday evening will help them determine which topics they should focus on. Your participation will help specialty crop producers be better equipped to create a safe working environment for their farms, staff and families.

The session will be held at the St. Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center beginning at 7:00 p.m. and it will run as long as you have stories to tell.



## Dr. Amanda Gevens to Speak on Identification and Management of Diseases of High Value Vegetable Crops

Dr. Amanda Gevens is an Assistant Professor & Extension Plant Pathologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Geven’s research interests include the development of integrated disease management programs for potatoes and vegetables in production and storage, investigation of biological features of the late blight and other water mold pathogens which promote persistence and infection, and evaluation of fumigation and alternatives to fumigation for the control of soilborne pathogens in vegetable systems.

Dr. Gevens will offer presentations on the identification and management of common and most problematic diseases of high value vegetable crops, including tomato, cucurbit and basil. Nuances of tomato disease management in season-extending high tunnels will also be discussed.

The Siegers Seed Co. ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Siegers Seed Co. at 1-800-962-4999

[www.siegers.com](http://www.siegers.com)

[www.superfreakpumpkin.com](http://www.superfreakpumpkin.com)



**Beginning Grower Workshops**  
**January 18, 2012**  
**St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center**  
**St. Cloud, MN**



Sponsored by the  
**Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association**  
**University of Minnesota Extension**  
**USDA – Risk Management Agency**

The Beginning Grower Workshops are designed for people thinking about starting or expanding a commercial vegetable or berry operation. 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.

**Your Future in Vegetable Production**

Registration: 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.  
 Workshop: 8:30 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.  
 (Lunch is included with registration.)

- Topics:
- Planning Your Future in Vegetable Production
  - Being a Business
    - Marketing, accounting, licenses, permits, tax numbers, etc.
  - Location, Location, Location
  - Principles of Raised Beds, Mulches and Rowcovers
  - Soils 101
  - Water When You Need It
  - Disease Identification 101
  - Managing Insect Pests
  - Weed Biology
  - Getting Safe and High Quality Product to Market
  - Managing the Logistics of Multiple Crops and Markets

**Beginning Berry Production**

Registration: 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.  
 Workshop: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
 (Lunch is included with registration.)

- Topics:
- So, You Want to Start a Berry Farm... Introductions and goals
  - Assessing and Accessing Your Market
    - Market research, consumer audience, competition
  - Being a Business
    - Accounting, licenses, permits, tax numbers, etc.
  - Getting Ready for Planting and Strawberry Production Basics
    - Pre-plant preparation, variety selection, planting tips, setting up a field
  - Grower Profile
  - Raspberry Production Basics
  - Blueberry Production Basics
  - Marketing Tips and Tricks
  - Questions and Answers

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

The Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show will be held on Thursday and Friday, January 19 & 20, 2012 at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention 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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_ V Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Berry Workshop \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$75 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vegetable Workshop \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$75 = \_\_\_\_\_

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.

“Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire.”

– Reggie Leach

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

– Andrew Carnegie

“Knowledge is power.” – Francis Bacon

***Plan to join us in St. Cloud in January and watch the newsletter for more information on ways to network with producers, increase your knowledge and grow your business.***

★ ★ Session Spotlight ★ ★

### Healthy Soil – Building the House for Biology

Mark Boen from Bluebird Gardens in Fergus Falls, MN will discuss how to watch nutritional density and flavor rise in your produce when you set the stage for bacteria, fungi and earthworms to live in your soil. This session will address the all important chemistry, physiology and biology in the soil and how cover crops feed this life. Mark will speak during the General Session on Thursday morning, January 19, 2012. See pages 10 & 11 for the full educational program.

### Comments from the 2011 Conference:

#### What part of the conference did you enjoy the most?

Grower participation.

The combination of important information and creative presentation.

Fabulous speakers & access to them. Thank you!!

Talking with other producers.

The grower-given presentations – especially the practices they do for a particular crop from start to finish.

Meeting other growers.

The Stokes Seeds ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Stokes Seeds at 1-800-263-7233

[www.StokeSeeds.com](http://www.StokeSeeds.com)

# U of M GLEANINGS

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

The October issue of Smithsonian magazine included an article<sup>1</sup> on giant pumpkins and the people who grow them. The pumpkins can become heavier than some subcompact automobiles - 2011's record was 1818.5 pounds (!), produced by Jim and Kelsey Bryson of Quebec, Canada. Some of the folks who raise these pumpkins (actually *Cucurbita maxima*, not *C. pepo*) use special nutrient brews and/or microorganism concoctions including mycorrhizae or soil bacteria, in addition to the usual fertilizers.

