

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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December, 2003 Volume 17, No. 5

A Note From The Board

By Bill Jacobson – Pine Tree Orchard, Inc., White Bear Lake, MN

Greetings.

I am writing this "Note from the Board" after getting home from our November 4th Board meeting. I always look forward to this post-season meeting to trade war stories and find out what happened and how everyone's year went. As usual, there were plenty of weather-related moans and groans. Asian lady beetles, deer and black bear were the animal pests discussed. A hay ride fatality, liability insurance and farming in suburbia rounded out the chatter between agenda items. All this and a great home-cooked meal by Marilyn, it's no wonder I look forward to these meetings. We really did get some work done. The agenda was 1¼ pages long.

Some important items that came out of the meeting are:

The MFVGA is in good financial shape.

Membership is good, but we all need to keep soliciting our farmer friends and associates.

The educational conference on February 5 & 6 looks fantastic!!

Our produce bag program was a hit and will be repeated for 2004.

The cost of berry plants might rise substantially so our group ordering might be more valuable than ever.

There are opportunities for three people to have a term on our Board of Directors.

Of course, all this and more will be discussed and/or presented at our annual meeting!

Something I like to tell people as I explain how important it is to be involved in grower organizations and attend meetings and seminars is this: I have been growing strawberries since 1982 and I have planted strawberries less than 20 times. Now, if I was a dentist for 21 years and told you I had performed only about 20 root canals in my career, you would probably be squirming in the dentist's chair. As farmers, we only get one shot a year at many of our procedures. So in the off season I try to pick up as many extra years of experience as I can by attending meetings and networking with educators and other growers.

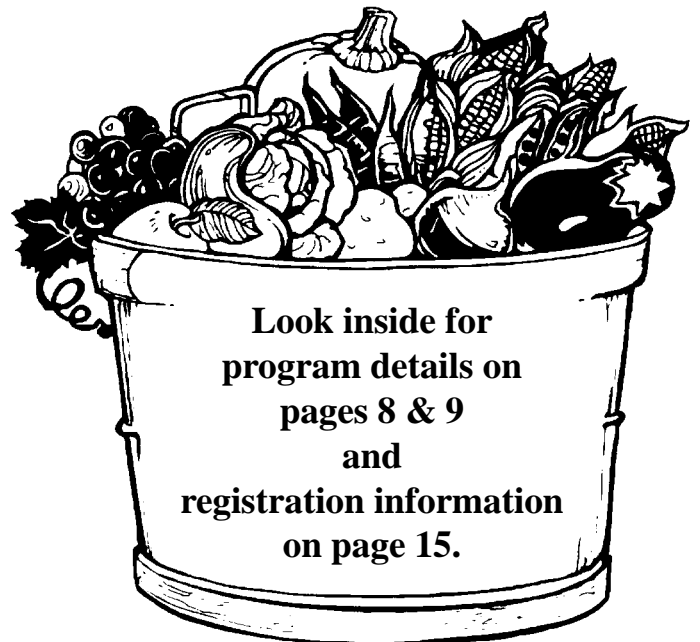
I hope you all have a safe and joyous holiday season. I look forward to seeing everyone at our meeting in St. Cloud.



Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

February 5 & 6, 2004

St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN



MFVGA Policy on Conference Registration Cancellations and Refunds:

MFVGA will refund registration fees for the 2004 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in full if the MFVGA office is notified before Friday, January 30, 2004. If the MFVGA office is notified after January 30, 2004, but before February 2nd, 75% of the registration amount will be refunded. No refund will be issued if registrations are cancelled after Monday, February 2, 2004.

MFVGA Board Positions Open

The Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is looking for members who are willing to serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors. We are looking for representatives from both the fruit and vegetable industries. If you are interested in serving the MFVGA as a Board member, or would like more information, please call Marilyn at the MFVGA office (763-434-0400). Your name will be forwarded to the nominations committee.

Join us for the "Bull Session"

If you are coming to the Educational Conference and plan to be in St. Cloud on Wednesday, February 4, 2004, you are invited to join other growers and educators for an informal "Bull Session" beginning at 7:00 p.m. This is an excellent chance to visit with other growers, meet new people and renew old acquaintances.

Bring samples of jellies, jams, salsa, etc. to share – crackers and chips will be provided.

The "Bull Session" will be held at the Best Western – Kelly Inn. If you have any questions, please call the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400.

Upcoming Events:

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show – February 5 & 6, 2004. St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN.

MDA Offers Organic Demonstration Grants

St. Paul, MN – For organic growers, practical information can sometimes be difficult to find. That's why the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is offering a new organic demonstration grant program designed to help farmers try out organic practices on their own farms. The MDA's Agricultural Resources Management and Development Division has up to \$50,000 to award for organic demonstration projects this year and the agency is accepting applications through December 12, 2003.

"We are partnering with the USDA Risk Management Agency to make this special program possible," said Diversification Specialist Meg Moynihan. "These grants can reduce the risk associated with trying a new practice, especially something as intricate as organic production. By sharing what they learn from the demonstrations, participants also help other Minnesota organic farmers create success for their own operations."

Individual grants up to \$5,000 are available for one-year projects that demonstrate organic crop, livestock, or vegetable production practices. Joint applications from groups of farmers will also be considered. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

- Weed management;
- Cover-cropping and inter-seeding strategies;
- Pest and disease management;
- Soil issues, including fertility management, biological health, and conservation;
- Alternate grains for livestock feed;
- Organic livestock management, including parasite control and feed;
- Improving cosmetics of fruits and vegetables to increase marketability;
- Conversion issues (transitioning from conventional to organic, including agronomics and economics); and
- Reducing cost of production to increase profit margins.

