

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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February, 2004 Volume 18, No. 1

A Note From The Board

Kevin Edberg – The Berry Patch, Forest Lake, MN

Dear Grower Friends,

We're in that time of year when the winds blow cold, darkness comes early, and the hints of spring coming on the breeze are still months away. It's the time of year to sit in the easy chair with a cup or mug of your favorite beverage while reading some of the grower articles you didn't find time for last summer and fall, and perhaps even to think and dream about the year ahead.

This year completes my 26th season as a berry grower. For 26 summers, my life has been shaped by watching the sky, crumbling soil between my fingers, noting the subtle changes as plants grow and mature, being present to the ever-changing dynamics of each new season. And being able to share some of it with folks like you.

Two thoughts come to me. First, how much pleasure I've gotten from getting to know so many other growers in this state, and how much I've learned in that process as well. I've been going to grower meetings for every one of those 26 years, and have been proud to watch MFVGA, and our partnerships with the folks in Extension, at MDA, and through other associations. I hope it's been as rewarding for you as it has been for me.

But I'm also thinking of how much more we have to learn. In my opinion, as an industry, we are seldom very intentional in managing our businesses for consistent profitability; we are not typically leaders in technology adoption or innovators in marketing; we tend to make decisions based on cost rather than return on investment. And we find it easier to complain about things that happen (or didn't happen) instead of organizing ourselves to change things or make things happen.

So as you read this, I challenge you to sit back in your chair, and ponder what you need to do to become a better, more consistently profitable grower. And while you're at it, what can we be about as an organization and as colleagues, to make that happen? Bring that with you to the MFVGA conference in February and let me, and other colleagues, know what's on your list. See you in St. Cloud!



Bill Lamont

To Give Three Presentations On High Tunnel Production

Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr. will give three presentations on high tunnel production during the 2004 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference to be held in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 & 6, 2004.

Dr. Lamont will discuss using high tunnels for organic production on Thursday morning, February 5th. Thursday afternoon

he will talk about tomato and pepper production in high tunnels. His last presentation will be on Friday, February 6th, when he will discuss high tunnel production of berry crops.

Dr. Lamont began his career as an Extension Specialist and applied researcher in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at North Carolina State University after completing his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in the Department of Vegetable Crops at Cornell University. It was while in North Carolina that he developed his passion and enthusiasm for researching and teaching about the production of vegetable crops using plastics or plasticulture system that has been the hallmark of his career.

Leaving North Carolina State University, Dr. Lamont spent a year in Rome, Georgia as part of a group of entrepreneurs attempting to develop a plastic manufacturing facility that would incorporate applied agricultural research and extension type outreach into its corporate structure. It was a good idea but one that couldn't get the necessary funding to get off the ground so he then moved on to Kansas State University and the Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources where he spent nine years honing his resident educational skills (classroom teaching) culminating in being awarded the Conoco Presidential Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching. He continued to conduct research on the use of plastic mulches, drip irrigation and row covers on a wide variety of vegetable crops in the Great Plains of the United States.

In 1997 he accepted his current position in the Department of Horticulture at The Pennsylvania State University as an Associate Professor with a split appointment in extension and research and returned home to Pennsylvania where he was born and raised. Effective July 1, 2003 he was promoted to Full Professor. Since coming to Penn State, he and colleague Dr. Mike Orzolek have co-founded the Center for Plasticulture and developed the High Tunnel Research and Education Facility, the largest facility of its kind in the United States dedicated to research and education on the use of this rapidly growing season extension technology.

Bill Lamont continued on page 2

Bill Lamont continued from front page

Dr. Lamont has written extensively on the subject of plasticulture for a wide variety of publications from scientific refereed papers, to proceedings of state and regional commodity meetings, and in a wide variety of trade magazines. He has been an invited speaker at many commodity meetings around the country and at international conferences on plasticulture. He is a twice Past-President of the American Society of Plasticulture and is currently serving as Vice-President of the Extension Division of the American Society for Horticultural Science, an organization for which he has organized several educational seminars on the subject of plasticulture which were held at various locations around the country.

(Some of the information included in this article was taken from the June 2003 issue of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers News.)

The full program schedule for the 2004 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and a registration form is included in this issue of the MFVGA Newsletter.

"A genius is a talented person who does his homework."

– *Thomas Edison*

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.

Rusty's Ag Sales Has New Owner

Rusty Leffingwell, founder of Rusty's Ag Sales, of Fairbury, Illinois, recently announced the sale of his firm. The new owner is Chad Wieland of Kawkawlin, Michigan. Chad grew up working in an implement dealership with his father. A few years back, upon the sale of the dealership, Chad established the Chad Wieland Farm, where he now raises berries and vegetables along with corn, wheat and soybeans. The majority of the berries and vegetables are sold through his own market on the farm.

Rusty will still be involved in the design and manufacture of new products, as well as furnishing assistance at specialty trade shows. Rusty's comment, "It's great to have a new owner who wants to continue what we started nearly 20 years ago."

