



MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Ron Branch
Vice-President	Foster Mooney
Secretary- Treasurer	Dan Whitcomb
Board of Directors	
Floyd Broman	Terry Nennich
Kevin Edberg	Gary Pahl
Bill Jacobson	Mike Thorson
Executive Coordinator:	Marilyn Johnson

April 2002



NOTE FROM THE BOARD

Kevin Edberg – The Berry Patch
Forest Lake, MN

Hello!

I'm glad to be able to greet you as a (sort of!) new Board member of the MFVGA. This spring marks the beginning of my 25th year as a fruit and vegetable grower. During almost all of those years, I have been a member of a grower association: first, the Minnesota Berry Growers Association, and later, the MFVGA. I was also among the early growers who started the Minnesota Grown Promotion Group. It's been several years now since I've served on the MFVGA Board, but it's good to be back. Some of the most enjoyable professional relationships I have are those with other growers in this organization, and I hope I can help our organization serve all of you effectively.

The name of my farm is The Berry Patch, located near Forest Lake, MN. The farm has been in operation for a little over 30 years. I started working there in college as flunky labor, became farm manager, and later, the managing partner of the operation. Our biggest revenue crop is strawberries, but we also have several acres of blueberries and raspberries. We have dabbled with pumpkins, asparagus and other vegetable crops in the past, but currently specialize in the fruit crops.

I have a BS in Horticulture and Ag Economics from the U of M, have done graduate work in plant breeding and plant physiology. (I thought I was going to be a fruit breeder when I grew up...a northwoods, cold hardy Gregor Mendel.) But the more years I grow, the less I think I really know, and the more fascinated I remain with fruit crops and how they respond to changes in culture and environment. One of the areas that is particularly intriguing to me these days is the whole area of soil biology and "healthy soils", and their impact on fruit growth.

I don't earn my living from farming. The source of my farming subsidy is my work as the executive director of Cooperative Development Services, a non-profit organization that helps individuals form businesses that they own and control in all sectors of the economy. Though I travel a lot for my work, and am not home a lot, the most enjoyable times in my world are the times when I can walk my fields at sunset, see the tangible result of work, and be amazed by the beauty and mystery of Creation.

If there's one thing I hope for our organization, it's that we continue to find ways of working together, sharing knowledge, helping each other be successful. Life is too short for anything less. If there are ways your Board can make that happen for you, let us know!

Here's to the advent of spring, and a successful growing season for all of us!

2002 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Deadline Announced

St. Paul, Minnesota, March 20, 2002 – State Executive Director John Monson today announced that the federal regulations governing the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) have been published effective March 19, 2002. As a result of this publication, the deadline to apply for 2002 NAP coverage has been established as April 18, 2002. Monson said, “All producers in Minnesota who raise NAP crops need to have filed an application for coverage in their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and have paid the applicable fee by close of business April 18, 2002, in order to have coverage effective for year 2002. In addition, all crop year 2001 NAP crop yields must be reported to the producer's FSA county office by close of business April 18, 2002, in order to count toward the NAP Actual Production History (APH) for 2002. All 2002 APH yields must be reported by the application closing dates for 2003 coverage which may vary crop by crop.”

Any person who wishes to obtain a copy of the proposed regulations may do so by accessing the Government Printing Office (GPO) website: www.access.gpo.gov/ and clicking on GPO Access; Federal Register, 2002; Tuesday, March 19, 2002; Commodity Credit Corporation; TEXT. All comments should be submitted as directed in the proposed rules and must be received by April 17, 2002, to be considered.

Producers with questions concerning NAP should contact their county FSA office.

Thank You – Cindy, Jim and Cliff

Three MFVGA Board members completed their terms at the annual meeting during the 2002 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. Cindy Femling and Jim Hipp had both completed six years of service on the MFVGA Board of Directors. Cliff Rowe served on the Board for three years. We greatly appreciate their leadership and their contributions to the Board and to the association.