Projects must be on Minnesota farms to qualify. Results of the demonstrations will be highlighted in the Greenbook, a free publication produced annually by the MDA's Sustainable Agriculture Program.

Application materials and more information are available on the MDA website, www.mda.state.mn.us/esap/organic or by contacting the Agriculture Resources Management and Development Division, MDA, 90 West Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107, 651-297-7686. Completed applications must be received by December 12, 2003. An independent panel will review applications.

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: 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.



See you in St. Cloud!

The Minnesota Grown Program will be on hand for both days at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in St. Cloud. Please stop by our booth and introduce yourself if we haven't met in person – it's always helpful to put a face with the name. You can also see the point-of-sale materials, shirts, hats and other items. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome!

Gift Ideas from Minnesota Grown

Visit minnesotagrown.com for some great holiday gift ideas from the Minnesota Grown Promotion Group. Minnesota Grown shirts, hats and aprons make great gifts and help create awareness of Minnesota agriculture.

2004 Directory Sponsorship Update

Having a media sponsor for the 2003 *Directory* has worked out very well for everyone. Infinity Broadcasting, which includes WCCO-AM, WLTE-FM, KCCO-AM and WXPT-FM has been the beneficiary of being a part of a very popular statewide guide. In return, each station ran 160 ads and promotional announcements on behalf of the *Directory* and each station's web page has had a link to the Minnesota Grown site.

We are negotiating with Infinity as well as other potential media partners regarding the 2004 *Directory*. We hope to have a sponsor on board by the time *Directory* renewals are mailed in early December.

Are you the Weakest Link?

One of the keys to having a successful web site is to be ranked highly by search engines. When consumers do a search for a specific product on their computer, how likely are they to find you? That's not a simple question to answer, given the multitude of search engines and browsers being used. One way to increase your ranking is to have other web sites link to you. That's why it's important to include your web address in your Minnesota Grown Directory listing. It's also a good reason to include a link to minnesotagrown.com in your site. When you link to Minnesota Grown, be sure to add the Minnesota Grown logo.

License and Directory Renewals Due

Minnesota Grown license renewals and listing forms for the 2004 *Directory* will be mailed just after Thanksgiving. As always, the

annual license fee is just \$5 and includes free point-of-sale materials. The *Directory* listing fee will remain at \$40 each. The MDA issued a record number of licenses (over 755!) in 2003. 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.

Marketing Conference is March 16

The annual Minnesota Grown Marketing Conference is moving to a new location and time this year in hopes of drawing an even bigger and more diverse crowd than before. It will be held on Tuesday, March 16 at the Earle Brown Center on the St. Paul Campus near the fairgrounds. Program details and speakers are being confirmed as this newsletter goes to press. If you have a topic you'd like to see addressed or a specific speaker to recommend, we'd love to hear from you. For the latest info, contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 or visit our web site at www.minnesotagrown.com

Minnesota Grown Promotion Group Receives RMA Education Funding

The USDA Risk Management Agency has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Minnesota Grown Promotion Group to conduct risk management education projects for specialty crop and livestock producers who participate in the Minnesota Grown Program. Many of the items will directly benefit fruit and vegetable growers and will be administered by the MFVGA. Those items are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter. The cooperative agreement also includes funding for the 2004 Marketing Conference and the educational conferences of the member associations of the MGPG. The MGPG is a private, non-profit organization that promotes Minnesota Grown products.

Minnesota Grown Promotion Group Names Officers

Bob Fitch was re-elected President of the Minnesota Grown Promotion Group at its November meeting in St. Paul. The rest of the Executive Committee consists of Gail Griffin, Vice President, Mike Lorentz, Treasurer and John Marshall, Secretary. Three at-large positions were also filled at the meeting. Ed Lorentz and Jerry Linser were each re-elected and JoAnne Berkenkamp was elected to the seat formerly held by Tim Peterson.

Living Green with Minnesota Grown

One of the basic principles of environmentally friendly is to buy local. With that in mind, the Minnesota Grown Program is exploring ways to have a larger presence at the 2004 Living Green Expo. The 2003 event was attended by over 10,000 consumers and the 2004 Living Green Expo will be held May 1-2 on the fairgrounds. At this point, we are looking for ways that Minnesota Grown can be an official sponsor of the event and use the event to create some press for the availability of the new 2004 *Directory*. More details will be available in the next MFVGA newsletter.

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.

What Do USDA Partnership Agreements Mean to MFVGA?

The Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is very pleased to announce that we were awarded a \$50,000 Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Agreement through the USDA – Risk Management Agency. The Minnesota Grown Promotion Group was also awarded a partnership agreement through the USDA – Risk Management Agency’s Education program. MFVGA programs were also submitted as part of the Minnesota Grown proposal.

Combined, the partnership agreements with the USDA – Risk Management Agency will fund the following programs to benefit MFVGA members and fruit and vegetable growers throughout the region:

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference

Partnership dollars will help fund speaker expenses, offset room and equipment rental and help defray some of the printing and promotional expenses.

MFVGA Newsletter

Partnership dollars will allow us to include more information on risk management topics and expand the newsletter to reach more producers.

Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable IPM Newsletter

Funding will combine the current Minnesota Vegetable IPM Newsletter and the MDA Apple & Strawberry Report into one publication to be posted on the web and mailed to a limited number of producers and educators. Funding also continues these programs for the 2004 growing season.

Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Manual for the Beginning Grower

Funding will allow us to work with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the USDA – Risk Management Agency to review the manual that was developed several years ago by the Extension Service and MDA and to update and expand the manual to include more information, new topics, and an expanded and updated resource section.

High Tunnel Production Manual

Funding provides the opportunity for Dr. David Wildung from the U of M’s North Central Research and Outreach Center and Terry Nennich with the U of M Extension Service to develop a manual on high tunnel production that also incorporates their recent research in Minnesota.

Distribution of Risk Management Materials

Funding will allow us to provide copies of the *Midwest Vegetable Production Guide* free of charge to MFVGA members who are vegetable producers. Copies of the guide will also be distributed to non-member vegetable growers who register for the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in February. We plan to distribute the guides at the educational conference in St. Cloud on February 5 & 6, 2004.

Apple and Strawberry Field ID Guides and IPM Manuals - Funding will also allow us to work with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture IPM Program to print additional copies of two field guides developed by MDA for the identification of pest insects, diseases and beneficial organisms in Minnesota apple orchards and strawberry fields. Companion manuals on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) have also been developed. The project was initially funded with grant dollars provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A limited number of the guides and manuals have been produced and distributed. Funding by the Risk Management Agency will allow us to distribute additional copies of the field guides and manuals to MFVGA members as well as other area apple and strawberry growers.

More information on these programs and how you can get copies of the materials will be included in future issues of the MFVGA newsletter.

USDA Awards \$24.7 Million In Partnership Agreements to Develop Risk Management Tools and Education

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced awards of \$24.7 million in risk management partnership agreements on October 8, 2003. The agreements will support the development of new risk management tools for producers and outreach and education opportunities to limited-resource and other traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers.

“The Bush Administration is committed to providing farmers and ranchers appropriate risk management tools to manage their businesses,” Veneman said. “These projects will help underserved, small and limited-resource producers better manage the many risks they face.”

RMA Administrator Ross J. Davidson, Jr., said that through these partnerships “women, minority, limited resource and other traditionally underserved agricultural producers will receive assistance in understanding and using risk management tools to improve their economic viability.”

Community Outreach and Assistance Agreements - Forty-nine competitively awarded partnerships with community-based, educational and nonprofit organizations will use \$5 million to educate women, limited resource and other traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers.

Research and Development Agreements - Of the \$24.7 million, \$10.6 million was awarded to qualified public and private organizations for research and development of new non-insurance risk management tools.

Education Partnership Agreements and Targeted States - Of the \$9.1 million awarded, \$4.5 million is provided for the Targeted States Program to deliver crop insurance education to producers in 15 historically underserved states through cooperative agreements. Specialty crop, livestock, nursery and horticulture producers will benefit from \$4.6 million in education partnership agreements for commodity partnership programs.

**Upper Midwest Regional
Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference
February 5 & 6, 2004**

**St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

Sponsored by the
Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association

In cooperation with the
University of Minnesota Extension Service
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
North Dakota State University Extension Service
USDA – Risk Management Agency

Thursday morning – February 5, 2004

7:00 a.m. Registration

8:15 – 10:15 a.m. GENERAL SESSION – ORGANICS

8:15 – 8:30 Welcome / Announcements
8:30 – 9:00 Overview of Organic Production: Regulations & Definitions – Meg Moynihan, Agricultural Diversification Specialist, MDA
9:00 – 9:45 Cover Crops –
9:45 – 10:15 Grower Showcase –

10:15 – 11:00 Break to the Trade Show

11:00 – 12:00 noon SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION

11:00 – 11:45 Year in Review – Grower participation
11:45 – 12:00 Canola & Wool Mulch Research Update – Steve Poppe, U of M – WCROC

11:00 – 12:00 noon SESSION II: WEED BIOLOGY LEARNING GROUP

Led by Dr. Roger Becker, U of M – Dept. of Agronomy & Plant Genetics

11:00 – 12:15 p.m. SESSION III: HIGH TUNNEL PRODUCTION

11:00 – 11:30 Overview of High Tunnel Production & Update on Minnesota Research – Dr. David Wildung, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
11:30 – 12:15 High Tunnels for Organic Production – Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr., Pennsylvania State University – Dept. of Horticulture

11:00 – 12:00 noon SESSION IV: SWEET CORN – INSECTS

11:00 – 11:30 Elementary Aspects of Ear Worm Control in Sweet Corn – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service
11:30 – 12:00 Update on European Corn Borer – Dr. Bill Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology

More information on the speakers at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference will be included in the February 2004 issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Thursday afternoon – February 5, 2004

1:00 – 4:45 p.m. SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION

1:00 – 1:45 Avoiding Winter Injury in Strawberries – Dr. Thaddeus McCamant, Northland Community Technical College
1:45 – 2:15 Specialty Crops Grant Small Fruit Research Updates – Strawberry Flame Weeding / Renovation and B.A.L.S. Research – Dr. David Wildung, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
2:15 – 2:45 Black Root Rot – Definitions and Basic Information on the Complex – Dr. Annemiek Schilder, Michigan State University – Dept. of Plant Pathology
2:45 – 3:15 Break to the Trade Show
3:15 – 3:45 Black Root Rot – Options for Control – Dr. Annemiek Schilder, Michigan State University – Dept. of Plant Pathology
3:45 – 4:15 Variety Update – Dr. Jim Luby, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
4:15 – 4:45 Stinger Use in Strawberries – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service