"I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow."

– *Woodrow Wilson*

Order Your Berry Plants Today

MFVGA is coordinating another group order of strawberry and raspberry plants for the 2004 growing season. We are finalizing the pricing with our suppliers and order forms will be mailed out soon. If you do not receive an order form and are interested in more information, please contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or e-mail mfvga@worldnet.att.net. If you send an e-mail, please reference berry plant orders in the subject line.

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.

★ ★ ★ Session Highlights ★ ★ ★

Thinking of starting a commercial small fruit or vegetable operation? Maybe you're thinking of expanding your current production? What are the major aspects of commercial production which are an indicator of success or failure? Terry Nennich, Commercial Horticulture and Marketing Educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will present the topic "Six Major Considerations for a Successful Commercial Horticulture Operation" on Friday afternoon, February 6th. Other topics covered during the "Beginning Grower Session" include marketing considerations and determining who will buy your product, things to consider when deciding whether to use conventional or organic production methods, steps you can take to try to minimize wildlife damage, soil considerations, and irrigation management. The "Beginning Grower Session" begins at 1:15 p.m. on Friday, February 6th.

Stinger Use in Strawberries

In the summer of 2003, the MFVGA and the University of Minnesota Extension Service worked together to receive a Section 24-C, Special Local Needs Registration, for Stinger in strawberries to control thistles and certain other weeds in strawberries. This session will address safe and effective use of Stinger in strawberries including mode of action, weeds controlled, timing, rates, safety precautions and other aspects of responsible use of Stinger herbicide. If you grow strawberries and have a problem with thistles, you won't want to miss this session on Thursday afternoon, February 5th. The complete program can be found on pages 5 and 6.

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.



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

Marketing is one of the problems, if not the major problem, for many growers. Although there are several different marketing avenues – wholesale, farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture, farm stands, pick your own, or restaurants and food service outlets – growers are often on the lookout for ways to sell product profitably. There is a small movement to get consumers and businesses to buy locally. Can the two needs meet in an organized fashion?

In trying to determine if there was an efficient way to bring Twin Cities restaurateurs and farmers together, I found that there already are several groups doing this on an informal scale. The Southeast Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership does this through its limited liability corporation that represents 40 producers. Personal contacts are made with restaurateurs and marketing distribution companies. The Land Stewardship Project’s Pride of the Prairie project links growers with restaurants, grocery stores, caterers, distributors, and institutions in West Central Minnesota. Contacts with the retailers were made on an informal, one-on-one basis. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy has a website (www.eatwellguide.org) that allows consumers to search for producers of sustainably raised beef, poultry, lamb, pork, bison, fish, dairy, eggs, and goat in the U.S. and Canada. Many restaurants in the Twin Cities already buy locally-grown product, but the links between growers and restaurateurs is made on a one-on-one basis.

Is there interest in developing a website like eatwellguide.org for fruits and vegetables? Would restaurateurs, distributors, and consumers use such a site? Is there a discrepancy between what chefs want and what growers are willing to provide? Do all chefs want wholesale prices, and are all growers unwilling to accept those prices while providing high service and quality? Would restaurateurs be willing to search a website weekly to source high quality product, or do they only want to work with a few, known-to-them growers? Would growers be willing to post product that they have to sell on a website on a weekly basis or send me the information to post?

I sent out letters to five local restaurateurs to gauge interest in linking with producers, and got only two responses back. Maybe restaurateurs get a lot of these invitations and are tired of hearing from individuals about linking up with local producers. Not having a large budget to eat out, or a lot of time to visit restaurants individually, I hesitate to set up informal contacts with restaurateurs, but I think that there must be a better way to link growers with people who’d buy the products than in the informal and disorganized way that is typically used.

If you have thoughts on this situation, please let me know.

"Go the extra mile. It's never crowded."
– Executive Speedwriter Newsletter

★ ★ ★ Session Highlights ★ ★ ★

Almost everyone agrees that early sweet corn is a money maker. In the “Sweet Corn – Advanced” session on Thursday, February 5th, Terry Nennich, Commercial Horticulture educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will present two years of research data using large acreage floating row covers to enhance early production of sweet corn in northern Minnesota. Other topics discussed in the session include planting considerations, how variety selection affects weed control strategies, an update on Bt technology and rootworm as well as postharvest considerations. A complete program schedule can be found on pages 5 and 6.

The Conservation Security Program: How it can benefit fruit and vegetable growers.”

How will the new Conservation Security Program work? Hear the latest news about rules and funding for launching this new direction in conservation. Fruit and vegetable growers will not be left out of the program. This conservation program focuses on small, diversified producers who can provide a public benefit by ensuring cleaner air, water and healthier soil. Those who are already doing a great job will not be left out, but will get help with maintaining their practices. Learn how this program will be the first to ensure that high priority resource concerns are actually resolved with a combination of conservation practices appropriate to the individual farm. The Conservation Security Program will be discussed on Friday, February 6th. See page 6 for the full Friday schedule.