Foods for Health Conference – May 19 – 21, 2002

From “edible vaccines” to nutritionally enhanced items designed to prevent disease, agriculture today promises a healthier future for everyone. Integrating medicine with food will be the focus of the Foods for Health conference May 19-21, 2002 in Minneapolis. Hosted by the University of Minnesota's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, and the Academic Health Center, this National Agricultural Biotechnology Conference brings together nationally renowned food and health scientists with ethicists and consumer experts. To register, or for details on the conference, program, and speakers, to go the Web site (www.coafes.umn.edu/nabc2002) or call 612-625-6710.

Proceedings Books Available

If you were unable to attend the 2002 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, but would like a copy of the conference *Proceedings Book*, copies are available for \$12.00 each.

The *Proceedings* contains many of the talks given at the educational conference and includes information on apples, berry production, irrigation, pumpkins, sweet corn, high tunnel production and much more.

To receive a copy of the 2002 *Proceedings*, send your check for \$12.00 (payable to MFVGA) to the MFVGA office at 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304.

MFVGA Board Elects Officers for 2002

The MFVGA Board of Directors met on March 4, 2002 for their first meeting following the 2002 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show. The Board elected the following officers to serve for the coming year: President – Ronald Branch from Berry Ridge Farm in Alexandria, MN; Vice-President – Foster Mooney from Jewel Lane Farm in Chisago City, MN; and Secretary/Treasurer – Daniel Whitcomb from JQ Fruit Farm in Princeton, MN.

Additional Exhibitors at the 2002 Trade Show

The following exhibitors were present at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show on January 31 and February 1, 2002, but were not listed in the February 2002 issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Canterbury Park
Ecker's Equipment
Farm Service Agency
Innovative Packaging, Inc.
MAST International
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
Specialty Seeds
Temple Products, LLC
The Secret Garden
USDA – Risk Management Agency

Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors and Supporters

A number of exhibitors, other businesses and associations help support the annual educational conference and the MFVGA by contributing dollars towards our refreshments and by helping to defray other costs associated with the conference. With the continued increase in conference costs – refreshments, meeting space, etc., - their contributions help us keep your conference registration fees reasonable.

Sponsors and supporters of this year's Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference were the Central Minnesota Vegetable Growers Association, the St. Paul Growers Association, DeVries Manufacturing, Inc., DuPont Ag Products, Hennepin Co-Op Seed Exchange, Inc., Isanti County Equipment, Inc., Nelson's Vegetable Storage Systems, Inc., Seedway, Stokes Seeds, Inc., Syngenta Seeds and UAP Midwest – Howe.

Thanks also go to AgStar Financial Services for sponsoring the hors d'oeuvres for the Thursday evening social hour.

The following sponsors also provided the *Annual Midwest Vegetable Guide* for 2002 that was given to vegetable growers at the conference. Special thanks go to Dow AgroSciences LLC, DuPont Agricultural Products, FMC Corporation, Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc., and the University of Minnesota Vegetable IPM Program.

Thank You.

Risk Management Agency Requests Input from Vegetable and Flower Seed Producer Groups and Melon Producer Groups

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) intends to obtain input from producer groups before entering into contracts for research and development to increase participation in areas for agricultural commodities that may be underserved by the Federal crop insurance program. RMA believes this input is critical in determining the need and direction of research and potential development.

RMA requests input from groups or individuals representing melon producers and producers of vegetable and flower seeds so that their needs, concerns and other input may be considered before it enters into a contract for the research and possible development of risk management strategies or products for producers of these commodities. Of particular interest is any input that would help RMA determine the extent that producers want RMA to pursue such research and potential development or risk management strategies or products. RMA is also interested in receiving specific suggestions and concerns regarding the structure, scope, and limitations producers and producer groups want to be considered for such strategies or products. Anyone who is aware of insurance protection that is generally available from private companies to cover the risks that would likely be covered by recommended risk management strategies or production, is encouraged to advise RMA accordingly as indicated below.