The mycorrhizae concoctions are generally mixes of fungi that penetrate the roots of plants and form short-lived structures in the roots, called arbuscules. In exchange for carbon from the plants, the fungi provide the plants with nutrients, most often phosphorus, nitrogen, and some micronutrients, as well as protect plants against some stresses<sup>2</sup>. They are everywhere in soil, with about 70-90% of plants involved in symbioses with arbuscular mycorrhizae. These fungi are completely dependent on the plant for growth and reproduction. Because the mycorrhizal concoctions are blends, it is often difficult to subject these mixes to rigorous scientific scrutiny. To be able to state that something is effective, it's best to test the "something" in isolation from other complicating factors, otherwise one doesn't know if an effect is due to the "something" or some other thing in the system.

However, one of the bacterial brews used by giant pumpkin growers contains a single bacterium, *Azospirillum brasilense*. This bacterium is a free-living nitrogen-fixer, but although it may fix nitrogen, it doesn't seem to share it with its host plant. One scientific paper<sup>3</sup> showed that *A. brasilense* could increase the height, dry weight, and stem circumference of 30 to 45 day-old tomato seedlings. However, the effects were not due to the bacterium's nitrogen-fixing ability because the scientists got the same results with *A. brasilense* bacteria that lost this ability. It seems to be generally accepted that the bacteria increase the density and length of plant roots by secreting plant growth promoting substances<sup>4</sup>. Also, although some growth promotion is seen with seedlings, differences disappear with time in the field, especially if the soil is fertile, with relatively high organic matter. Any increases in yield were observed in light soil with low to intermediate levels of nitrogen fertility and moisture.

Most of the scientific studies of *A. brasilense* were done with grasses, like sorghum, corn, and wheat. Besides the study with tomato seedlings mentioned above, one other study was done with a vegetable. Bean seedlings were also found to increase root mass when seeds were inoculated with *A. brasilense* and the plants grown hydroponically<sup>5</sup>, but because no yield data were obtained, it's not known whether the bacterial treatment resulted in more seeds. Recently, studies have been done testing the effects of inoculating

greenhouse-grown marigolds and Jamaican Scotch Bonnet peppers with *A. brasilense*<sup>6,7</sup>. There were no significant effects on plant heights, marigold flower numbers, marigold flower bud size, or pepper shoot and root weights due to the bacteria, but plants were well-fertilized and potted in commercial soil mixes, a situation that, according to the grass studies, would not be expected to show any significant effects.

So are giant pumpkin growers wasting money buying *A. brasilense* microbial brews? There's no scientific evidence because nobody's done the study, but it's probably a good thing that giant pumpkin growers are doing it for the fun and challenge, and not for profit.

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup>Borrell, B. 2011. Smithsonian, October 2011, pp. 98-106.
- <sup>3</sup>Bashan, Y, M Singh, and H Levanony. 1989. Canadian Journal of Botany 67:2429-2434.
- <sup>7</sup>Buabeng, F, LO Lee, CP Cotton, FM Hashem, RB Dadson. 2011. HortScience 46:S277 (Abstract 412).
- <sup>2</sup>Denison, RF, ET Kiers. 2011. Current Biology 21:R775-R785.
- <sup>4</sup>Dobbelaere, S. et al. 2001. Australian Journal of Plant Physiology 28: 871-879.
- <sup>6</sup>Dorman, MH, CP Cotton, and FM Hashem. 2011. HortScience 46:S251 (Abstract 405).
- <sup>5</sup>Vedder-Weiss, D. et al. 1999. Symbiosis 26: 363-377.

The Rispens Seeds, Inc. ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Rispens Seeds, Inc. at  
1-888-874-0241  
[www.rispensseeds.com](http://www.rispensseeds.com)

## Garlic – Continued

If you heard Jerry Ford's presentation on garlic at last year's conference you may have been one of the people who said Jerry needed more time. Well, we're giving Jerry more time. Jerry Ford will be back for the 2012 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference to continue the discussion of growing garlic in the Upper Midwest. Plan to join him on Friday afternoon, Jan. 20th. For more information, see the Specialty Crops program on page 11.



The Nourse Farms ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Nourse Farms at  
413-665-2658  
[www.noursefarms.com](http://www.noursefarms.com)

## Employee Management Skills for Today: Planning for Success

Agricultural producers in Minnesota rely more heavily than ever on a hired workforce, family and non-family employees, to successfully produce food. This is a significant resource, which most of our farm operators have never learned how to manage. After all, farmers consider themselves producers, not personnel managers.

To help farm operators do a better job of being good employers and to help them understand regulations under which they operate, University of Minnesota Extension has prepared "Employee Management Skills for Today – Planning for Success," a series of topics built on the most common questions raised by Minnesota agricultural employers.

Workshop topics include legal issues and taxes, communications, the hiring process and compensation.

We are currently planning a workshop to be held in March 2012. Further information and a registration form will be included in the February newsletter.