Corn Ear Worm (CEW) can be a disaster for nearly every fresh market sweet corn grower, yet control is relatively simple once producers understand where they come from, how to monitor for them, critical control times and conventional and organic controls. If CEW in sweet corn is a problem for you, be sure to attend the “Elementary Aspects of Corn Ear Worm Control in Sweet Corn” at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday morning, February 5th, during the “Sweet Corn – Insects” session.

"Yes, we have organic sessions this year – see program details on pages 5 & 6."

Cole Crops

Growing cole crops (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and like crops) can be a profitable enterprise, whether you are growing them for a mix with your farmers market produce or selling into stores or wholesalers. The “Cole Crop” session on Friday morning, February 6th, will address many of the basic production practices along with some of the latest research information. The session will also include information on varieties and insect pests in addition to a discussion of whether processing affects the health benefits of cabbage. More information on the “Cole Crops” session can be found on page 6.



Why Join Minnesota Grown?

MFVGA members are invited to join the grower-directed Minnesota Grown program which is designed to help you promote your products and connect with consumers. Minnesota Grown was established in the 1980's to promote fruits and vegetables and it has since become synonymous with fresh food and ornamental products of great quality and variety. There are currently more than 750 growers licensed to use the logo.

Growers use the logo because Minnesota consumers prefer to buy local, fresh products for their quality and because many consumers also have an interest in supporting small farms and rural communities. It only costs \$5 to join. For that small investment you receive:

- A 2004 License to use the Minnesota Grown logo - a valuable tool to differentiate and promote your products that were grown or raised on Minnesota farms (many growers incorporate the logo onto their product packaging, website, signs, etc.);
- Access to free merchandising items like stickers and posters to help promote your Minnesota Grown products (www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/orderpromoitems.pdf);
- Continuous access to cooperative promotions and information through our newsletters (www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/updatejul03.pdf); and for growers that sell direct to the consumer
- Eligibility to be included in the 2004 *Minnesota Grown Directory* (<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/directory.htm>).

See you in St. Cloud!

The Minnesota Grown Program will be on hand for both days at the MFVGA annual conference in St. Cloud. If you haven't returned your paperwork for your license and *Directory* listing you can take care of it in person. Please take a minute to visit 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. We have two new t-shirts (including a long sleeve t-shirt) that you'll want to see. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome!

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 finalized and will be posted on-line at www.minnesotagrown.com. For the latest info, contact Paul Hugunin at 651-297-5510 or visit our web site at www.minnesotagrown.com

The Minnesota Grown Directory is distributed free statewide at participating farms, churches, libraries, travel information centers, by extension agents, realtors, and many more. In 2003, 170,000 directories were printed for distribution to consumers looking for fresh, quality products. The cost for a Directory listing is only \$40. That includes both your listing in the printed book and an on-line listing with map and direct web links.

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 8.

To request an application form for a Minnesota Grown license and perhaps a listing in the 2004 *Minnesota Grown Directory* (for direct-marketers), call the Minnesota Grown Answerline at 1-800-657-3878 or 651-297-8695 and leave your name and mailing address. If you have internet access, you can save us a stamp by completing and mailing the on-line PDF application form at: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/join.htm>

You can apply for a calendar-year Minnesota Grown License at any time, but to ensure a spot in the 2004 *Directory*, please apply by the end of February. Thank you for your interest in Minnesota Grown.

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.

**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 begins
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 – Dale R. Mutch, Extension Specialist, Michigan State University
9:45 – 10:15	Grower Showcase – Paul Burkhouse
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

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 – Rod Elmstrand
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 (tickets required)

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 – Gary Gramm, 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 – Bill Jacobson
9:45 – 12:00 noon	SESSION II: APPLES / TREE FRUIT
9:45 – 10:15	Varieties: Trials & Tribulations for the Average Grower
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 Considerations for Commercial Orchards – Bob Purvis
11:30 – 12:00	Winter Hardiness – David Bedford
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 – Bonnie Dehn, Dehn's Garden, Inc.
11:15 – 12:00	Easy Postharvest Cooling – Dr. Cindy Tong, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
9:45 – 11:30 a.m.	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

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 – 2:45	Grower Showcase – Chris Blanchard, Rock Spring Farm, Spring Grove, MN
2:45 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 4:00	Cash Management Strategies for Direct Marketers – Don Cassidy - Century College
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 – Jake Jordan, Jr.
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:15	Garlic Research Update – Dr. Carl Rosen
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
1:15 – 1:45	Risk Management – 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 – Glenn Schafer - FSA
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 – Jim Ennis
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

