

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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July, 2003 Volume 17, No. 3

A Note From The Board

By Dan Whitcomb – JQ Fruit Farm, Princeton, MN

It's WONDERFUL that summer is finally here. As a farmer, I rejoice with the arrival of flowering fruit buds and young seedlings breaking through the ground as my crops take off for harvest.

This spring was different - no strawberry plants, or very few, lots of blueberry fruit buds but no bud break, just dead limbs with sprouts breaking out at the bottom. Some apple trees that have been with me for 17 years did not come back. My wife complains about her hostas and perennials not coming up. My neighbor, who digs black dirt from his peat bog, has to continue to deal with perma frost at 4 to 6 foot depths in late June and froze out alfalfa fields.

The lack of snow cover and sub-zero temperatures this winter, along with the extreme wetness last fall, has now shown its damage. It does look like a good year for apples. It's good to have a diversity of crops. But Thank God, I registered for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) last November for the orchard crops (strawberries, blueberries and apples). Last week the FSA inspector visited to assess damage. He had already looked at three other blueberry fields prior to mine.

After chatting over coffee at the kitchen table, I learned from the inspector that this year approximately 1,250 farmers registered for the NAP program. Last year over 1,480 farmers were registered. I can't imagine that 230 farmers did not enroll to minimize their crop risk. The NAP program is a disaster risk management program that costs \$100 per crop with a farm maximum of \$300. **Remember, if you're growing vegetable crops you must register them at your FSA office by July 15th.**

It looks like a good growing summer so far if you are not growing blueberries or strawberries. It appears that the most crop losses are being reported in central, east, and southeast Minnesota. If you have damage and are registered in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), make sure you report your loss as soon as you know you have damage.

Well, it's time for me to get back to planting tomatoes, melons, sweet corn and pumpkins. Crop diversity also helps to minimize your risks. To learn more about crop diversity and programs to insure your crops remember to attend the annual MFVGA conference in February. It is a great learning experience.

You're Invited to a Summer Field Day and Picnic

Friday, August 8, 2003

North Central Research & Outreach Center
(NCROC) Grand Rapids, MN
Nordic Ridge Gardens – Bovey, MN

9:45 a.m.

Meet at NCROC - Horticulture Office
(Located East of Grand Rapids, MN on Hwy 169 E)

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Tour of NCROC

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Travel to Nordic Ridge Gardens
(Approximately 15 – 20 minutes from NCROC.
Directions will be provided the day of the tour)

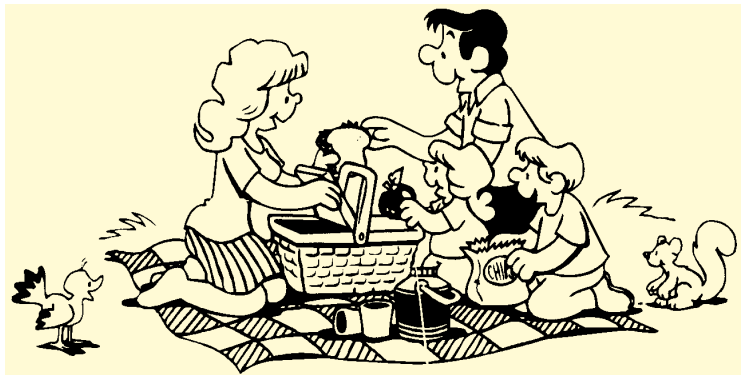
12:30 – 1:15 p.m.

Picnic lunch at Nordic Ridge Gardens

1:15 – 3:00 p.m.

Tour Nordic Ridge Gardens

For more information about the tour and a registration form, see the back page of this Newsletter. The cost for the picnic is \$10.00 per person.



Improving Economic Security

How the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 Will Benefit American Agriculture

On May 28, 2003, President Bush signed a jobs and growth plan for all Americans. Under the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, farm households will receive over \$4 billion in Federal income tax relief in 2003.

The Act accelerates marginal tax rate reductions and other relief that was scheduled to be phased-in under the 2001 Act, reduces the tax rate on dividends and capital gains and increases the amount of capital investment that can be expensed by small businesses.

Over 86 percent of all farm households will receive some tax relief under the 2003 Act. The average tax savings in 2003 for all farm households is estimated at about \$2,000 or a 16% reduction.