1:15 – 4:30 p.m. SESSION II: PUMPKINS & OTHER CUCURBITS

1:15 – 1:45 Cucumber Beetle – How to Monitor for Them, etc. – Dr. Bill Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology
1:45 – 2:15 Efficient Harvesting Techniques for Pumpkins –
2:15 – 3:00 Break to the Trade Show
3:00 – 3:30 Varieties – Grower panel on what varieties are money makers
3:30 – 4:00 Sandea Herbicide Trials – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service
4:00 – 4:30 Ornamental Gourd Varieties – Jason Williamson, Rupp Seeds

1:15 – 4:30 p.m. SESSION III: TOMATOES & PEPPERS

1:15 – 2:00 Blights and Bacterial Diseases of Tomatoes & Peppers – Identification and Control – Dr. Janna Beckerman, U of M – Dept. of Plant Pathology
2:00 – 2:30 Mulches – Steve Poppe, U of M – WCROC
2:30 – 3:00 Break to the Trade Show
3:00 – 4:00 Tomato & Pepper Production in High Tunnels – Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr., Pennsylvania State University, Dept. of Horticulture
4:00 – 4:30 Grower discussion on varieties

1:15 – 4:30 p.m. SESSION IV: SWEET CORN – ADVANCED

1:15 – 1:45 Planting Considerations – Dr. Vince Fritz, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
1:45 – 2:15 Early Season Row Covers – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service
2:15 – 3:00 Break to the Trade Show
3:00 – 3:30 Variety Selection Affecting Weed Control Strategies – Dr. Roger Becker, U of M – Dept. of Agronomy & Plant Genetics
3:30 – 4:00 Bt Technology – Rootworm Update – Dr. Bill Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology
4:00 – 4:30 Ice & Other Postharvest Considerations – Dr. Cindy Tong, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

4:45 MFVGA Annual Business Meeting

5:15 Social Hour in the Trade Show area
6:30 “Minnesota Grown” Banquet – Entertainment by Steve Russell

Friday morning – February 6, 2004

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	GENERAL SESSION
8:00 – 8:15	Overview of the Midwest Vegetable Production Guide and Introduction to New Apple & Strawberry IPM Materials
8:15 – 9:00	Pesticide Misuse – What It Is and How Producers Can Prevent It – John Peckham, Agricultural Chemical Investigation Unit, MDA
9:00 – 9:45	Break to the Trade Show
9:45 – 12:15 p.m.	SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION
9:45 – 10:30	High Tunnel Production of Berry Crops – Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr., Pennsylvania State University – Dept. of Horticulture
10:30 – 11:00	The Multi-colored Asian Lady Beetle: A Recent Invader and Pest of Fruit Production – Robert Koch, U of M – Dept. of Entomology
11:00 – 11:15	Grubs – Dr. Thaddeus McCamant, Northland Community & Technical College
11:15 – 11:30	Symbiosis: Strawberries and Mycorrhizal Fungi – Marjorie Ross, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
11:30 – 12:00	Bumble Bee Pollination in Blueberries - Dr. Marla Spivak, U of M - Dept. of Entomology
12:00 – 12:15	Berry SARE Grant Update
9:45 – 12:00 noon	SESSION II: APPLES / TREE FRUIT
9:45 – 10:15	Apple Trellising
10:15 – 10:45	How The Food Quality Protection Act Relates to Apples – Label requirements and chemical usages – Barbara VanTil, FQPA Coordinator, EPA
10:45 – 11:30	Grafting – Bob Purvis
11:30 – 12:00	Winter Hardiness
9:45 – 12:00 noon	SESSION III: MARKET GROWER SESSION
9:45 – 10:30	Organizing for a Market Garden – Ron Branch, Berry Ridge Farm – Alexandria, MN
10:30 – 11:15	Merchandising for Direct Marketing & Farmers' Markets –
11:15 – 12:00	Easy Postharvest Cooling – Dr. Cindy Tong, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
9:45 – 12:00 noon	SESSION IV: COLE CROPS
9:45 – 10:15	Production Practices for Cole Crops – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service
10:15 – 10:45	Varieties – Grower discussion
10:45 – 11:30	Insect Pests – Dr. Bill Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology
11:30 – 12:00	Does Processing Affect Health Benefits of Cabbage? – Dr. Vince Fritz, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

Friday afternoon – February 6, 2004

1:15 – 4:00 p.m.	SESSION I: DIRECT MARKETING
1:15 – 1:45	Minnesota Grown Opportunities for Direct Marketers – Paul Hugunin
1:45 – 2:30	Grower Panel / Roundtable Discussion on Making Money With “By-products” and Value-Added Items
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:15	Entertainment Farming –
3:15 – 4:00	Cash Management Strategies for Direct Marketers
1:15 – 4:30	SESSION II: BEGINNING GROWER SESSION
1:15 – 1:45	Six Major Considerations for a Successful Horticultural Operation – Terry Nennich, U of M Extension Service
1:45 – 2:15	Who Will Be My Customer? – Kevin Edberg
2:15 – 2:45	Organic or Conventional? – Curt Nyegaard, U of M Extension Service
2:45 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 3:30	Minimizing Wildlife Damage – Nick Reindl, DNR Wildlife Specialist
3:30 – 4:00	Don't Treat Your Soil Like Dirt! – Dr. Carl Rosen or Peter Bierman, U of M – Dept. of Soil, Water & Climate
4:00 – 4:30	Irrigation Management – Jerry Wright, U of M Extension Service
1:15 – 4:15 p.m.	SESSION III: SPECIALTY CROPS
1:15 – 2:00	Breeding Potatoes for Specialty Markets – Dr. Christian Thill, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
2:00 – 2:30	Ornamental Corn Production –
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:15	Specialty Peppers
3:15 – 3:45	What Would Asians Buy? – Dr. Cindy Tong, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
3:45 – 4:15	Produce for the Latino Market – Fernando de Villena – U of M, Dept. of Horticultural Science
1:15 – 4:45 p.m.	SESSION IV: BUSINESS AND RISK MANAGEMENT
	Risk Management –
1:15 – 1:45	How to Find a Crop Insurance Agent and What Questions to Ask
1:45 – 2:15	Crop Insurance Update – AGR Programs and What Producers Can Do Now to Start Preparing – Risk Management Agency
2:15 – 2:45	NAP Program Update
2:45 – 3:15	What a NAP Inspector Looks for When he Does a Damage Assessment – How They Evaluate the Situation
3:15 – 3:30	Break
3:30 – 4:00	Midwest Food Alliance – Update on Marketing Program
4:00 – 4:45	Federal Conservation Security Program – How it can benefit fruit and vegetable growers – Amanda Bilek, Program Coordinator, The Minnesota Project