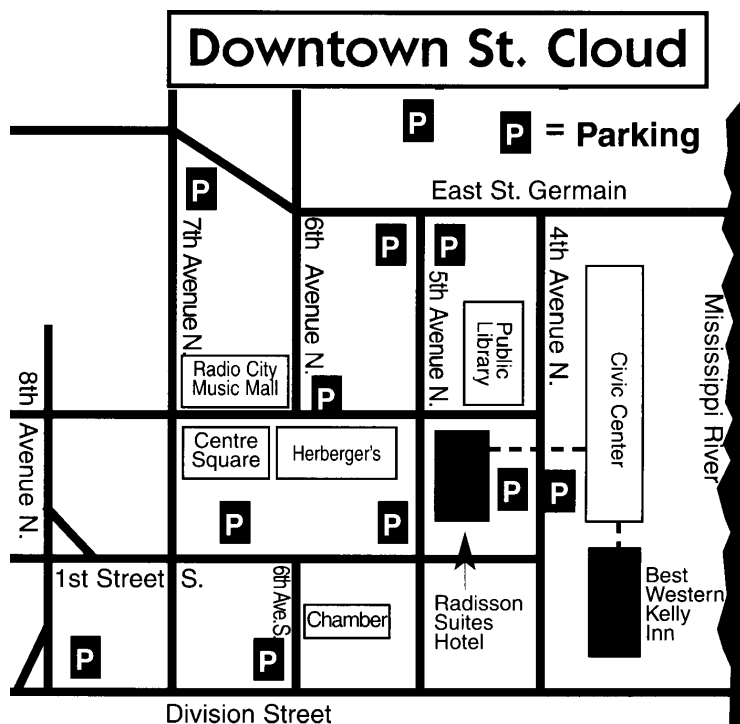
Radisson Suites Hotel 320-654-1661

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.



★ ★ ★ Session Highlights ★ ★ ★

Considerations for grafting in a commercial orchard.

Bob Purvis will discuss considerations and planning for grafting in a commercial orchard setting on Friday morning, February 6th, during the Apples / Tree Fruit session.

Bob Purvis got his first experience with fruit growing apples, tart cherries, and berries in Anchorage, Alaska (1980-89) and wrote the Extension publication, "Growing Tree Fruits and Cane Fruits in Alaska." After earning an M.S. in Horticulture at Washington State University (1992), he worked from 1992 –1999 in the Yakima Valley as an agricultural consultant and orchard horticulturist, responsible for managing the care of 1,500 acres of apples, pears and cherries at Chiawana Orchards. He brought a number of cold-hardy Canadian pome and stone fruit cultivars through the quarantine system in the late 1980s and has grafted and tested them in Alaska, Minnesota and Washington. Since 1986 he has personally topgrafted hundreds of apple trees in Washington and Minnesota. An active member of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX), he is currently the chair of its apricot interest group and has apricots, plums and cherries on trial at his home in Cottage Grove, MN. Bob is employed by the Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service as an ag statistician.

The full Friday schedule can be found on page 6.

How the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Discovers Pesticide Misuse

Each year MDA investigators conduct dozens of unannounced pesticide use and federal Worker Protection Standard inspections of growers and applicators.

Authority to conduct these inspections is granted to the MDA under Minnesota law and through its Cooperative Enforcement Agreement with the US EPA. Under additional state and federal law, growers and applicators must submit to these inspections and provide accurate and truthful information to the MDA inspector about what products were applied.

During the inspections, inspectors sometimes discover the illegal use of pesticides or what the MDA refers to as a "pesticide misuse".

Most commonly during these inspections, pesticides have been used which are not labeled for a particular crop. Sometimes the "pesticide misuse" involves other growers, pesticide sales reps and pesticide application companies.

Depending upon what the crop stage is/was when the "pesticide misuse" is discovered, the crop may be embargoed (at the production site or retail locations) and may be eventually ordered destroyed. Often sampling and receipt of analytical results can take weeks, sometime rendering the crop essentially worthless to the grower.

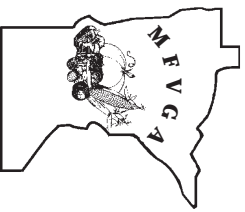
Learn how to protect your valuable investment and crops ahead of time from Gary Gramm, Lead Agricultural Chemical Investigator, Agricultural Chemical Investigation Unit, Minnesota Department of Agriculture on Friday morning, February 6th, during the general session beginning at 8:00 a.m.

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®

Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Return this form with payment to:

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

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 \$ _____

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

(Dues are \$25.00 per year.)

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

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

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MFVGA

Mail to: MFVGA
 c/o Marilyn Nysetvold Johnson, Exec. Coordinator
 15125 W. Vermillion Cir. NE
 Ham Lake, MN 55304
 Questions? Call 763-434-0400 Fax: 763-413-9585

VISA® MASTERCARD®

Number _____
 Expiration Date _____
 Signature _____

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.

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.

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference

2004 Speaker Directory

The following individuals are scheduled to speak at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 & 6, 2004. We anticipate the educational program will be presented as scheduled, see pages 5 and 6, but unexpected changes are sometimes necessary.