The Benefits to American Agriculture

Specific provisions and benefits for American farmers and ranchers include:

Acceleration of the 2001 Act Tax Relief: The acceleration to 2003 of the 2001 Act tax relief that was originally scheduled to be phased-in over the next several years includes:

- (1) an expansion of the 10-percent bracket from \$12,000 to \$14,000 for joint returns (\$6,000 to \$7,000 for single taxpayers),
- (2) a reduction in the current marginal tax rates of 27%, 30%, 35% and 38.6% to rates of 25%, 28%, 33% and 35%,
- (3) an increase in the standard deduction and the width of the 15% bracket for married couples to twice the amount for single taxpayers, and
- (4) an increase in the child tax credit from \$600 to \$1,000.

Benefit to American Agriculture: This accelerated relief will reduce the tax burden of farm households by about \$2.3 billion in 2003. This includes an additional \$100 million that will be provided to middle and lower income farm households under the refundable portion of the child credit.

Reduced Tax Rate on Dividends: Under the Act, dividends paid to individuals will be taxed at 15 percent (5 percent for taxpayers in the 15 percent or lower income tax brackets).

Benefit to American Agriculture: About one third of all farm households, including over half of all households with a farmer over 65, receive dividend income that is taxable. These households will realize average tax savings of about \$1,200 for a total reduction in Federal income taxes of about \$700 million in 2003.

Reduced Tax Rate on Capital Gains: The Act reduces the tax rate on capital gains to 15 percent and 5 percent for taxpayers in the 15 percent or lower income tax brackets.

Benefit to American Agriculture: Capital gains are an important component of income for many farmers. According to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data, 45 percent of all farmers report some capital gains. This is more than double the share for all taxpayers and on average the amount of capital gain reported by farmers is 50 percent higher. The new lower tax rate generally applies to sales on or after May 6, 2003. For 2003, farmers will save an estimated \$500 million. The tax benefit will increase to over \$750 million in 2004 since the new lower rates will be in effect for the full tax year.

Increased Expensing of Capital Investment: The Act increases the bonus first-year depreciation from 30 to 50 percent (for purchases after May 5, 2003) and raises the amount of investment that can be expensed from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Benefit to American Agriculture: For 2003, this will allow over 90 percent of all investment in farm machinery and equipment to be immediately deducted. Ninety-eight percent of all farmers will be able to deduct their entire investment, greatly simplifying the record-keeping burden associated with the depreciation of capital purchases. Increasing the bonus first-year depreciation and the amount of capital investment that can be expensed will reduce the effective tax rate on farm capital, resulting in increased purchases of farm machinery and equipment.

For 2003, the amount of farm machinery and equipment that can be immediately deducted is estimated to increase by about \$3.5 billion or 25 percent. This will reduce Federal income and self-employment taxes paid by farmers by about \$1 billion. The tax savings would gradually decline in future years as depreciation deductions drop since most capital purchases would have already been written off.

Alternative Minimum Tax Relief: The alternative minimum tax (AMT) exemption amount would be increased by \$9,000 for married taxpayers and by \$4,500 for single taxpayers for 2003 and 2004.

Benefit to American Agriculture: This AMT relief is important to farmers since, compared to other taxpayers, slightly more farmers are subject to the AMT. Under the AMT relief, most farmers would fully benefit from the tax cuts.

(This analysis was prepared by USDA's Office of the Chief Economist. For more information visit www.usda.gov.)

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 funded in part by 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: Jan. 1st for the February 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.

Minnesota Apple and Strawberry Report

The Apple & Strawberry Report is a weekly newsletter published by the Ag. Resources Management and Development Division of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture during the growing season (May-September), and monthly during the off-season (October-April). The publication uses the data collected from cooperating apple and strawberry fields to report on pest pressure, thresholds and control options. The publication also periodically features articles on fruit production, biology and management of key fruit pests and diseases.

Reports are posted on the MDA web site on Fridays. The report is available on the Web at: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/biocon/fruitreports>

Other Web Sites of Interest:

“Apple IPM: A Guide for Sampling & Managing Major Apple Pests in N.Y. State,” available at: <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/apple.man/contents.html>

“Strawberries: Organic and IPM Options” 2003, available at <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/strawberry.html>

Liberty® Herbicide Use On Sweet Corn Is NOT Allowed!

Sweet corn growers are being warned **not** to use Liberty herbicide on their sweet corn crop. Liberty herbicide is **not** labeled for use on sweet corn but is labeled for use on **FIELD** corn. The use of Liberty herbicide on sweet corn is a violation of the Minnesota Pesticide Laws and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

Applications of Liberty herbicide to sweet corn are subject to Minnesota Department of Agriculture enforcement actions including the imposition of monetary penalties. In addition, use of Liberty herbicide on sweet corn could cause the sweet corn crop to be adulterated under state or federal laws and consequently unsuitable for human or livestock consumption. Adulterated food crops are typically destroyed.