Risk Management Agency
6501 Beacon Drive
Kansas City, MO 64133

MFVGA to Receive \$160,000 in USDA Specialty Crop Grant Money

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture awarded \$1.7 million in specialty crop grants as part of a one-time federal emergency farm assistance package designed to help stimulate the state's specialty crop industry. This is the first time emergency funds have been appropriated to non-program crops. Grant applications were submitted to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for review last fall and were judged by a number of criteria, including each specialty crop's share of the value of the state's overall specialty crop production.

The specialty crop grants are made possible due to a federal appropriation given to Minnesota by the federal government. Specialty crops are generally fruits and vegetables, but are specifically defined as any agricultural crop except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts and tobacco.

Of the \$160,000 awarded to the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, \$40,000 has been designated for marketing projects and \$120,000 has been designated for research projects, the educational conference and administrative support.

Marketing projects will be done in cooperation with the Minnesota Grown Program and other marketing groups. Projects will focus on wholesale promotions, development of materials that can be used by direct marketers and a cost share program for farmers' markets to increase their promotional efforts. Part of the money will also be used to help fund the Minnesota Grown Directory Passport Program. For more information on the Minnesota Grown Directory Passport Program, see the Minnesota Grown Notes.

Research dollars will be spent on the following fruit and vegetable projects:

Inexpensive Greenhouse (Hoop House) Innovation for Northern Climates

Blueberry Organic Growing Systems – Including Cover Crop Evaluation

Alternative Weed Control Systems for Strawberries –

 Flaming and Renovation Approach (Bearing Years: 2nd – 4th years)

 Novel Mulch, Cover Crop Approach (Establishment Year)

Small Fruit Cultivar Evaluations

Blueberry Pruning Systems

Strawberry Bacterial Angular Leaf Spot – Is it of Economic Importance?

Evaluation of Apple Cultivars for Zone 3 Hardiness Adaptability

Additional dollars will help fund outside speakers for the educational conference as well as increase promotional efforts. Watch for updates on the grant projects in future issues of the MFVGA Newsletter. Research results will also be presented at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference.

Other producer organizations receiving part of the specialty crop money include the Red River Potato Growers Association (\$420,000 for market development and field merchandising) and the Midwest Food Processors Association (\$300,000 for pest and disease prevention in sweet corn, peas and snap beans, and enhancement of a web-based information system). Also receiving grant money was the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association, the Minnesota Christmas Tree Association and the Minnesota Apple Growers, among others.

2002 Educational Conference Successful

The Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show drew almost 500 people to St. Cloud, MN for the three-day conference and two-day trade show held January 31 through February 2, 2002.

Area growers were given the opportunity to attend a variety of sessions on berry, vegetable and apple production as well as various marketing sessions.

If you didn't attend this year's banquet – you missed a wonderful event. Bob Ash's talk "Change is Inevitable, Growth is Optional" had those who heard him laughing through the rest of the conference, especially in the elevator.

The MFVGA Board and the University of Minnesota Extension Service is already starting to plan the 2003 conference. It's not too early for you to plan to attend. The 2003 educational conference and trade show will be held on February 6 – 8, 2003 at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN. See you there!

Changes Announced by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

The following information was received from Steven D. Wiyatt, Director, Statistics Division of the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) recently completed an extensive program review of the statistics provided for all commodities. The goal of the review was to identify areas where efficiencies could be gained with minimum impact on data users. As a result of this review, changes are being made to several programs, including the vegetable production and chemical usage statistics program. These changes will begin with the 2002 crop year.

Currently, production statistics are published annually and chemical usage statistics are published biennially for thirty-five vegetable and melon crops. For seven vegetables, annual production and biennial chemical usage information is available for both fresh market and processing utilization. In addition, area harvested by cropping season or contracted area and production are published in the seasonal *Vegetables* report published in January, April, July, September and October for many of the crops. After a careful review of the combined vegetable production and chemical usage estimating program, it was determined that crops with less than 25,000 acres published in the *Vegetables Summary* report would be removed from the program. In addition, States growing less than 1,000 acres of a vegetable or melon crop will no longer estimate that crop. NASS will continue to collect and publish vegetable data on an exhaustive list of vegetables in the Census of Agriculture.