The Adams County Nursery, Inc. (A C N) ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact A C N, Inc. at  
1-800-377-3106  
[www.acnursery.com](http://www.acnursery.com)

The Ag Resource, Inc. ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Ag Resource, Inc. at  
218-847-9351 or 1-800-288-6650

## Food Safety is Good Business



Protect your business and your customers by reducing your risk of microbial contamination. Decreasing the chance that your product will make your customers sick also decreases your potential liability. Good Agricultural Practices are what you do to keep

pathogens off your product and those practices are detailed in your food safety plan.

### Write Your Own Food Safety Plan

Nobody knows your business like you do. The time you spend now writing your own plan will be a bargain compared to the time you could spend later if there was a problem, and the potential loss of sales and product.

Minimizing any potential problem is just good business and developing and implementing a food safety plan helps minimize potential problems. Documenting daily cooler temperatures every morning can clearly show a problem with your refrigeration early enough to get it fixed before you add A LOT of produce to your compost pile.

### GAPs: Write Your Own Food Safety Plan Workshop

A Food Safety/GAPs Workshop will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The workshop will be held at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, MN.

This workshop, conducted by Michele Schermann (Agricultural Health and Safety Research Fellow with the University of Minnesota), will educate producers on how Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) can help minimize food safety risks.

You will learn what is necessary for a successful USDA GAP/GHP audit and begin to work on a food safety plan which can be incorporated into a GAP audit.

Even if you don't need a GAPs audit and no one is asking you for a food safety plan, it's a good idea to have one. Many growers are already doing a lot of record keeping and in many instances you just need to tweak your existing record keeping. Templates to help you create your own food safety plan will be provided.

### Workshop Topics:

- A review of produce safety issues and market implications
- GAPs: Worker training, water management
- GAPs: Manure, composting management, wildlife management
- GAPs: Harvest, packinghouse sanitation, pest control, transportation
- GAPs: Record keeping, traceability and crisis management
- Development of a Farm Food Safety Plan: Resources and getting started
- PLUS grower perspectives and so much more!

### What to Bring:

- Your laptop (recommended). If you do not have a laptop, bring paper and pen; you will be provided with the same material as the people using laptops.
- A list of crops you want to be USDA GAP/GHP certified (current and/or future)

- Farm maps with fields outlined that contain the crops to be certified
- Packinghouse floor plan that shows product flow from the time it enters the packinghouse until it leaves (if you have a packinghouse).
- A list of contracted services (e.g., pest control, portable toilet rental/servicing, trucking/transportation)

### Workshop Details:

**January 18, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**(Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.)**

**St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center**

**10 4th Ave. S., St. Cloud, MN**

**Cost: \$40 per person – includes lunch**

### Registration Form: – Food Safety / GAPs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Farm Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail

Additional registrants from this farm business:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ individuals @ \$40.00 each \$\_\_\_\_\_

Send registration form and payment to:

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

Sponsored by MFVGA and the MN Department of Agriculture / Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.



# Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN  
January 19 & 20, 2012

The Crop Production Services (CPS) – Galesville, WI ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact Crop Production Services – Galesville at 608-539-2090 or 1-800-551-5708

## Beginning Grower Workshops: Beginning Berry Production

### Your Future in Vegetable Production

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN  
January 18, 2012

## Community Supported Agriculture: Is a CSA right for you?

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN  
January 18, 2012

## Food Safety/GAPs Workshop

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN  
January 18, 2012

Accommodations are available at:

### Best Western – Kelly Inn 320-253-0606

Single or Double Rate – \$82 per night

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

### Mention “Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers” to receive conference room rates.

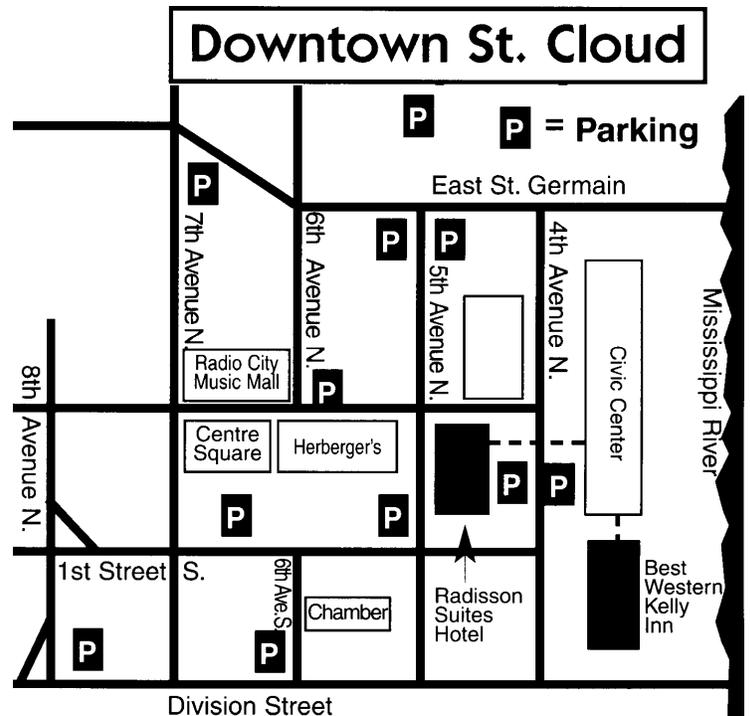
Block will be released on Dec. 17, 2011.