Misunderstandings about the use of Liberty herbicide on sweet corn may have arisen due to the fact that in 1999, EPA granted an Emergency Exemption (under Section 18 of FIFRA) for the use of Liberty herbicide on sweet corn. That exemption expired on July 22, 1999 and neither the product registrant nor the Minnesota Department of Agriculture sought to extend the Section 18 Emergency Exemption beyond the expiration date.

I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.

Stephen Leacock

Minnesota Vegetable IPM Newsletter

The *Minnesota Vegetable IPM Newsletter* is back for 2003 to alert growers and processors of pest outbreaks and timely management recommendations. When relevant, the newsletter also provides newsworthy topics related to biotechnology and specialty crops, nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables, food safety, impacts of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), produce marketing and articles of broad interest concerning the benefits of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and sustainable agriculture.

The newsletter is a partnership between the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and the Midwest Food Processors Association.

The Minnesota Vegetable IPM Newsletter is available on the VegEdge website at <http://www.vegedge.umn.edu> Previous issues of the newsletter can also be viewed at <http://www.vegedge.umn.edu/mnvegnew/mnindex.htm>



Blueberry Field Night - July 17th Central Lakes Ag Center - Staples, MN

By Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer,
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Horticulture specialists from the University of Minnesota will lead discussions on commercial u-pick blueberry start-up steps, organic practices, maintenance practices and marketing tips on **Thursday evening, July 17, 2003**, at the Central Lakes College - Ag Center in Staples. Discussion will be tailored around the interests of potential and existing commercial growers and Master Gardeners. Production practices included in the discussion will be soil pH, fertility, weed control, mulching, pruning and trickle irrigation.

Registration is free and opens at 5:30 p.m. The field night will run from 6 p.m. to dusk and will take place in the U of M blueberry planting south of the bus garage. If it's raining, the meeting will be held indoors at the Ag Center.

The Blueberry Field Night is co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Service, UM-Central Region Partnership, UM-College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences and the Central Lakes College - Ag Center.

For more information, contact the UM-Central Region Partnership at 1-877-977-7778 or Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer, at jwright@umn.edu or 320-589-1711 (UM-WCROC at Morris).

U of M – COAFES To Host Listening Sessions

The College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences and the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Stations will be hosting listening sessions around the state this summer. They are interested in your thoughts about how they are doing with regards to their priorities.

Two years ago a similar set of listening sessions produced the College priorities – Emphasizing Exemplary Education, Promoting Safe and Healthy Foods, Enhancing Agricultural Systems, Improving Environmental Quality, Revitalizing Minnesota's Rural Communities and Serving Urban Communities. The session this summer will provide input and feedback that will help guide the future of the College.

You can also have a stronger voice in shaping the future of research, education and engagement on food, agriculture and environment in Minnesota. Comments made at the listening sessions will play an important role in decisions on how the College implements its priorities during this time of change.

The Listening Session format is informal – with an emphasis on listening to citizens. A short presentation will provide an overview of priorities and challenges. The session format, with breakout discussion, will ensure that college leadership and faculty can hear about the issues that are important to you.

Listening sessions are jointly hosted with the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Stations, which support research activities at the University of Minnesota. For more information or to pre-register for any of the eight Listening Sessions, go to <http://www.coafes.umn.edu/listen> or call 612-624-3009. The dates and locations for the Listening Sessions are:

- ** **Tuesday, July 8 from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.** – Northwest Research and Outreach Center, Crookston, MN
- ** **Wednesday, July 9 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.** – North Central Research and Outreach Center, Grand Rapids, MN
- ** **Tuesday, July 15 from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.** – West Central Research and Outreach Center, Morris, MN
- ** **Wednesday, July 16 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.** – Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Lamberton, MN
- ** **Thursday, July 17 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon** – Southern Research and Outreach Center, Waseca, MN
- ** **Monday, July 21 from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.** – University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chanhassen, MN
- ** **Thursday, July 24 from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.** – Borlaug Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus
- ** **Tuesday, August 5 from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.** – Minnesota Rural Summit, Centennial Student Union, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN

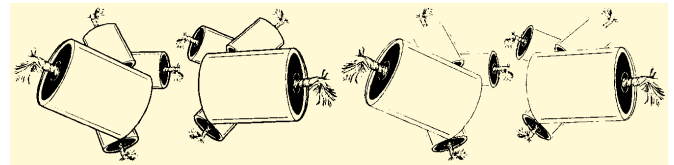
Note: This is an opportunity for fruit and vegetable growers to help shape the future of research, education and engagement on food, agriculture and environment in Minnesota. With the State budget cuts and cuts to the University of Minnesota, the Extension Service, the Department of Agriculture and other ag-related programs in the state, anything we can do to try to focus and shape priorities to maintain resources for commercial fruit and vegetable growers is essential. We encourage you to attend one of these meetings and make your needs and opinions known.