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TRADE SHOW HOURS:

Thursday – Feb. 5: 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Friday – Feb. 6: 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

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

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference February 5 & 6, 2004

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE TRADE SHOW AND MFVGA ANNUAL MEETING

ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT

Best Western-Kelly Inn 320-253-0606

Room block will be released 1/4/04

Single Rate – \$70.00 Double Rate – \$76.00

Radisson Suites Hotel 320-654-1661

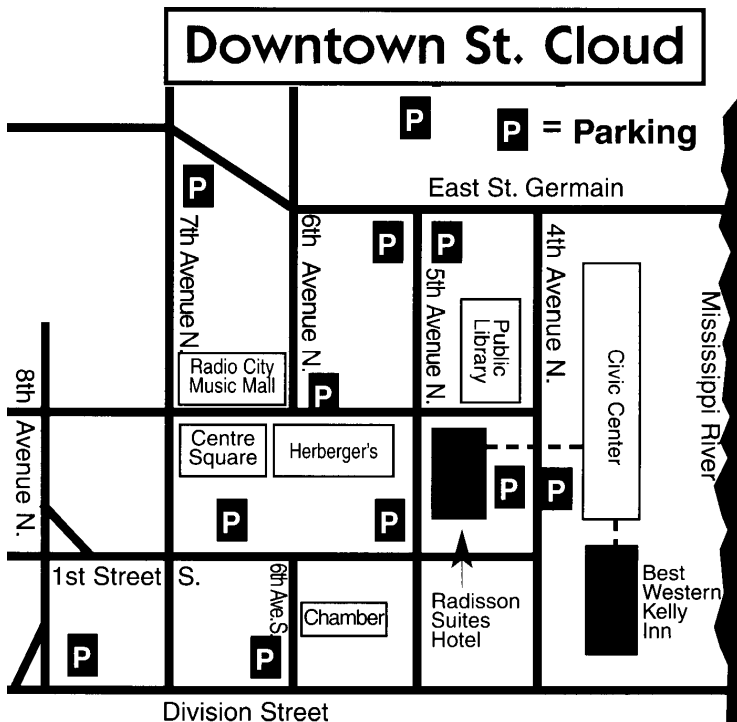
Room block will be released 1/4/04

Rate for 1 or 2 people – \$105.00 per night.

Be sure to mention the MFVGA to receive special conference room rates.

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

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



Minnesota Grown Banquet

You are cordially invited to join your friends, fellow growers, vendors and educators at the "Minnesota Grown" banquet on Thursday night, February 5, 2004 during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show in St. Cloud.

The dinner will be followed by Steve Russell – Juggling Extravaganza. Steve Russell is a dexterous guy with eye-catching skills and off-center comic flair. He was trained by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey and is a seasoned professional with his own brand of fresh, distinctive humor. Join us for an evening of good food, great entertainment and genuine hilarity.

This is a great opportunity to relax, enjoy a good "Minnesota Grown" meal and good conversation followed by a large dose of laughter. The banquet begins at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are required. The registration form can be found on page 15.

2004 Trade Show Exhibitors

The following exhibitors have already signed up for the 2004 Trade Show held in conjunction with the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. The Trade Show will be held at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN on Thursday and Friday, February 5 & 6, 2004. Additional exhibitor information will be included in the February 2004 issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

- Ag Resource, Inc.
- Ag Tec
- Agro-K Corporation
- Captain Jack Communications
- Central Landscape Supply, Inc.
- Chesmore Seed Company
- Farm Service Agency
- Farmers' Choice Food Brands
- Gowan Company
- Great Goods
- Harris Seeds
- Isanti County Equipment, Inc.
- Johnny's Selected Seeds
- Jordan Seeds, Inc.
- Koppert Biological Systems, Inc.
- Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture – IPM Program
- Minnesota Grown
- Nelson's Vegetable Storage Systems, Inc.
- OXBO International
- Rispens Seeds, Inc.
- Roeters Farm Equipment, Inc.
- Rupp Seeds, Inc.
- Rusty's Ag Sales
- Smurfit Stone Container Corp.
- Stokes Seeds, Inc.
- UAP – Great Lakes – LaCrescent
- UAP – Northern Plains – Howe
- USDA – Risk Management Agency

It's not too late to sign up – contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 for an application for exhibit space.