\* \* \* \*

### The Radisson Suites Hotel 320-654-1661

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

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This issue of the MFVGA Newsletter is sponsored, in part, by the USDA – Risk Management Agency, Risk Management Education Division.

For more information on the Risk Management Agency visit their website at [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov).

Information on the Farm Service Agency can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

**Upper Midwest Regional  
Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference  
January 19 & 20, 2012**

Sponsored by  
The Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association  
in cooperation with the  
University of Minnesota Extension Service  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
USDA – Risk Management Agency

**Thursday morning, January 19, 2012**

**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, University of Minnesota  
10:00 – 10:30 Break to the Trade Show  
10:30 – 11:30 Healthy Soil – Building the House for Biology – Mark Boen, Bluebird Gardens, Fergus Falls, MN  
11:30 – 12:00 Grower Profile – Jerry Mills, Mills Apple Farm, Marine, Illinois

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

***Registrations received before  
December 31, 2011  
qualify for the  
“Early Bird” Drawing –  
A gift certificate for  
a night at the Kelly Inn.***

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. Updated information will be printed in the February Newsletter. Program updates can also be found on the MFVGA website at [www.mfvga.org](http://www.mfvga.org).

**Thursday afternoon, January 19, 2012**

<b>1:15 – 4:30</b>	<b>Session I: Berry Session</b>
1:15 – 2:15	Year in Review – Grower Participation
2:15 – 3:00	Grower Profile – Darwin and Judy Pless
3:00 – 3:30	Break to the Trade Show
3:30 – 4:30	Grower Profile
<b>1:15 – 4:30</b>	<b>Session II: High Tunnel – General</b>
1:15 – 2:15	Setting Up High Tunnels
2:15 – 3:00	First Year Experiences – Paul Schultz, Schultz Farm Organics
3:00 – 3:30	Break to the Trade Show
3:30 – 4:00	Secondary Crops – Kohlrabi, Small Cabbage & Lettuce – Mark Boen, Bluebird Gardens, Fergus Falls, MN
4:00 – 4:30	Rodent Management – John Loegering, University of Minnesota – Crookston, Natural Resources Department
<b>1:15 – 4:30</b>	<b>Session III: Tomatoes &amp; Peppers</b>
1:15 – 2:00	Integrated Management of Common and Infamous Foliar Diseases of Tomato in Field and High Tunnel – Dr. Amanda Gevens, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department of Plant Pathology
2:00 – 2:30	Why Graft Tomatoes? – Cassie Boadway, University of Mn, Dept. of Horticultural Science
2:30 – 3:00	Hot Pepper Varieties – Jason Williamson, Siegers Seed Company
3:00 – 3:30	Break to the Trade Show
3:30 – 4:30	Grower Profile
<b>1:15 – 4:30</b>	<b>Session IV: Sweet Corn</b>
1:15 – 1:45	Weed Management – Dr. Roger Becker, University of Minnesota – Dept. of Agronomy & Plant Genetics
1:45 – 2:45	Western Bean Cutworm – Dr. Bill Hutchison, University of Minnesota – Entomology Dept.
2:45 – 3:00	Break to the Trade Show
3:00 – 3:30	Nitrogen Management – Dr. Charles Rohwer, University of Minnesota, Southern Research & Outreach Center
3:30 – 4:30	Cover Crops
<b>4:45 – 5:15</b>	<b>MFVGA Business Meeting</b>
<b>5:15 – 6:30</b>	<b>Social Hour in the Trade Show Area</b>
<b>6:30</b>	<b>Minnesota Grown Banquet</b>
	Speaker: Jerry Mills, Mills Apple Farm in Marine, Illinois Columnist for the <i>Vegetable Growers News</i> and <i>Fruit Growers News</i>



## Beginning Grower Workshops Planned

Beginning Grower Workshops will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center (formerly the St. Cloud Civic Center) in St. Cloud, MN before the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference.

If you are wondering what it takes to start a commercial vegetable farm or berry patch or if you are interested in learning how to turn a large garden into a profitable venture, plan to attend the Beginning Grower Workshops.

Additional information and a registration form can be found on page 4. The Beginning Grower Workshops are sponsored by MFVGA, University of Minnesota Extension and the USDA-Risk Management Agency, Risk Management Education Division. These organizations are equal opportunity providers.