Dr. Roger Becker studies weed management strategies in annual and perennial systems in disturbed and undisturbed habitats. Current projects include purple loosestrife in wetlands, commercial processing vegetables – sweet corn and peas, cultivated wild rice, biological control of weeds, and the environmental impacts of herbicide and non-herbicide weed management systems. He received his Ph.D. from Iowa State University in 1982.

Dr. Janna Beckerman is an Extension Educator / Assistant Professor with the University of Minnesota – Plant Pathology Extension. She received her Ph.D. from Texas A & M University.

Peter Bierman received his M.S. degrees in Horticulture and Soil Science from the University of Minnesota. He has research and extension experience in soil management, soil fertility and water quality. His research has involved both agronomic and horticultural crop production along with effects of agricultural practices on environmental quality.

Amanda Bilek is the Program Coordinator for the Minnesota Project. The Minnesota Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to economic development and environmental protection in rural Minnesota. The main program areas at the Minnesota Project are agriculture policy, water policy, renewable energy promotion, sustainable communities, and on-farm biogas systems. Amanda works in the program areas of agriculture policy, on-farm biogas systems and renewable energy organizing.

Ron Branch owns and operates Berry Ridge Farm near Alexandria, MN where he raises a variety of berries and vegetables.

Don Cassidy is an instructor with Century College in White Bear Lake, MN.

Jeanne Ciborowski is the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Fernando de Villena is a research assistant in the Department of Horticultural Science at the University of Minnesota.

Bonnie Dehn and her husband, Bob, own and operate Dehn's Garden, Inc. in Andover, MN where they grow pesticide free farm produce and herb plants galore. They sell their produce from the heart of the Minneapolis Farmers' Market.

Kevin Edberg is the Executive Director of Cooperative Development Services and has been the managing partner of The Berry Patch near Forest Lake, MN for many years. The Berry Patch produces strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. Before joining Cooperative Development Services, Kevin was the Assistant Director of the Ag Marketing Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Rod Elmstrand received his bachelors and masters degrees in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota. For more than 20 years Rod has enjoyed his educational roles with the U of M Extension Service, working in several counties including Mille Lacs, Chisago, and more recently in Isanti County. Rod and his family have owned and operated a small fruit farm for 22 years where they grow and market strawberries, blueberries and pumpkins.

Jim Ennis is the Project Director for the Midwest Food Alliance, a Minnesota-based non-profit organization. Since 2000, Midwest Food Alliance has been working with agricultural producers in Minnesota to support their marketing efforts.

Dr. Vince Fritz has been an Extension Specialist in horticulture at the University of Minnesota, Southern Research and Outreach Center in Waseca since 1985. Working in a field-oriented research program, he investigates the physiological effects of vegetable crops on both mineral and organic soils. Recent emphasis has focused on improving stand establishment in vegetable crops grown for the fresh market.

Gary Gramm is the Lead Agricultural Chemical Investigator with the Agricultural Chemical Investigation Unit at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Paul Hugunin works in the Agricultural Marketing Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Much of his time is spent developing and expanding the Minnesota Grown Program.

Dr. Bill Hutchison is a Professor and Extension Entomologist with the University of Minnesota. He conducts IPM research that supports the productivity needs of vegetable and forage growers in the Upper Midwest. Both basic and applied research is done to implement integrated pest management (IPM) and resistance management programs for a variety of crops including sweet corn, cabbage, cucumber, carrot and alfalfa. He developed the VegEdge website for timely pest updates and fact sheets on vegetable insect pests and has been a co-editor of the "Minnesota Vegetable IPM Newsletter" since it began. He received his Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of Wisconsin.

Bill Jacobson along with his parents, brother and sisters, owns and operates Pine Tree Orchards, Inc. in White Bear Lake, MN. Bill is a current MFVGA Board member and a past-president of MFVGA and NASGA and has been involved in a number of research projects with specialists from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Jake Jordan, Jr. and his family own and operate Jordan Seeds, Inc. and Jordan Ranch in Woodbury, MN.

Robert Koch is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota working on his Ph.D. in Entomology. His research has focused on the multi-colored Asian lady beetle.

Dr. William J. Lamont, Jr. is a Professor and Extension Vegetable Crops Specialist in the Department of Horticulture at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania. He has an extensive background in research, extension and teaching and is known for his work with all components of the plasticulture system, including extensive work with high tunnel production systems.

Dr. Jim Luby teaches plant genetics at the University of Minnesota, Department of Horticultural Science. His research interests include utilization of wild germplasm in fruit crop improvement, genetic variation for health properties of fruit crops, development of efficient techniques to screen breeding material for resistance to cold temperature

Speakers continued on page 11

Speakers continued from page 10

injury, and the relationship of plant growth and development to avoidance of winter injury. Active breeding programs are conducted in apples, grapes, strawberries and blueberries.