Advertising Cost-Share Dollars Available to Minnesota Farmers' Markets

The Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is pleased to announce the second year of the advertising/promotion cost-share program for Minnesota Farmers' Markets. This program is made possible by specialty crop grant money awarded to MFVGA by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as part of a one-time federal emergency farm assistance package designed to help stimulate the state's specialty crop industry.

Projects qualifying for the cost-share dollars will develop NEW marketing opportunities – new signage for the market, a new newspaper ad, a new radio ad, etc. Cost-share dollars can also be used to help fund an expansion of existing advertising/promotional efforts, including adding color to a newspaper ad, increasing the number of times an ad runs in a local paper, increasing the size of a print ad, running ads in additional newspapers, etc. Ads and signs must include the Minnesota Grown logo to qualify for grant dollars.

Cost-share dollars are limited and applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline for applications is July 31, 2003. If you are a market manager and did not receive an application, please contact Marilyn Johnson at 763-434-0400 for more information.



We Need Your Help for the “Great Minnesota Get-Together”

After our cool, wet spring it's hard to imagine the end of summer and crowds gathered for the “Great Minnesota Get-Together”. It is, however, time to start thinking about the Minnesota Grown / MFVGA booth at the State Fair.

The refrigerated display case will be used again this fall. The case allows us to include a wide variety of fresh produce and other Minnesota Grown processed and value-added products. We need your help to make the display as complete, colorful and attractive as possible. Help us show the thousands of people who stop by the booth each year that Minnesota Grown produce and products are the best and encourage them to buy produce that truly is “Fresh From Your Neighbor.”

If you are willing to donate fresh produce or other products for the display, please call Marilyn Johnson at the MFVGA office – 763-434-0400. We are looking for a wide range of items that show the variety and quality of what's available in Minnesota.

If you would like to volunteer for a four-hour shift at the booth, call Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510. There are three four-hour shifts each day of the Fair. The State Fair runs from August 21st through Labor Day.



2003 Minnesota Grown Directory

Roughly 130,000 of the 170,000 *Minnesota Grown Directories* printed this year have been distributed across the state – one at a time and in bulk, to consumers who call, listed growers, realtors, health clinics and more.

The 2003 *Directory*, featuring more than 500 direct marketing producers, is available to consumers in print form for free by calling 1-888-TOURISM, or online at www.minnesotagrown.com. The *Directory* is being promoted by our media sponsor/partner, Infinity Broadcasting, through their radio stations (WCCO, Mix 104.1, KCCO and 102.9 Lite FM) and on those stations' websites.

Growers and other supporters of Minnesota agriculture can still get bulk quantities of the 2003 book to distribute (for free) by calling 651-296-4939. Growers who missed the chance to be included in the 2003 *Minnesota Grown Directory* printing can also receive a license to use the Minnesota Grown logo and be listed in the website version of the directory for this growing season. Those already in the book should let us know if there are mistakes/changes desired in their online listings. Listed growers may also forward a map/directions to us so we can include your location/map on the website, which is designed to help consumers find individual farms and markets.

We'd also request that growers with their own website provide a link back to Minnesota Grown (www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown), as some search engines apparently rank web sites by the number of sites that link to them. The Minnesota Grown logo graphic is available electronically to growers or your web masters in several different formats.

Budget Update

So far, so good is the best way to describe the results of the legislative budget agreement as it relates to the Minnesota Grown Program. While many state programs and services have been reduced or eliminated because of the budget crisis, funding for the Minnesota Grown Program has been maintained at its current level. That's not a guarantee that the program won't see any cuts in the coming two years but it's a good start and an indication of the program's support. The state currently contributes \$71,000 per year to match contributions to the program that come from private sources such as producer associations and advertising fees.

Capitol Café Features Minnesota Grown Products

While many visitors to the state capitol building would never know it exists, there is a restaurant located in the capitol basement that is frequented by legislators, staff and others during legislative sessions. This year, the Capitol Café featured Minnesota Grown products during the height of the legislative session during the last week of April. Among

the featured items were Minnesota Grown pork chops, buffalo burgers, elk burgers, a mixed greens salad, cheese, sparkling apple cider, grape jelly, and chicken. Minnesota Grown price cards were used to highlight the featured items and the new *Directory* was available at the cash register. The restaurant reported excellent feedback from customers and has tentatively planned a repeat of the event in the future.