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

The University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Science has a new department head, Thomas E. Michaels. Dr. Michaels comes to Minnesota from the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada, where he was a Professor in the Department of Plant Agriculture and Associate Dean in the Ontario Agricultural College of the University of Guelph. However, Dr. Michaels is not unfamiliar with the Upper Midwest, as he received his M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Breeding from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. While at the University of Guelph, Dr. Michaels worked on bean genetics, releasing 12 cultivars, and also developed 4 peanut varieties (yes, peanuts) for southwestern Ontario. He has won several teaching awards and an honorary lifetime membership to the Canadian Seed Growers' Association. The Department is glad Dr. Michaels has joined us, and we hope to introduce him to vegetable and fruit growers soon, especially anyone interested in growing peanuts commercially. The arrival of Dr. Michaels means that the former interim Department Head, Dr. Carl Rosen, can spend more time on soil science. Thanks, Carl, for your administrative service!

You have probably heard by now that there will only be 18 regional Extension Service centers in the very near future, instead of offices in every county. There currently are Regional Extension Educators (a long time ago they were called "county agents") specializing in horticulture. These educators include Karl Foord (specializing in business management), Krishona Martinson, Robert Mugaas (specializing in turf), and Terrance Nennich (specializing in fruits & vegetables). Three more Regional Educators will be hired, to be housed at the regional centers in Farmington and Andover. What areas these new hires will specialize in has not yet been determined, and will probably depend upon who is hired and what their backgrounds are.

If you were disgusted by those multicolored Asian lady beetles in your apples, raspberries, and grapes this past October, not to mention in your house, I urge you to look at <http://www.vegedge.umn.edu/VEGPEST/Harmonia/Harmonia.htm>. Dr. Bill Hutchison and his graduate student, Bob Koch, wrote this factsheet on the lady beetles after this year's infestations. The beetles may be a recurrent problem in the future.

That's all the news from the University for now. By the time you read this, you should be thinking about the next Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference, the equipment you're going to fix this winter, the next Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference, your winter vacation, not to conflict with the next Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference, the seed you're going to buy for next year's plantings, and the next Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. Hope to see you there.

Dr. Bill Lamont from Penn State to Speak on High Tunnel Production

We are very excited to have Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr. participating in the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in February.

Bill Lamont has an extensive background in research, extension and teaching. In his current position he is responsible for the culture and management of potatoes and other vegetable crops. He is the author of numerous research and extension publications on vegetable crops, drip/plastic mulches, high tunnels and greenhouse vegetable production. He is a frequent contributor to trade publications such as *American Vegetable Grower*, *Productores Hortalizas*, *Irrigation Journal*, *Grower*, *The Vegetable Growers News* and *Spudman*.

Dr. Lamont is a Professor and Extension Vegetable Crops Specialist in the Department of Horticulture at The Pennsylvania State University. He was born and raised in rural Pennsylvania and obtained two undergraduate degrees, one in Economics and Business from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA and the other in Horticulture from Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, PA. He received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Department of Vegetable Crops, Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

This is an event you will not want to miss. Program details are included on pages 8 and 9. More information on Dr. Lamont and his presentations will be included in the February issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

Conference Scholarships Available

A limited number of scholarships are available for the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference to help defray registration fees for commercial growers and students attending the Thursday and Friday educational sessions. The MFVGA scholarship fund was established with dollars from the USDA-Risk Management Agency and our Specialty Crops Grant. Scholarships cannot be applied to trade show admittance.

Scholarship dollars 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 2004 conference must be received in the MFVGA office and approved before January 23, 2004. 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@worldnet.att.net.

Family Budgets

Dean McCorkle, Fredrick D. DeLano, Danny Klinefelter
and Larry Langemeier *

(Taken from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A & M University System, Bulletin L-5265, RM3-17.0, 5-99 as posted on the National Ag Risk Education Library web site.)

Budgeting for family income and expenses is often a lower priority for farm and ranch families than budgeting for the business.

Without budgeting, family living expenses may exceed the available income and jeopardize the overall financial goals of the farm and family. The management of family expenses within a set of mutual family goals can help to keep money from slipping needlessly away. Some reasons producers do not devote more time to managing family finances include:

- They are not tax deductible.
- Family budgeting is difficult and time consuming.
- Compared to farm/ranch expenses, family living expenses are too small to worry about.
- Non-farm income pays for family expenses so it doesn't matter.

Many producers devote attention to family living expenditures only once a year – at loan renewal time. To approve an operating loan, many lenders require that the borrower provide an estimate of family living costs, either as an annual total or broken down by expense category. Producers may rarely go back and compare their actual family living expenses against their budgeted amounts.

Why Develop a Family Living Budget

Budgeting for family expenditures is the foundation of a sound financial management plan. When used in conjunction with records of actual spending, a family budget allows you to pinpoint unnecessary spending, and areas where actual costs may be higher or lower than you previously thought. Given the tight profit margins in agriculture, adhering to a finely tuned family budget can provide a much needed boost to your financial future.

Family Goals and Standard of Living

Before developing your family budget, you must first determine your farm and family goals, and the standard of living your family desires. It is important that all members of the family be involved in this goal setting process so that the goals reflect the perceptions and ambitions of each member of the family. Open communication is important in this process. When establishing family goals, be as realistic as possible and consider all available income. If you set unattainable family goals you will only have to adjust them later to match your available financial resources.