## 2012 Trade Show Exhibitors

The following exhibitors have already signed up for the 2012 Trade Show held in conjunction with the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. The Trade Show will be held at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota on Thursday and Friday, January 19 & 20, 2012. More exhibitors and additional exhibitor information will be included in the next issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Ag Resource, Inc.

Agro-K Corporation

BCS/Kaye Corporation

Crop Production Services – Galesville, WI

Haygrove, Inc.

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Driftwatch Program

Minnesota Farmers Union

Minnesota Grown

Rispens Seeds, Inc.

Rockford Package Supply

Roeters Farm Equipment, Inc.

Rupp Seeds, Inc.

Seedway, LLC

Siegers Seed Company

Windridge Implements

**Exhibitors:** Sign up today so your information will be included in the next newsletter. Contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or [mfvga@msn.com](mailto:mfvga@msn.com) for an application for exhibit space.



## Order Minnesota Grown Bags Early

MFVGA is planning the next 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.

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 January 19 & 20, 2012. Samples of the plastic bags can also be requested from the MFVGA office. **You must be licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo to order the bags.**

### Reusable Bags

These large SmarTotes are hunter green with white printing. Made of non-woven polypropylene, the bags have a reinforced bottom and fold together and snap closed for easy storage.

The reusable bags can be customized with your logo for a minimal fee. The SmarTotes must be ordered in quantities of 50. A minimum order of 500 bags is required to customize the bags. Samples of the reusable bags are not available, but we will have some on display at the conference in January.

We are currently finalizing pricing, etc. for both bag styles. If you would like more information, please contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or [mfvga@msn.com](mailto: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.

If you have ordered bags in the past or have expressed an interest in the bags, you will receive order forms for both styles. 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 these bags next year, you need to place your order by the deadline. Minimums will apply.

# Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

January 19 & 20, 2012 – St. Cloud, MN

All educational sessions will be held at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center.

Sponsored by: *Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, USDA-Risk Management Agency*



Attendee's Name (Please print)

Attendee's Name (Please print)	Full Registration Conference & Trade Show (Thursday & Friday) January 19 & 20			Thursday Night Banquet	One-day Registration Circle One Thursday Friday			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	
	\$90.00	\$30.00	\$170.00	\$25.00	\$70.00	\$30.00	\$100.00	\$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, January 13th to be considered pre-registered.

Individual or Farm Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your primary crop?  Vegetables  Berries  Apples  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday and Friday registration includes admittance to all educational programs, trade show and a copy of the *Proceedings* book. It does not include the Thursday 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 \_\_\_\_\_ V Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this form with payment to:*

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

# MFVGA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

## October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012

Farm/Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Hail Netting Publication Available

*Hail Netting for Minnesota Apple Producers*, a publication researched and written by Thaddeus McCamant, Ph.D., Specialty Crops instructor with the Northland Community & Technical College, is now available free of charge from the MFVGA office. Funding for the publication was provided through a partnership agreement between the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and the United States Department of Agriculture – Risk Management Agency, Community Outreach & Assistance Partnership Program.

The publication includes sections on the science of hail and hailstorms, structures that support hail netting, materials and costs, the influence of hail netting on tree growth and fruit quality, the economics of hail netting, grower perspectives, planning and constructing a hail netting structure and a reference section.

To request a copy, contact the MFVGA office at 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304 or call the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or send an e-mail to [mfvga@msn.com](mailto:mfvga@msn.com).

## MFVGA is –

- A leader in education for specialty crop producers.
- A leader in consumer outreach.
- An advocate for our members, markets and industry.
- Building partnerships to expand opportunities for members.
- Working to stimulate and support research and advancements in good agricultural practices.

Join or renew today.

The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association at 612-625-7766 or 1-800-510-6242.

[www.mncia.org](http://www.mncia.org)

# Business Workshop for Small and Specialty Crop Farms: Putting It All Together

Saturday, February 4, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Ridgewater College

2 Century Ave., Hutchinson, MN

## Workshop Schedule:

Registration: 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

General Session: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Business Planning: Why, What & How

Please select the sessions you plan to attend.

### Breakout Session #1: 10:15 – 11:45 a.m.

**Goal Setting 101**

I'm not sure where I'm going! Let's sit down and begin the process of creating your roadmap to success.

**Creating My Starting Point: The Balance Sheet**

Knowing your starting point is critical to you and your business. We will start creating your balance sheet right in this session.

**What Kind of Records Do I Need?**

We will review the types of records that you will need and suggest methods of recording and keeping that information so it can be useful to your business.

### Lunch: 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Included with registration)

### Breakout Session #2: 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

**Sources of Financing**

I don't have enough cash! Let's look at some options for financing your venture.

**Developing A Cash Flow & Budgets**

How much can I expect to earn and where will it go? Setting budgets and cash flows will help you reach your goals.