Dr. Thaddeus McCamant received his Ph.D. and Master's degrees from Washington State University. He is currently the Specialty Crops Management Instructor for the Northland Community and Technical College in Detroit Lakes, MN, working with direct market farmers throughout Minnesota. He has worked as a college professor, a fieldman working with cherries and apples for a packing shed on the Oregon-Washington border; a Peace Corps volunteer working with bananas in West Africa and an apple picker.

Meg Moynihan is an Agricultural Diversification Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Resources Management Development Division. She works with MDA's Sustainable Agriculture Program which provides farmers and consumers with information on organic production practices and certification.

Dale R. Mutch is an Extension Specialist in cover crops and IPM with 23 years experience at Michigan State University and MSU's Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners, Michigan. He has worked the past seven years on alternative pest management strategies for Michigan farmers. He has coordinated the Field Crop AoE On-Farm Research and Demonstration publication for the past five years and he is on the NCR SARE Administrative Council. His research interests are in using cover crops to enhance adoption of sustainable and organic farming systems.

Terry Nennich is a Regional Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He has been working with vegetable and small fruit development in the northwest corner of Minnesota for many years with an emphasis on pumpkins, asparagus, carrots, onions, cole crops, wild rice and strawberries. Prior to coming to Minnesota, Terry worked with the fruit and vegetable industry in southern Michigan. Terry's specialization is Commercial Horticulture and Marketing.

Curt Nyegaard has worked with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, most recently serving as County Extension Director / Professor in Lake of the Woods and Roseau Counties in northern Minnesota.

Steve Poppe is the Horticulture Coordinator at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN. Current research projects include wool mulching systems for specialty crops, bio-based weed control in strawberry using sheep wool mulch and canola mulch, cultivar trials of bedding plants, USDA field evaluation of woody plant materials and evaluation of apple cultivars and selections, evaluation of strawberry cultivars and selections as well as projects related to flowers and ornamental grasses.

Bob Purvis earned an M.S. in Horticulture from Washington State University and has worked with tree fruits in Alaska, Washington and Minnesota. He is also an active member of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX). Bob is employed by the Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service as an ag statistician.

Nick Reindl is a Wildlife Damage Extension Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. He is based in Brainerd, MN and provides technical assistance and emergency deterrent materials assistance to reduce or eliminate damage by wildlife.

Dr. Carl Rosen specializes in mineral nutrition of horticultural crops. His research concerns environmental assessment of nitrogen use in agricultural soils as well as nitrogen acquisition by various vegetable and fruit crops. An additional research focus is the beneficial use and recycling of various municipal wastes for horticultural and agronomic purposes. Dr. Rosen holds a joint appointment in the Department of Soil, Water and Climate and the Department of Horticultural Science. He has extension responsibilities in soil fertility aspects of horticultural crops. He is also on the graduate faculty in soil science.

Marjorie Ross is a research assistant in the Department of Horticultural Science at the University of Minnesota.

Glenn Schafer is with the St. Paul office of the Farm Service Agency.

Dr. Annemiek Schilder is an Assistant Professor in Plant Pathology at Michigan State University. She is a specialist in small fruit pathology. The main research goal of her program is to diversify options and find alternatives to conventional chemicals for control of diseases of small fruit crops, such as blueberry, grape, strawberry, cranberry and raspberry. She received her Ph.D. from Cornell University.

Dr. Marla Spivak is an Associate Professor in the Department of Entomology at the

University of Minnesota. She received her Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of Kansas.

Dr. Christian Thill is a potato breeder and plant geneticist that has also worked for Monsanto Co. and Frito-Lay, Inc. Dr. Thill teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in sustainable vegetable production and plant breeding. His research interests include breeding, genetics, cytogenetics, and the utilization of wild germplasm in potato cultivar development and enhancement, as well as disseminating this information to industry. Areas of research emphasis are both basic and applied and include development of efficient breeding techniques to incorporate traits from wild germplasm to cultivated potato, develop breeding material and cultivars with high yield, yield stability, pest resistance, and quality.

Dr. Cindy Tong is an Extension Postharvest Specialist for the University of Minnesota Extension Service. She has been with the University of Minnesota for 12 and a half years.

Barbara VanTil is with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, based in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. David Wildung is a Professor and Center Horticulturist at the North Central Research and Outreach Center in Grand Rapids, MN. Dr. Wildung is involved in small fruit cultural management research, small fruit breeding and cultivar evaluation, vegetable cultural management research, woody ornamental evaluation (All American Trials), flower cultural and cultivar evaluation, vegetable cultivar evaluation and tree fruit cultivar evaluation.

Jason Williamson is a sales representative with Rupp Seeds.

Jerry Wright is an Associate Professor and Extension Engineer in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. His interests are in irrigation and drainage water management practices for agronomic and horticulture crops and associated natural resource issues. His current research projects include nitrogen and irrigation timing and white mold development in dry edible beans, blueberry response to micro-irrigation systems, white mold control in irrigated dry edible beans, evaluation of daily crop water use "ET" models and the evaluation of trickle irrigation on blueberry production. Jerry is based at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN.