All other aspects of the vegetable production and chemical usage statistics program will remain unchanged from the current format. These include complete year's data in the *Vegetables Summary* report and the biennial *Agricultural Chemical Usage Vegetables Summary* report; monthly prices and marketing year average prices in the monthly and annual *Agricultural Prices* reports; and preliminary price and value in the annual *Crop Values* report.

NASS's mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. NASS believes the revised program will continue to achieve this mission and meet the information needs of the vegetable industry.

Production Statistics will be discontinued in Minnesota for the following commodities beginning in 2002: beets and fresh carrots.

How Many Do You Remember?

1. Blackjack chewing gum.
2. Wax Coke-shaped bottles with colored water.
3. Candy cigarettes.
4. Soda pop machines that dispensed bottles.
5. Coffee shops with tableside juke boxes.
6. Home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers.
7. Party lines.
8. Newsreels before the movie.
9. P.F. Flyers.
10. Butch wax.
11. Telephone numbers with a word prefix (i.e., Olive-6933)
12. Pea shooters.
13. Howdy Doody.
14. 45 RPM records.
15. S & H Green Stamps.
16. Hi-fi's.
17. Metal ice trays with levers.
18. Mimeograph paper.
19. Blue flashbulbs.
20. Beanie and Cecil.
21. Roller skate keys.
22. Cork popguns.
23. Drive-ins.
24. Studebakers.
25. Wash tub wringers.

If you remembered 0 – 5 = You're still young.

If you remembered 6 – 10 = You're getting older.

If you remembered 11 – 15 = Don't tell your age.

If you remembered 16 – 25 = You're older than dirt!

MFVGA Membership Elects Three New Board Members

At the MFVGA annual business meeting held on January 31, 2002 during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, three members were elected to serve three-year terms on the Board of Directors.

Elected to fill vacancies on the Board were Kevin Edberg from The Berry Patch near Forest Lake, MN; Bill Jacobson from Pine Tree Orchards in White Bear Lake, MN and Gary Pahl from Pahl Farms, Inc. in Apple Valley, MN.

Other Board members for the 2002 year are Ron Branch from Alexandria, MN; Floyd Broman from Rogers, MN (representing the Central Minnesota Vegetable Growers Association); Foster Mooney from Chisago City, MN; Terry Nennich from Bagley, MN; Mike Thorson from Browerville, MN; and Dan Whitcomb from Princeton, MN.

Completing six years of service on the Board were Cindy Femling from Afton Apple Orchard in Hastings, MN and Jim Hipp from the Hipp Family Farm in Blaine, MN. Cliff Rowe from Berry Hill Farm in Anoka, MN completed three years of service on the Board.

Risk Management Toolbox for Specialty Crop Growers

A new pocket folder, with tab for easy filing, introduces specialty crop growers to an understanding of the USDA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Program (NAP) as well as sound risk management principles. This folder includes fact sheets on how to keep reliable and verifiable records, understanding and determining Actual Production History (APH), how to file a notice of loss and more. Also included is the USDA's 20-page Introduction to Risk Management and introduction to Risk Management Agency pilot programs. Real life examples make it easy to understand the concepts and processes.

This resource was written and developed by Rodney Elmstrand and Terry Nennich, Extension Educators with the University of Minnesota Extension Service; Glenn Schafer, program specialist with the Farm Service Agency and by Laurie Fredricks with the Risk Management Agency (RMA). An RMA grant has supported this cooperative effort.

The Risk Management Tool Box for Specialty Crop Growers pocket folder can be obtained through the University of Minnesota Extension Offices or by calling 1-800-876-8636 and ask for item #MI-07721. The cost is \$4 each.