Lights, Camera, Action...

Minnesota Grown Summer TV Ads Scheduled

Nearly \$35,000 of television ads promoting Minnesota Grown produce available at farmers' markets and grocery stores are set to run this summer. KMSP-TV (Channel 9) is receiving the bulk of the campaign with WFTC (Channel 29) and KSTP (Channel 5) also airing a portion of the schedule. The 5-week schedule begins on July 14 and will end up being seen an average of 6 times by roughly 65% of females in the viewing area between the ages of 25-64 years old.

Roughly 2/3 of the ads feature farmers' markets and are funded jointly by Minnesota Grown, the Minneapolis Farmers' Market and the St. Paul Farmers' Market. The other 1/3 features Minnesota Grown produce available in grocery stores and is funded by Minnesota Grown and the MFVGA.

Twenty Growers Register for Berry Cost Share

As this article is written, twenty Minnesota berry growers have signed up for the berry cost-share program. The program pays for one-half the cost of ads that include the Minnesota Grown logo and web address up to a maximum of \$250 per grower. Most growers are using newspaper ads but radio ads are eligible as well. A limited amount of funds are still available and will be allotted on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Paul Hugunin if you would like more information.

Discounted Minnesota Grown Banners Available

The Minnesota Grown Promotion Group is offering a new cost sharing program for customized Minnesota Grown banners printed by Banner Galaxy. Each banner includes a color Minnesota Grown logo along with whatever text the grower chooses. In addition to choosing their own text, growers choose the banner size and the vinyl thickness they prefer. There is no minimum quantity and prices start at roughly \$60 for a 2ft x 6ft-vinyl banner (including delivery). The web site and password was included in the last Minnesota Grown Update for licensed producers. The Minnesota Grown Promotion Group is contributing \$10 toward the cost of each banner. Contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 with any questions about ordering your custom banner or if you've misplaced the password.

More Producers are Using the Logo

Although the year is barely half over, a record number of licenses to use the Minnesota Grown logo have been issued. The MDA has mailed over 730 licenses so far in 2003, up from the previous record of 715 for all of 2002. Contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 if you produce a Minnesota Grown product and would like information about using the Minnesota Grown logo and free point-of-sale materials.

Apple Bag Closures and Stickers Available

Kwik Lok bag closures and PLU stickers with the Minnesota Grown logo are available from UAP-LaCrescent again this season. Minnesota apple growers purchased over 900,000 stickers and bag closures featuring the logo during 2002. Contact UAP directly at 1-800-551-5708 to order.

Minnesota Grown information is supplied to MFVGA by Paul Hugunin (651-297-5510) and Brian Erickson (651-296-4939) 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.

Comprehensive Guide to Sprinkler Irrigation Systems Now Available

By Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer,
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Agricultural producers and consultants, engineers, equipment dealers, government agency employees, educators, students, and others interested in the technology of irrigation have a newly published resource to help them better understand all aspects of sprinkler irrigation systems. The book *Sprinkler Irrigation Systems*, MWPS-30 from MidWest Plan Service (MWPS) provides a systematic approach to the whys and hows of developing sprinkler irrigation systems.

Sprinkler Irrigation Systems was developed to provide a planning tool, reference guide, and design manual for a broad audience. It is intended to be a repository of the technical knowledge necessary to design and develop sprinkler irrigation systems, and to further an understanding of the methods used to manage irrigation systems efficiently.

In line with those aims, the book provides information that helps to determine water needs and to establish a minimum recommended system capacity. The publication also includes a discussion of the methods used to evaluate a water supply and to determine the type of sprinkler system that best fits a specific need.

One chapter is devoted to understanding and using water sources properly. This chapter includes sections on planning, drilling, developing, pumping, and maintaining irrigation wells. Separate chapters discuss sprinkler performance characteristics and sprinkler selection and frost control. Another chapter explains how to select pumps, piping, and power units.

The book does not neglect special uses for irrigation systems. One chapter discusses chemigation, which is the application of fertilizers and pesticides through irrigation systems.

The final chapter in the book contains examples covering the step-by-step planning and design process for different sprinkler irrigation systems. Included in the examples are designs for a center-pivot system with a well, a traveler irrigation system for irrigated pasture, and an irrigation system for a small acreage that is producing horticultural crops.