Keeping the Family Farm Healthy

Amy Lyman – Penn State University

Life on a family farm can be hectic and at times seem out of control. Much of the activity is fast-paced and decisions need to be made quickly. This reality can keep many family farm operators from attending to the basic needs of the business. Here are a few ideas for you.

Developing A Structure To Support Your Work

Job descriptions for all family members involved with farm work, including a definition of the role of board members, are a necessity. Job descriptions set the boundaries of each person's responsibility and designate individuals as the primary holders of certain information. Job descriptions are not straight jackets, they provide guidelines that define how and by whom the work will get done.

Cross-training employees helps you identify the information needed to run the operation and helps you figure out what areas need backup support. Having two people trained to do the same job (although one person holds the primary responsibility) lets employees and managers know who to call if an employee is absent, instead of frantically searching for someone to fill in.

Plan for major events, whether they be purchases of equipment, building or renovating a structure, doing major maintenance work, etc. There never seems to be enough time to get anything done, and often it takes a crisis before something finally happens. If you use part of a scheduled meeting to brainstorm about the items that need to be taken care of, and prioritize those items, then you are providing yourself with useful guidelines for the work to be carried out over the next 3 to 6 month period.

Family business vision statement. This document will say why you are doing what you are doing and how you want to see it get done. This statement should reflect family members' ethics and values that guide business operations. This is especially important for family owned businesses because it clarifies the reason why you are in a family business. Is there something about your family's history or the way you run the operation that is important to you? These family concerns can be incorporated into the vision statement and serve as a guideline for making major decisions on issues such as hiring, land use practices, and long term growth plans. It doesn't take a tremendous amount of time to develop a vision statement; however, it takes a good deal of thought. Once you've started to talk about your vision, it is easy to write the statement.

Acknowledging the Dynamics of Family Business Life

There are unique dynamics that operate in a family business. Many management consultants tell people to separate their family lives from their business lives, and only make decisions based on one set of concerns or relationships. This is not possible in a family business (I question whether it's possible in any business!). In a family business, a sound decision takes into consideration personal issues and business issues (see table top right).

Differences in Family and Business Systems	
Family Systems	Business Systems
Rewards are given because of your membership in the family and possibly because of need	Rewards are given because of your performance on specific tasks
Training is implicit, talked about as training to be a good family member, no standardized practices	Training is explicit, necessary to do a good job, tends to be standardized
Promotions are based on longevity, a very inflexible system, you are born into a position	Promotions are based on skill and seniority, you can work hard to achieve a new position
Separations are usually messy, no clear guidelines for process	Separations are less painful, clear guidelines to follow, is a common process
Operating principles incorporate compassion and caring	Operating principles incorporate efficiency and objectivity
Basic motive is to seek harmony	Basic motive is to seek profits

Paying attention to both family and business concerns is not easy. Family rules and norms about what to talk about and what to keep quiet may limit discussion of important issues. As you begin to discuss family and business concerns you may need to use a non-family member to help you sort through the questions that come up. But, families tend to be closed groups – it's in their nature. This can affect the family's willingness to call on outside resources for help. If you're thinking, "Well, we can do it ourselves," or "We don't need any outside help," remember that one of the advantages an outsider has is not being caught up in your family's rules and norms. They can ask the "dumb" questions which will trigger, in your own mind, a solution to the problem that had been stuck or hidden.

To make the most of your family business, it is vital to create and use a diverse network of people resources for both your business and family concerns. Bring all family members and their resources in the business so you don't just use the resources of the founder or first generation. This can be hard when the resources that the younger generation is bringing in are new or unfamiliar. An example is the use of computers and computer programs for bookkeeping or keeping records.

There are many things you can do to prepare yourself to make decisions. The first thing is to talk about the importance of being honest instead of saying what people want to hear. When it's your operation and you are the ones making the decisions, you need to have people be honest about their anxieties and questions. Everyone involved in the decision should be encouraged to speak up about what they perceive as the pluses and minuses of this decision and their willingness to take collective responsibility.

Collective responsibility means that everyone agrees to be responsible for the decisions that are made. This brings with it a tremendous amount of individual responsibility and comes in handy as a philosophy when there is dissension within the family. At times, family members who don't get along pay less attention to

Family Farm continued on page 13

decisions made that affect someone else's work area. They accept decisions that they are not comfortable with because they don't see it as their decision. Having collective responsibility says everyone who is involved in the operation is responsible for the decision. It's a very powerful tool for encouraging people to speak up.

Another part of decision making to consider is the relationship between trust and risk. Trust involves risk. Part of risk is supporting someone's efforts to take on a challenge. When you trust someone you accept the risk that some things will be out of your hands. There may be times when you feel uncomfortable because a decision has been made but someone else is responsible for doing the job. The risk piece of this process is letting go of the anxiety and saying "I trust you. We made this decision. It's your area to implement. I trust you to do it and to do the best that you can." This process does not imply taking unnecessary risk by making a decision with which you are not comfortable. The focus should be on trusting the person to do his or her best once the decision has been made.