The financial goals of your family can be divided into two categories – short-term and long-term. Short-term goals are those you hope to achieve in the coming year, while long-term goals are those you hope to achieve further in the future and that usually require substantial financial resources. Examples of short-term goals are replacing the washer and dryer, or trading in the family car. Examples of long-term goals include saving for your children's education, saving for retirement, and paying off the farm/ranch.

Standard of living is mostly perception. What one person or family perceives as being a lavish lifestyle may seem frugal to someone else. The standard of living your family desires can be something

you want now, or it can be a goal to strive for in the coming years. Do you want to drive a \$40,000 vehicle or a \$15,000 vehicle? Do you want to live in a \$250,000 house or a \$65,000 house. How frequently do you want to dine out at an expensive restaurant – twice a week, once a month? These are the kinds of standard of living questions you need to address.

Family Records

The best way to develop an accurate family budget is to be very familiar with your current and past expenses. If you have not been keeping good records, developing a budget will be more difficult. You may be doing one or a combination of the following: 1) drawing an amount from the farm checking account to pay family living expenses each month; and / or 2) using non-farm income to pay all or a portion of family living expenses. In either case, you can probably review past bank statements and pay check stubs to determine how much money you spent each month for family living expenses. After determining this amount, list the expenses you incur each month that are known, or fixed. These could include child-care, car payment(s), house payment(s), cable/satellite TV, auto/life/home/medical insurance, and others. After establishing these amounts, subtract the total of these known expenses from the total amount the family spent. The remainder will be those expenses that vary from month to month. These will include expenses such as groceries, dining out, gifts, utilities, clothing, entertainment, travel, furniture, home maintenance, medical care, auto fuel, and others. Next, based on your memory, cashed checks, and other records you have, allocate the remainder to the family living expense categories that vary from month to month. Start with expenses for travel, furniture, home maintenance, and medical care, since these expenses tend to occur less frequently than the others. For the others, you'll have to use your best judgment in allocating to these categories. Try to recall any amounts that were intended to be used for family living expenses but were instead transferred to the farm account (and/or non-farm business account) or used to service farm debt. Overlooking these types of transactions could cause your family living expenditures to be vastly overestimated.

Developing Your Family Budget

If you have been keeping good family records, building a budget is much simpler because you know your past spending patterns. Whether you are building the budget based on an estimate of past costs or on actual costs, keep in mind that your past lifestyle, goals and standard of living may or may not be the same as the way you plan to live in the future.

You can budget on an annual basis, monthly basis (cash flow), or a monthly average. Use a method that is most useful to you. If your income fluctuates from month to month, a monthly budget will probably be most useful. If your income is fairly stable from month to month, an annual budget may be most useful.

* Extension Program Specialist- Risk Management, The Texas A & M University System; Extension Agricultural Economist, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service; Professor and Extension Economist, The Texas A & M University System; and Extension Agricultural Economist, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service.

Family Budgets continued on page 10

Budgeting Income

To begin, list all sources and estimated amounts of income you expect to have available for family expenses during the year. These include salaries, interest income, rental income, dividends, non-farm business income, etc. If some portion of farm income is to be used for family living (which is typical), estimate an amount you plan to set aside for family living. You may have to adjust these amounts before you're satisfied with your budget.

Budgeting Expenses

Since there are so many types of family living expenses, determine the categories that are meaningful to you and your family. For simplicity, they should be consistent with the categories you use in your record-keeping system. Refer to Table 1 for examples of expense categories. The next step is to budget an amount for each of your expense categories that reflects the goals, lifestyle, and desired standard of living you have established.

Example

Jack and Jane Farmer are not happy with their current financial situation and have decided to take a closer look at their family expenditures. They have been using some of their equity to pay for family expenses. Here are a few facts about the family:

- The Farmers have been keeping pretty good family living records.
- The Farmers have a 6-month-old son.
- They farm full time and have a medium size cow/calf operation. After all farm expenses and loan payments are paid, \$12,000 is available for family living expenses.
- Jane works off the farm and has annual take home pay of \$30,000. The Farmers also earn a small amount of interest income each year.
- They are satisfied with their current standard of living but they think they can achieve it at a lesser cost.
- They would like to invest \$150 per month for their child's college education and \$175 per month into an IRA.

The budget in Table 1 is the Farmers' first attempt at putting together a family budget. To keep the budgeting process as simple as possible, they only list the net amount (take home pay) of Jane's salary. The taxes withheld from Jane's salary adequately cover the tax liability incurred due to the salary. They estimate an additional \$3,000 in taxes due on their farm and interest income. The Farmers' family living records are pretty good, but not perfect. Knowing this, they review the past 12 months of records and make a few corrections. They then make estimates for the budget based on the past 12 months of records, keeping in mind that during the most recent 6 months, they have had a child.

Table 1. Example Monthly Average Family Living Budget

	Monthly Average	Annual
Income		
Salary (net take home)	\$2,500	\$30,000
Farm income available	1,000	12,000
Interest	42	504
Total income	\$3,542	\$42,504

Monthly Average

Annual

Variable Expenses

Auto fuel	\$150	\$1,800
Auto repair	75	900
Clothing	150	1,800
Contributions	200	2,400
Dining out	150	1,800
Entertainment/Travel	75	900
Gifts	50	600
Groceries	275	3,300
Medical	50	600
Telephone	75	900
Utilities	125	1,500
Household/Furniture	100	1,200
Savings/Investments	325	3,900
Total variable expenses	\$1,800	\$21,600

Fixed Expenses

Car payment	200	2,400
Child care/Child expenses	400	4,800
House payment	963	11,556
Insurance	200	2,400
Taxes	250	3,000
Total fixed expenses	\$2,013	\$24,156

Total expenses	\$3,813	\$45,756
Net surplus/deficit	(\$271)	(\$3,252)

Budget Surplus or Deficit

The next step is to subtract the total expenses from projected income to determine if you have a budget deficit or surplus. If you have a surplus, consider doing some or all of the following:

- Make sure you have not underestimated some of your expenses or overestimated income.
- Apply the surplus to debt.
- Reinvest the surplus back into the farm.
- Invest the surplus.
- Increase your standard of living and / or family goals.