**How Do I Market My Product?**

Growing is one challenge. Selling it is another. Join us for a discussion on marketing strategies.

### Break 2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

### Breakout Session #3: 2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

**How Do I Interpret My Financial Data?**

Am I making any money? We will look at how to interpret the information you may already have and what it can tell you.

**What Is My Cost of Production?**

Not sure how much to charge or if you are making any money? Let's work through an enterprise analysis to help you find your bottom line.

**Putting Your Business Plan Together**

Do you have all of the information, but don't know what to do with it? We will help you begin the process of developing your own business plan.

### Wrap-up 3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

**Sponsors:** Program presented by Ridgewater College Farm Business Management Educators.

Program sponsored by the Ridgewater College Farm Business Management Education Program, the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the USDA Risk Management Agency, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

For workshop information contact Steve Zenk at 320-523-5468 or [steve.zenk@ridgewater.edu](mailto:steve.zenk@ridgewater.edu)

For registration questions, please contact Kim Tensen at 320-222-7606 or [kim.tensen@ridgewater.edu](mailto:kim.tensen@ridgewater.edu)

Campus maps can be found at [www.ridgewater.edu](http://www.ridgewater.edu).

## Registration Form:

Please return the form with payment by Thursday, January 26, 2012.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Registrants from this farm business:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed

1st Registrant @ \$50.00 each \$50.00

Additional @ \$25.00 each \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark your workshop selections. Please make a copy for additional registrants and include with the registration. Thanks!!

Send Registration to:

Kim Tensen  
Ridgewater College FBM  
PO Box 1097  
Willmar, MN 56201



## 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 Thursday and Friday educational sessions. Scholarships may also be requested for the Beginning Grower workshops to be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012. Scholarships are provided through funding from the USDA Risk Management Agency. 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 2012 conference must be received in the MFVGA office and approved before January 6, 2012. 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](mailto:mfvga@msn.com).

## MFVGA Policy on Conference Registration Cancellations and Refunds:

MFVGA will refund registration fees for the 2012 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in full if the MFVGA office is notified before Friday, January 13, 2012. If the MFVGA office is notified after January 13, 2012, but before Monday, January 16, 2012, 75% of the registration amount will be refunded. No refund will be issued if registrations are cancelled Monday, January 16, 2012 or later.



## What Is Farm Management?

Steve Zenk

Ridgewater College, Farm Business Management (Olivia Site)

I have been a farm business management instructor for Ridgewater College for almost 24 years. During that time I have been asked many times "what is farm management?"

The best definition comes from when I was a very young student back in 9th grade agriculture class. My high school agriculture instructor explained that the business of farming was like a three-legged stool. The three legs of agriculture are land, labor and capital. A brief description of the three legs would be: land, this is your access to quality resources, such as land that can produce a product. Labor, is your access to resources to get the physical work done in a timely fashion, this includes both manual and machinery labor. Capital is access to the financial resources to obtain quality land and labor. This includes record keeping, and tools to track savings and investments as well as tools to obtain outside credit.

The farm business stands on these three legs. The business will only reach the level as the shortest leg allows. The maintenance of these three legs is farm management. So management is working with all farm resources and keeping them in balance and giving the business the opportunity to grow. All farm businesses deal with these issues regardless of size. All farms need land and resources, all farms need a labor force to get work done, all farms need capital to pay the bills and grow the business. It makes little difference if you grow two acres of vegetables or two thousand acres of corn and soybeans.

How are you doing managing your farm business? Which leg of your three-legged stool is holding your business back from being as successful as you want it to be? Are you happy with your current management system?

Over the years of working with farm businesses of all sizes I have found that few have completely conquered all areas of management. Think about the areas where you are strong and those areas where you could improve in the management of your business.

**Great businesses build strengths and minimize weakness.**

The farm business management programs through the MNSCU college system can help you discover your strengths and weaknesses in your business and help you to become more successful. There is special tuition assistance available for Minnesota fruit and vegetable growers. If you are interested, please contact me at [steve.zenk@ridgewater.edu](mailto:steve.zenk@ridgewater.edu) and I will help you contact an instructor near you.



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## Time to get in the book!

As the year winds down and the holidays are in full swing, it's time to join or renew your membership in the Minnesota Grown Program. Consumer demand for healthy, locally grown products direct from the farm has never been stronger and we're thankful to be able to help them find you in our annual directory. We're also happy to help you connect with businesses through our new online database and hope you'll participate in that new opportunity if you haven't already done so.

Here are three specific ways you can get involved in Minnesota Grown for 2012.