Sprinkler Irrigation Systems contains more than 110 photographs and illustrations. Included in the illustrations are example layouts of irrigation systems and diagrams of pumping and piping systems. The book also has approximately 70 tables which help to organize technical data, including estimated pressure losses for hard and soft hoses, peak application rates for various systems, maximum flow rates, friction losses, and efficiencies of typical drive units.

MWPS is a cooperative regional research and extension organization headquartered at Iowa State University that represents the 12 land-grant universities of the North Central Region of the United States and the USDA.

Authors of the publication are Thomas Scherer, Extension Engineer, North Dakota State University; William Kranz, and C. Dean Yonts, Irrigation Specialists, University of Nebraska; Donald Pfost, Extension Engineer, University of Missouri; Hal Werner, Extension Agricultural Engineer, South Dakota State University; and Jerry Wright, Associate Professor of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and Extension Engineer, University of Minnesota.

MWPS-30, *Sprinkler Irrigation Systems*, costs \$25.00 per single copy plus sales tax, shipping and handling charges. To order a copy, contact Midwest Plan Service at <http://www.mwpsdq.org/> or order Toll Free: 800-562-3618 or MWPS, 122 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3080 .

For more information on the content of the handbook, visit website <http://www.mwpsdq.org/> or contact Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer, at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN at jwright@umn.edu or 320-589-1711.

2004 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show

The 2004 Educational Conference will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 – 7, 2004. The Trade Show will be held on Thursday and Friday, February 5 & 6. Make a note and plan to attend.

We are currently working on the educational program for the 2004 Conference and sessions are being planned on high tunnel production, (both vegetable and fruit applications), berry production and marketing and apple production. The general session on Thursday morning, February 5th, will focus on organic production.

Vegetable topics will include sweet corn production (beginning and advanced sessions), pumpkins, tomatoes and peppers, cole crops, specialty crops and much more.

Other sessions will address information for beginning growers and how to organize a market garden. Direct marketing, business and risk management sessions are also being planned.

Mark your calendars now and watch for more details in upcoming issues of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Notice to Exhibitors:

It's not too early to send in your application for booth space for the 2004 Trade Show held in connection with the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. The Trade Show will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 & 6, 2004. Plan to attend and remember to sign up early!

DAILY CROP "ET" AVAILABLE OVER THE INTERNET

By Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer,
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Daily crop ET information for irrigation scheduling by Minnesota and Wisconsin growers can be easily accessed over the internet by linking to one of the following WEB pages. This information can be most helpful in deciding when one needs to start irrigating.

Minnesota & Wisconsin (reference) Crop ETs
<http://www.soils.wisc.edu/wimnext/>

The Minnesota and Wisconsin ET daily statewide color-coded maps are available around the middle of April. Each daily ET map gives a reasonable estimation of the potential (reference) ET value across the area based on the weather conditions of that day. Potential ET values are very similar to the daily crop ET from a full canopy crop.

The daily values from the Wisconsin site can also be sent directly to a user by e-mail each day for a given field site within the map area if requested over the WEB site.

These reference ET daily contour maps are generated using data from local airport automatic temperature recording stations across the state and solar radiation estimations calculated from a GOES satellite that takes a picture about every 10 minutes to estimate the daily solar radiation for a given location. A comparison of the last few years' values with ET estimations from local weather stations at Staples and Morris has found them to be very similar with the Web site values generally being around 10 percent greater in value than reported by local ET hotline services using site weather stations.

The daily WI-MN ET maps are created and managed by Bill Bland, University of Wisconsin Extension Soils Scientist. To estimate the daily ET value for a crop before full canopy and near maturity the ET value must be taken times a crop coefficient (Kco) constant that may range from .25 to 1.0 and is dependent on the growth stage of the specific crop. Generally, for annual crops, the correction factor starts out around .25 and increases to 1.0 or greater as the plant nears full canopy and holds there until produce starts to mature. As a crop matures, some crop types will have their actual ET decrease slightly each day as they come to maturity, hence the crop correction factor will go from 1.0 to maybe as low as .40 as the leaves senesce and reach maturity.

Keeping track of the crop's daily ET use and regular in-field soil moisture checking can go a long way in helping an operator optimize the crop's growth while reducing the potential for leaching of some crop inputs like nitrogen into the groundwater.