Usually the first attempt at building a family budget reveals a budget deficit. The steps below will help you determine how to alleviate a deficit:

- Make sure you have not overstated any of the expenses or underestimated income.
- Reevaluate your family's goals and desired standard of living. You may need to lower them.
- Determine if you can decrease expenses while still meeting your goals and standard of living. You will more than likely have to make some tough choices to accomplish this.
- Determine if you have access to more income. If you do have this luxury, convince yourself that you're satisfied with the expense amounts you have budgeted.

Jack and Jane Farmer's family living budget has an annual deficit of \$3,252 (\$271 per month). Given the size of their farming/ranching operation and the realistic farm income and expense estimates they are using, they don't feel comfortable expecting that more than \$12,000 per year will be available for family living expenses. After several lengthy discussions, and researching ways to reduce costs, the Farmers determine the following reductions in expenses are feasible:

Category	Month	Year
House payment	\$ 25	\$ 300
Groceries	50	600
Clothing	25	300
Dining out	25	300
Savings	150	1,800
Total	\$275	\$3,300

The Farmers have found a cheaper home owner's insurance policy which reduces their mortgage payment. They've decided they can shop smarter, modify spending patterns, and eat out less often to reduce expenses for groceries, clothing and dining out. Jack and Jane have also decided that for the short term, they will have to hold off on the college savings plan. They hope to work this into their budget in the next 2 to 4 years.

Making the Budget Work

Working with family living budgets can be interesting and very rewarding if you perceive it as a challenge, and recognize the personal economic benefits achieved from a successful budget. Budgeting is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing exercise in pursuit of your financial goals. To accomplish the goals you have set, you should monitor your actual expenditures and compare them to your budget once or twice a month.

Managing a budget and keeping records is tedious enough, so try to avoid "watching every penny" and being distracted with irrelevant details. A good effort at keeping records and managing your family living budget will go a long way towards enhancing your financial future.

References

Prochuska-Cue, Kathy, "Budgeting: The Basics and Beyond," University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

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This issue of the MFVGA Newsletter is sponsored, in part, by the USDA – Risk Management Agency Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program. For more information on the Risk Management Agency visit their website at www.rma.usda.gov. Information on the Farm Service Agency can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Strawberry Project Update

Marjorie Ross and Dr. Emily Hoover
University of Minnesota

We are researching the relationship between strawberries and mycorrhizae, a beneficial soil fungus. Mycorrhizae are naturally occurring fungi which colonize the roots of many plants, including strawberries. Mycorrhizae improve nutrient uptake, especially phosphorus, protect against plant pathogens and improve soil structure. We are studying the effects of cultivar choice and management strategies on mycorrhizal colonization, and subsequent effects on the strawberry plants. We spent the 2003 field season collecting plant and soil samples from our research plots at Morris, and also on the farms of four local strawberry growers who agreed to collaborate with us. Now that our plant material is collected, we are measuring plant biomass production and leaf nutrient content. We are also examining the roots microscopically to count mycorrhizal structures and obtain an estimate of percent colonization. Ultimately mycorrhizal colonization within three different cultivars, Jewel, Annapolis, and Winona will be compared and comparisons between strawberry management strategies will be made. We will provide further research updates and additional background information on mycorrhizae in strawberries at the 2004 MFVGA conference. See you there.

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Berry Plants And Produce Bag Order Forms Available Soon

MFVGA is coordinating group orders of strawberry and raspberry plants and the "Minnesota Grown" produce bags for the 2004 growing season. If you are on the mailing list for berry plants, you will automatically receive additional information and an order form for the coming year. Order forms for the produce bags and information regarding deadlines, etc. will be sent to everyone who ordered bags last year or indicated interest in the bags.

Order forms will be sent out as soon as we have finalized the pricing with our suppliers. We encourage you to return your order forms as soon as possible.

If you would like to be added to either mailing list, call the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or send an e-mail to mfvga@worldnet.att.net.

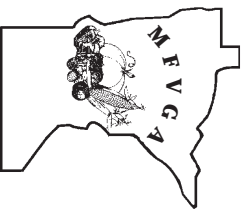
**Interested in exhibiting at the Trade Show?
Booths are still available.
Call MFVGA at 763-434-0400 TODAY
for more information.**

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

February 5 & 6, 2004 – St. Cloud, MN

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

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



Attendee's Name (Please print)	Full Registration Conference & Trade Show (Thursday & Friday) February 5 & 6			Thursday Night Banquet	One-day Only 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	
	\$80.00	\$20.00	\$155.00	\$20.00	\$60.00	\$20.00	\$85.00	\$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 30th 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®

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MFVGA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004

Farm/Company Name _____
 Phone (_____) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip Code _____
 E-mail Address _____
 Primary Crop Apples Berries Vegetables
 Crops _____

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
- _____ Northland Berry News

(An additional \$10.00 fee is required to receive the Northland Berry News.) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

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

*Registrations received before
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 a gift certificate for
 a night at the Kelly Inn.*

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

PLEASE NOTE:
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