- I. Minnesota Grown Member:** The annual membership (license) is only \$20 and provides use of the trademarked Minnesota Grown logo and unlimited free promotional items, such as an assortment of stickers, veggie tags, price cards and twist ties. The license is always required to be a part of the Minnesota Grown Directory.
- II. Minnesota Grown Directory Listing:** Directory listings are available to Minnesota growers including nurseries, ranchers, meat markets selling MN Grown meats, farmers' markets and others who raise or grow agricultural products and sell them direct to consumers. The Directory listing is only \$40 and if you sign up before March, you will be in both the printed and online directories.
  - A. We print 190,000 copies of the Minnesota Grown Directory and distribute them statewide – through listed farms and markets, tourist information centers, libraries, real estate agents, and just about anybody that can find an audience of local foods lovers. MFVGA members are encouraged to help us get those guides into the hands of consumers.
  - B. The online Directory has had over 200,000 unique visitors this year! On your online listing, you can add a picture of your farm or feature your products. You also have the ability to post upcoming events or needed information in the News & Events section of your page. This content should be changed periodically to ensure online information is fresh and up-to-date.

**III. Minnesota Grown Wholesale Database:** This is designed for chefs, grocers, distributors and schools or other food service buyers to use to find a local provider. Buyers can search based on geographical location as well as other criteria, such as whether or not a farm is GAP certified, certified organic and/or carries a certain level of liability insurance. We will also be working with the Farm-2-School program on new initiatives and ways to promote this database. This is free for all Minnesota Grown members.

Don't miss your opportunity; call Jessica Rovie today for more information or to sign up. 651-210-6170 or [Jessica.rovie@state.mn.us](mailto:Jessica.rovie@state.mn.us).

*Minnesota Grown information is supplied to MFVGA by Paul Hugunin (651-201-6510) and Jessica Rovie (651-201-6170) 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.*

Seasons Greetings

The Stark Bro's Nurseries & Orchards Co. ad has been removed because of issues related to uploading this publication to the website.

You can contact the Stark Bro's Nurseries & Orchards Co. at 1-800-435-8733.

## Are You Thinking About Making & Marketing Jams & Jellies?

Did you know that some fruits won't jell? Do you know the difference between a "spread" and a "jam"? Why is rapid boiling important? Do I really have to follow directions? Can I triple the recipe and get done faster? Why didn't it set? What kind of label do I need if I want to sell my product?

Jams and jellies can be processed in the home and sold at farmers' markets and community events in Minnesota. If you sell your jam and jelly at farmers' markets or community events, we encourage you to attend the "Making and Marketing Jams and Jellies" workshop.

The workshop will address the operational guidelines for the sale of jams & jellies, how to produce a quality product, food safety from harvest to process, home processing and canning equipment, labeling and documentation, cleanliness and sanitation.

The workshop will be led by Deb Botzek-Linn and Lou Ann Jopp, Food Science Educators with the University of Minnesota Extension.

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

We are currently finalizing details for ONE workshop to be held in the Twin Cities in March. Registration information will be included in the February newsletter.

### ★ ★ Session Spotlight ★ ★

## Plant Disease Clinic

The University of Minnesota Plant Disease Clinic is a multi-disciplinary laboratory that serves commercial growers as well as the general public. The services provided include routine plant disease diagnosis (e.g., leaf spots, root rot diseases, cankers, wilt diseases, etc.), nematode analysis, seed quality testing, viral analysis, insect identification, and contract research.

Disease diagnosis is a critical initial step for successful disease management. Several different diseases and/or plant health problems can cause similar symptoms; therefore, it is important to obtain an accurate diagnosis to choose the best disease-control measures and to know what is affecting your crops or plants.

Find out how the U of M Plant Disease Clinic can help you during the "Emerging Pests" session on Friday morning, January 20, 2012. The complete program can be found on pages 10 & 11.

## Do you sell your home-canned foods at farmers' markets? Are you "Peddling Your Pickles Safely?"

The "Peddling Your Pickles Safely" workshop is 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 regarding what types of products can be sold and where those products 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 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 and where can I get one?
- 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. The workshop will be conducted by University of Minnesota Regional Extension Educators in Food Science.

We are currently working on the scheduling details and plan to hold only ONE workshop in the Twin Cities area. Details and registration information will be included in the February newsletter and posted on the MFVGA website at [www.mfvga.org](http://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 and the USDA Risk Management Agency. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

## **USDA Invests in Crop Insurance Education to Help Small and Underserved Producers in 47 States Manage Risk, Remain Productive**

Washington, October 28, 2011 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) will support crop insurance education and outreach in 47 states to ensure that small and underserved producers get the information they need to effectively manage their risk and remain productive. Awards totaling approximately \$13.6 million from two RMA programs – Targeted States and the Education and Outreach programs – will support thousands of American farmers, ranchers and producers.

“Despite hardships and setbacks due to extreme weather conditions in many parts of the country, American agriculture is experiencing its strongest year overall thanks to the dedication and resilience of our farmers and ranchers,” said Vilsack. “USDA is committed to diversity, inclusion and performance in everything we do, and we need to continue to ensure opportunities in agriculture for all Americans. Through these partnerships, traditionally underserved agricultural producers and those in targeted states will receive assistance in understanding and using risk management tools.”