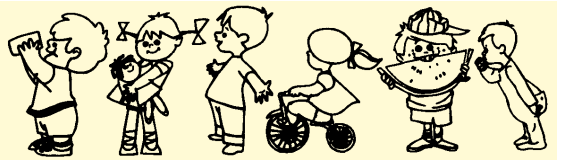
These daily ET values best serve the user if recorded on a calendar log like an irrigation checkbook worksheet or computer spreadsheet for quick reference when making your irrigation decisions. **Consider assigning the updating task to one of the younger members of your family.** Worksheets from the revised Irrigation Scheduling bulletin FO-01322 can be printed off the WEB at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC1322.html> or be purchased with a credit card at the University of Minnesota Extension Service - catalog web page at <http://www.extension.umn.edu> or by calling 1-800-876-8636 or 612-624-4900.

For more information on how to use daily crop ET information contact Jerry Wright, Extension Engineer at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN 320-589 -1711 or jwright@umn.edu or your local Extension or SWCD office.

Neighborhood Market Seeks Additional Vendors

The Kingfield Neighborhood Association is in its third year of sponsoring a small farmers' market in Southwest Minneapolis. The market takes place on Sunday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 43rd and Nicollet, running from June 15th to mid-October. They are recruiting additional vendors and are particularly interested in adding plants, fresh herbs, meat products, value-added items, cheese and dairy, etc.

Please contact Liz Gibson-Gasset, NRP Project Organizer at the Kingfield Neighborhood Association if you are interested in participating or would like more information about the market. You can reach Liz at 612-823-5980 ext. 3 or gibsongasset@yahoo.com.



Great Truths About Life That Little Children Have Learned:

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- 2) When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 7) Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
- 8) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 9) Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts!
- 10) The best place to be when you're sad is Grandma's lap.

Excerpt on EQIP Final Rule from a USDA press release on May 14, 2003

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), one of the most comprehensive programs in the 2002 Farm Bill, is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality and assists producers to meet local, state and federal regulations. EQIP funds help farmers and ranchers reduce soil erosion, improve water use efficiencies and protect grazing land by installing conservation practices that protect natural resources.

The EQIP final rule makes the program even more farmer-friendly by simplifying procedures and greatly enhancing the locally led aspects of the program. Also, program eligibility is expanded, making more farmers and ranchers eligible for participation. In addition, the rule focuses the EQIP program on priority conservation issues, such as clean water and clean air.

The EQIP final rule revises the program to optimize environmental benefits and clarifies definitions and terms, especially definitions for individuals, persons and eligibility issues. With the final rule, farmers and ranchers now have access to financial and technical assistance to carry out EQIP measures.

Agricultural producers interested in participating in EQIP can apply at any time at their local NRCS office or USDA service center. NRCS will evaluate each application and give higher priority to those applications that use cost-effective conservation practices; treat multiple resource concerns; address national, state or local priorities; and provide the most environmental benefits.

NOTE: A copy of the final rule is available on NRCS's website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/rules/7CFR1466_EQIPFinal.pdf