U of M Gleanings

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

The State budget cuts will affect every Minnesotan, resulting in lost jobs, fewer park services, and slower tax refunds and license renewals. Growers can expect less funding from the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture sustainable agriculture program. Even before these cuts were passed into state law, the University of Minnesota Extension Service has been making plans to deal with projected financial shortfalls. The budget for the Extension Service is **not the same** as that of the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences. Contributions to Extension's budget are 39% from the state, 25% from Minnesota counties, 19% from grants, and 17% from the Federal government. The problems are that Federal support is expected to fall behind the inflation rate, health care costs for employees continually increase, and 90% of Extension's budget is locked up in personnel salaries.

So what does this mean for you? If you ever call your local county Extension office for advice, you may find that the educator who used to answer your calls no longer has a job or is now responsible for a wider geographic area in the state. About 20 county educators decided to retire, and about 20 have been laid off. We still don't know how the new system will work.

Some of us who work on the St. Paul campus get some Extension funds to pay for travel to farms and grower conferences, phone calls, stationery, postage, and secretarial and accounting staff support. Next year, we will only have access to half or less of these funds (the amounts of the cuts vary from department to department). How these cuts will affect planning of the educational sessions of grower conferences and even travel to these conferences is yet to be determined.

But until we know exactly how the cuts will affect our work, it still costs nothing to think about fun projects to do (not necessarily by me) that might be useful to fruit & vegetable growers. Wouldn't it be great if someone would test different kinds of high tunnels for different kinds of fruits and vegetables? I recently visited a grower in Oregon, where there is less sun but milder winter temperatures than in Minnesota. The grower's been using plastic on his certified organic farm for years. He has cheap, short tunnels about 3 feet tall, medium-sized tunnels that a tractor and manure spreader can fit in, and a new \$15,000, 3-house, guttered system that will be used to grow lots of tomatoes. This year he's experimenting with growing carrots and strawberries in tunnels. Picking the right variety is always important, and he's testing three different varieties of strawberries in the short tunnels. All of the plants are planted directly into soil on raised beds with trickle irrigation under plastic mulch. Wouldn't it be nice if somebody would find out if we could use tunnels in Minnesota to extend the season in the fall before the ground freezes or early in the spring? There are also some new plastic mini-tunnels that go over a row of plants that could be tested. These mini-tunnels have drawstrings that allow for easy opening of the middle of the tunnel when ventilation is needed.

Another project I would like to see done is a marketing study to find out just how many farmers' markets or community supported agriculture farms Minnesotans would support. It would be great to find out where the support is, and what qualities farmers and their farms have that enable the farmers to make their living from their farming. Is it really true that California suppliers use marketing tactics to keep buyers in the Midwest from buying more locally-grown produce? What needs to be done to get Minnesotans to buy more locally-grown produce – a media campaign, better labeling, educating kids, making the produce more convenient to buy?

What about testing specialty vegetables and fruits and introducing them at farmers' markets? Should growers raise a wider variety of vegetables and fruits, more heirloom varieties, specialty potatoes, or vegetables used by recent immigrants? How well would these grow in Minnesota? Would anybody buy them?

The answers to these questions will just have to wait. Meanwhile, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced the results of a survey of human pathogens on domestically grown cantaloupe, celery, cilantro, green onions, lettuce, parsley, strawberries, and tomatoes. This survey complements an earlier survey of imported fruits and vegetables, which found 22 instances of salmonella and 5 instances of shigella out of 590

imported strawberry samples. No detectable pathogens were found on more than 400 samples of domestically grown celery, strawberries, and tomatoes. Detectable levels of pathogens were found on 5 out of 164 tested cantaloupe samples, 2 out of 85 cilantro samples, 3 out of 93 green onion samples, 1 out of 142 lettuce, and 1 out of 90 parsley samples. The samples were obtained from 5 major regions in the country, so probably not Minnesota, but now if anyone has questions about the safety of domestically grown foods, we can tell them about this survey.

MINNESOTA GROWN NOTES

Minnesota Grown information is supplied to MFVGA by Paul Hugunin (651-297-5510) from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Ag Marketing Services Division.