The partnerships announced in October will provide farmers and ranchers access to a complete set of conferences, targeted instruction, strategies and networking opportunities at a local level.

The Risk Management Education and Outreach and Targeted States programs are designed to help ensure that farmers and ranchers effectively manage their risk through difficult periods, helping to maintain America’s robust food supply and the survival of small, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally under-served farmers. RMA administers these partnership projects as well as the Federal crop insurance program, with funding and authority from the Federal Crop Insurance Act.

RMA helps producers manage their business risks through effective, market-based risk solutions. RMA’s mission is to promote, support, and regulate sound risk management solutions to preserve and strengthen the economic stability of America’s agricultural producers. Federal crop insurance provides support to American producers as part of the “farm safety net.” A strong farm safety net is important to the vitality of American agriculture.

More information on risk management planning information and tools can be found on the RMA website at [www.rma.usda.gov/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/). These tools can help you better understand areas in your operation where you might have downside risk exposure and evaluate where you might have upside opportunities.

## **MFVGA Announces Receipt of USDA-RMA Agreement**

The Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is pleased to announce the receipt of a partnership agreement with the USDA Risk Management Agency to help provide a variety of educational opportunities and resources for specialty crop producers in the Upper Midwest. The agreement provides partial funding for the 2012 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, Beginning Grower Workshops and a number of other workshops and resources to help improve farm safety and farm management as well as information on production and marketing strategies.

Information on these opportunities will be shared in the MFVGA Newsletter.

**SEE YOU**

**IN**

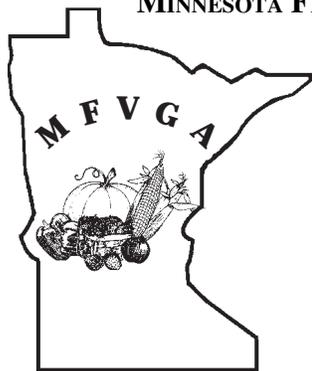
**ST. CLOUD**

## MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

c/o Marilyn Nysetvold Johnson, Exec. Coordinator  
15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE  
Ham Lake, MN 55304  
Phone: 763-434-0400  
Fax: 763-413-9585  
E-mail: [mfvga@msn.com](mailto:mfvga@msn.com)  
[www.mfvga.org](http://www.mfvga.org)

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## 2012 Strawberry and Raspberry Orders

Plan NOW to order your strawberry and raspberry plants for the 2012 season. If you have specific varieties that you are looking for, let us know now. If there are new varieties you'd like to try, let us know. **PLACE YOUR ORDER EARLY!!** MFVGA will be submitting a pre-order based on the varieties and quantities ordered last year. Every year there are varieties that sell out early. If you wait too long to order, we may not be able to get the varieties and the quantities that you want.

If you would like a berry plant order form, contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or [mfvga@msn.com](mailto:mfvga@msn.com).

### ★ ★ Session Spotlight ★ ★

## Cherries in Central Minnesota?

Sisters Pat Altrichter and Judy Heiling farm in the Randall/Browerville area of central Minnesota. After successfully adding Saskatoon berries to their U-pick operation they began exploring other fruits.

Sweet cherries don't survive the winter in their area, but then they learned about 'Evans', a newer variety of sour cherry from Canada that is flavorful and not as tart as most sour cherries. 'Evans' was also reportedly very hardy and Pat and Judy expected it would survive in central Minnesota.

Find out if cherries can be grown in central Minnesota when Pat and Judy share their cherry experiences during the Tree Fruit session on Friday afternoon, January 20, 2012. The complete program can be found on pages 10 & 11.

## ATTENTION TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS

The 2012 Upper Midwest Regional  
Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show  
will be held January 19 & 20, 2012 at the  
St. Cloud River's Edge Convention 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.

### ★ ★ Session Spotlight ★ ★

## Grower Profile - Mills Apple Farm



Conveniently located in the St. Louis "Metro East," Mills Apple Farm specializes in fresh fruit, both picked and pick-your-own. The apple and peach orchards are designed to provide a continuous supply of fresh tree-ripened fruit starting in mid-July with peaches and ending in November with apples. Different varieties of both fruits ripen at intervals throughout the season which means that fresh fruit is always available.

In addition to fresh fruit, Mills Apple Farm offers delicious, wholesome cider and the delicious aromas from the bakery tempt with their famous pies, cookies and other goodies. September and October bring family-oriented festivals. A petting zoo, children's play area, hayrides and educational school tours are also part of the operation.

Mills Apple Farm Vision – "Good fruit, good food and good fun." Find out more about Mills Apple Farm during the General Session on Thursday morning, January 19th.

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