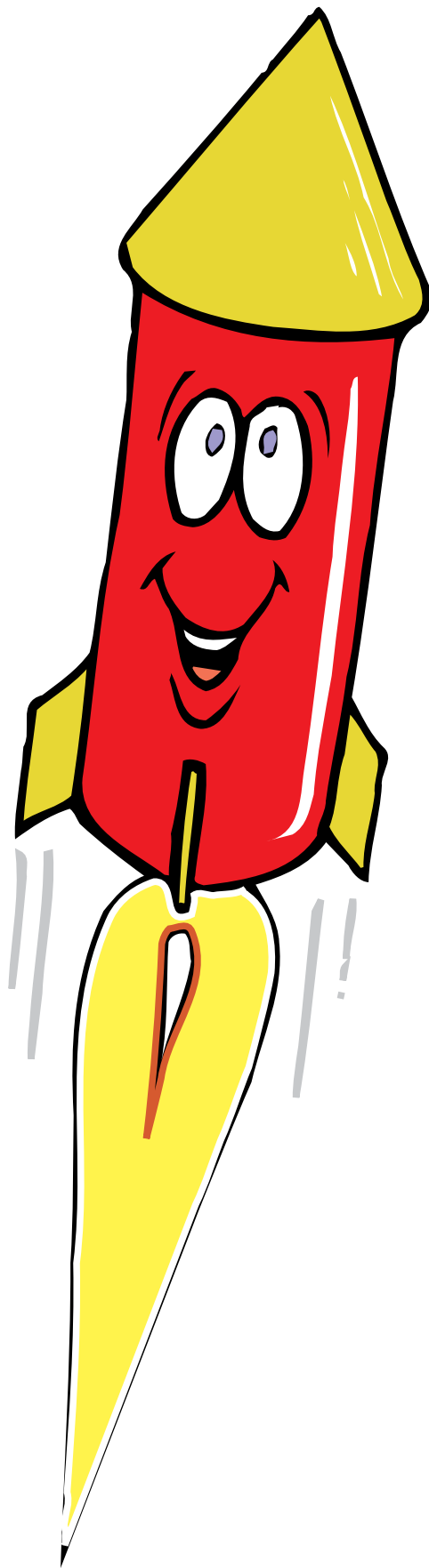


Proceedings Books Available

If you were unable to attend the 2003 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 2003 *Proceedings* contains many of the talks given at the educational conference and includes information on berry production, calibration, food safety, irrigation, marketing, vegetable production, soil health, tree fruit production and much more.

To receive a copy of the 2003 *Proceedings Book*, send your check for \$12.00 (payable to MFVGA) to the MFVGA office at 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE, Ham Lake, MN 55304.



SUMMER FIELD DAY AND PICNIC

Date: Friday, August 8, 2003

Time: 9:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tour Stops: **University of Minnesota – North Central Research & Outreach Center (NCROC)**
Grand Rapids, MN.
(The Research Center is located East of Grand Rapids on Hwy. 169 East.)
Nordic Ridge Gardens, Bovey, MN

The Field Day will begin at the North Central Research and Outreach Center at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, August 8, 2003.

A number of research projects funded by MFVGA's specialty crop grant dollars (awarded by USDA through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture) are currently underway at NCROC. These projects will be showcased during the Field Day.

The NCROC part of the tour will include discussions of the following: strawberry angular leaf spot project, strawberry cultivar project, blueberry observation trials, strawberry flame renovation equipment, strawberry nitrogen study with Mesabi, woody ornamental project and the annual flower and chrysanthemum projects.

Of interest to vegetable growers is the research being done on high tunnel production. Find out what researchers are learning and whether their studies could benefit your operation.

The Field Day will continue in Bovey, MN with a picnic lunch and tour of Nordic Ridge Gardens, owned and operated by Gene Eklin. The 160-acre former dairy farm is located on a picturesque hilltop, south of the town of Calumet, Minnesota on the west end of the Mesabi Iron Range.

A warm, sunny hilltop combined with sandy loam soil produces a bountiful crop of juicy red strawberries each summer and each fall the farm is host to thousands of visitors who come by bus or car to visit the farm animals, marvel at the abundant fall offerings (thousands of pumpkins, squash and gourds) and enjoy the family fun offered at the Pumpkin Patch.

Nordic Ridge Gardens has nine acres of strawberries – pick-your-own, pre-picked and marketed at the Farmers' Market in town. They have pumpkin festivals in October, fall hayrides, other fall entertainment, a farm animal petting barn and a playground.

Nordic Ridge Gardens is about 15-20 minutes from NCROC. Directions will be provided to those attending the tour.

The cost is \$10.00 per person and reservations for the picnic are required. Please return the registration form by August 1, 2003.

2003 SUMMER TOUR & PICNIC - REGISTRATION FORM:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

Number attending the Picnic - _____ at \$10.00 per person

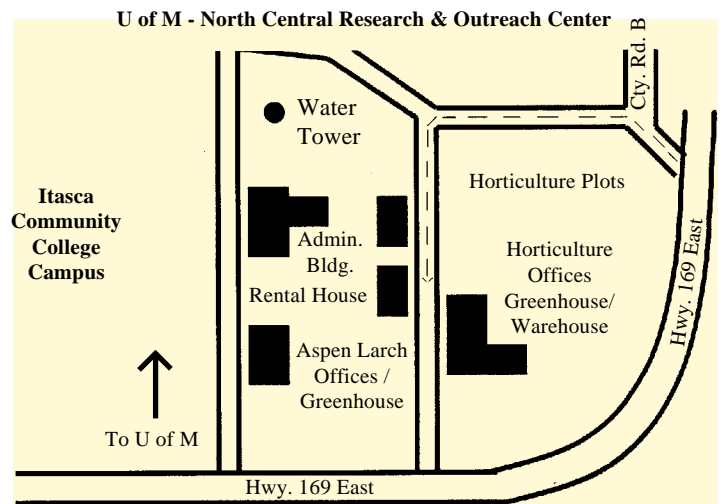
Total enclosed \$ _____

Make check payable to MFVGA.

Picnic registrations must be returned to the MFVGA office by August 1, 2003.

Mail registration form and payment to:

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



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@worldnet.att.net
www.mfvga.org

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