Directory Goes to Press

Five hundred and thirty grower listings have been received for the 2002 *Minnesota Grown Directory*, our annual statewide guide to ag products sold direct from the farmer. That record number represents an increase of over 50 from 2001 and makes this *Directory* the largest one ever printed in Minnesota. As a result of the increased listings, the book is growing from 72 to 80 pages.

The listing information is being entered in a new database, and formatted for printing with other directory content, including maps, a “Minnesota Grown Passport” prize contest, and a new 8-page centerfold insert that will house ads.

Order 2002 Directories Now

If you have the ability to distribute free *Minnesota Grown Directories* to consumers, please e-mail your mailing address and number requested to: brian.j.erickson@state.mn.us, or call Brian at 651-296-4939. The *Directories* are very popular anywhere the general public visits – wayside rest areas, restaurants, chambers-of-commerce, and tourist attractions are just some of the great places for the *Directory*. We appreciate requests that are in multiples of 50 or 200 (that’s how they’re boxed), and those that are made in early spring so we can ship the books to you direct from the printer.

New Passport Promotion

The 2002 *Directory* includes a brand new promotion designed to help generate even more sales for listed growers. The “Minnesota Grown Passport” will provide incentive for directory users to visit more locations or to visit more regularly. *Directory* users who visit three locations and obtain a signature or stamp from the location are eligible to win one of hundreds of prizes. The grand prize is a four-day trip for four to Ruttger’s Sugar Lake Lodge in Grand Rapids. The prize is valued at well over \$1,000. Other prizes include a family 4-pack of passes to Camp Snoopy in the Mall of America, and Minnesota Grown shirts. The Passport promotion is featured prominently inside the *Directory*.

Record Number of Marketers Register to Use Minnesota Grown Logo

Over 650 marketers have received licenses to use the Minnesota Grown logo this year – the most ever issued in a single year! Licensees have access to FREE Minnesota Grown promotional materials and are allowed to print the logo directly on packaging, brochures and signs. The cost of a license is just \$5 per year. To apply for a license, call Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 or visit www.minnesotagrown.com and follow the links to the producers’ corner on the MDA’s Minnesota Grown page.

150 Attend Marketing Conference

The annual Minnesota Grown Marketing Conference was held in St. Cloud on Saturday, February 2nd. It drew approximately 150 people who came to listen to presentations on topics ranging from entertainment farming to business management for small farmers. Carrie Schnepf, President of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, drew approximately 100 people to her session on entertainment farming. There were more than enough great ideas to get attendees excited about the coming year.

Mark your calendar now for the 2003 Marketing Conference, scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2003. Suggested topics and recommended speakers are always much appreciated!

Sign Up for Berry Cost-share

Berry growers that belong to the MFVGA and the Minnesota Grown Program are eligible for advertising cost-share funds this year. The Minnesota Grown Program will pay half the cost of advertising up to \$275 of matching funds per grower. Basic ad layout is provided by the Minnesota Grown Program and all ads must include the Minnesota Grown logo and web site. Growers who participated in last year's program will be contacted with a chance to sign up first; growers who did not participate in last year's cost-share should contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510. Open spaces will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Farmers' Market Ads

A full schedule of television ads promoting farmers' markets is scheduled for mid-summer. The ads will feature and are sponsored by both the Minneapolis Farmers Market and the St. Paul Farmers Market. One version of the ad will also feature the Minnesota Grown website (www.minnesotagrown.com) for consumers to locate a market near them.

Reminder to Farmers' Market Managers and Vendors

Farmers' market vendors are encouraged to use the free Minnesota Grown stickers, price cards and other promotional items to help reinforce the value of locally grown produce. But please remember that individual market vendors must be licensed to use the logo in order to have the promotional materials at their stall – it's not legal for individual vendors to use the logo just because the market itself is licensed to use the logo. Please contact Paul Hugunin with any questions.

Labeling Funds Available

If a new or improved label, bag or box is in your future, don't forget to add the Minnesota Grown logo. The Minnesota Grown Promotion Group will reimburse you for up to \$100 of your design charges. Contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 to register.

RESOLUTIONS

MINNESOTA FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION 2002 ANNUAL MEETING – ST. CLOUD CIVIC CENTER ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

GROUNDWATER:

We support a program of research projects and education in susceptible areas as designed by the new groundwater legislation for possible contaminants in the groundwater. We also support state grants and monies to fund these research projects and education.

FARM CHEMICALS, PESTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS:

1. Because pollution comes from many sources other than the farming sector, we oppose additional taxes on farm chemicals and fertilizers.
2. We oppose legislation which would regulate the sale and farm use of nitrogen fertilizers, and we oppose unnecessary restrictions on chemicals or liabilities resulting from the use of chemicals, as per label instructions.
3. We support research and development of Best Management Practices for the greatest economic return and safe use of nitrogen practices.
4. We encourage the use of returnable, recyclable or reusable chemical containers.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND WORKERS COMPENSATION:

We support revisions in Minnesota's Workers Unemployment Compensation laws to lessen the burden on producers to allow them to be competitive with producers in neighboring states. We support changes in the Workers Compensation laws which limit the amounts of compensation an injured worker may receive. We oppose extending unemployment benefits to workers who voluntarily quit their job, workers who are students on a full-time basis, or migrants who have relocated to a different job market.

RIGHT TO FARM:

We support the RIGHT TO FARM law.

MARKETING:

Be it resolved, we are opposed to the concept of minimum pricing for agricultural products.

TRESPASS LAW:

We support the Minnesota Trespass law and would support the elimination of all exceptions currently allowed. Privately owned land should be automatically considered posted. Anyone using private property for recreation and/or hunting must carry written permission from landowners.

MINNESOTA GROWN PROMOTION GROUP:

We support the continued cooperation of agricultural commodity groups and the State of Minnesota in the promotion of Minnesota Grown products.

WETLANDS PROTECTION:

We support efforts to preserve Minnesota's wetlands, but advocate a reasonable approach to agricultural drainage. We oppose unreasonable restrictions on the repair and cleanout of existing drainage systems. We support the compensation of land owners who are denied the use of their land.

IRRIGATION:

Irrigation insures a continued adequate supply of food and fiber for all people; therefore, we oppose a tax on agricultural usage, and continued increases of water usage fees.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (B.M.P.'s):

We support the development of the Best Management Practices with inputs from producers, researchers and suppliers. We oppose the establishment of mandatory Best Management Practices.

FOOD SAFETY:

In order to assure the continued abundant, safe and wholesome food supply in the United States, we support uniform laws setting pesticide tolerance levels based on scientific research. We oppose the scare tactics used with media cooperation which causes people to believe not only the food in question, but all food, has been contaminated without supporting scientific evidence. We support increasing the percentage of tolerance levels testing at importation sites.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND RESEARCH:

We advocate the expenditure by the University of Minnesota maintaining and enhancing agricultural research and departmental positions.

REGULATED PESTICIDE USE:

We support federal and state government regulation on regulated pesticide use. However, we oppose any local (city, township, etc.) government intervention on regulated pesticide use.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:

We support controlled management environments of deer and other wildlife in agricultural areas and we support the right to hunt all legal species within the guidelines of federal and state laws. We consider baiting to be deemed illegal only if it is not normal farming practices.

CRP ACRES:

We oppose the use of program acreage land to produce fruit and vegetable crops that directly compete with crops grown on non-program acreage.

BIOTECHNOLOGY:

We encourage the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to develop technology. We encourage studies in the area of biotechnology and support solid research to make the facts known to growers who can then make good decisions based on correct information.

U of M EXTENSION BUDGET CUTS:

We oppose the proposed budget cuts affecting the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The U of M Extension Service is a very important resource for the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association as well as its individual members. The proposed cuts will greatly reduce the resources that are available to Minnesota's fruit and vegetable growers. We encourage the University to restore funding to the Extension Service.