When decisions are made, pay attention to both family and business concerns. It's very important to consider the family reasons and the family dynamics that are influencing the business decision. Often in family business, decisions are made ignoring the family background that influences the decision. Sometimes it's hard to separate the two, so calling in an outsider may help. I have never seen a business decision made in a family business that did not have a family component to it. Sometimes it's 90% family concerns and 10% business concerns and sometimes it's the other way around. For example, consider a family that owned a large parcel of land which was split up, with parts of it sold to different farms over time. Now the family wants to buy the land back to recreate the family homestead. If you talk about it in terms of business decisions you can get into all kinds of convoluted justifications for why you want to buy the land. Acknowledging that it is the family homestead and that is why the family wants to buy it back frees people up from trying to justify something that no one really wants to talk about. A decision can be made based on the impact of the decision on the business and the family. Can the business support this purchase? Is it going to hurt the operation? Will it help the operation? Are we going to feel good about it?

Decision making involves responsibility as well as opportunity and can be affected by an individual's family and business roles. To successfully make decisions the responsibility that comes along with all of the opportunities needs to be emphasized. Accepting responsibility for business decisions can be a difficult area for board members who are not actively involved in business operations but participate in decision making. They can have a hard time dealing with the conflicts between perceived family and business responsibilities. Without a job description – especially one that spells out board responsibilities – all a family member has to rely on are family responsibilities, and that's only half the picture. I strongly advocate that all family members who are involved in decision making have job descriptions that cover their business responsibilities. This makes clear what their obligations are to the business, and what the boundaries are around the opportunities that can be pursued.

Develop Opportunities For Participation in Educational Programs

Developing specific educational programs for family members coming into the business is especially important to insure that knowledge is transferred visibly rather than assumed to be learned through osmosis. The next generation family member may have worked on the farm during the summer or helped out in one area, which is a good start, but this does not provide an understanding of the total operation.

Educational programs that all employees can participate in are a good enticement for attracting the best people to your operation. Including opportunities for education as a part of the job says that you care not only about what the employee can do now, but also about what he or she will be able to do in the future. This might not work for every employee, but for your key employees it can be very important to say we are going to help you further your education.

Education for career advancement may involve taking time off from the farm. One issue that often comes up for the next generation family members is the dilemma of having gone right on to the farm or ranch after high school. Questions such as "Can I do anything else? Am I just here because I'm a family member? Do I really have skills that are transferable?" pop-up after a few years.

It is often recommended that next generation family members work somewhere else for two years prior to entering the family business. There are a number of reasons for this. One is to gain a sense of independence and a sense of confidence in one's own skills. Another is to change the relationship between parent and child to an adult-adult relationship. Education for career advancement and support for pursuing educational opportunities away from the farm are very important to the development of the next generation of managers.

One of the most difficult family business issues concerns retirement and succession planning. Who will be the next leader? Very often retirement means an end to something and it may be difficult to talk about what's next. Here is this person who may have built the operation or who has worked on it all of his or her life, and all of a sudden he's talking about retirement.

Retirement is such a loaded issue to deal with that it can take attention away from other concerns that need to be addressed. Questions such as "what are you going to do when you stop going out to the dairy at four in the morning or when you stop running the tractor in the fields?" place attention on what a person will do after he or she is finished with current activities. It does not imply an end to one's active life. Rather it indicates a movement from one lifestage to another.

It is very healthy to think about *what's next*. What's next can be teaching, working in the community or working with other farmers who are struggling to get started. There is a wealth of knowledge, skill and wisdom in people about to retire that could be passed on. We don't tap into this resource very well. One program called SCORE – the Service Corp. of Retired Executives – makes

connections between retired executives and other organizations where there is a need for part time help in areas such as accounting, production processes, or marketing. You can do the exact same thing in terms of a farming operation. Think about what's next!

Conclusion The four areas I have discussed above are those that I encourage all family business members to pay attention to. Focusing on the issues in each area will enable you to ground your business in a solid framework of ideas (vision statement), opportunities (educational programs) and structures (job descriptions). This will provide you with a strong base for handling the daily ups and downs that are bound to be a part of your own family business.

Amy Lyman is a family business specialist, and was formerly Lecturer in Applied Behavioral Sciences, University of California, Davis. As of July, 2000 she was a Family Business Consultant with the The Great Place to Work Institute in San Francisco, CA.

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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.

Order Your “Minnesota Grown Produce Bags” for 2004



Order forms for the “Minnesota Grown Produce Bags” have been mailed to producers who ordered bags through MFVGA last season. We are starting the ordering process earlier this year and plan to have bags available early in the 2004 growing season. If you ordered bags or indicated an interest in the bags, an order form was mailed to you. If you did not receive an order form and would like more information, please contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or mfvga@worldnet.att.net. If sending an e-mail, please reference the produce bags in the subject line.

The bags are a heavy 1 mil white plastic bag printed with a dark green “Minnesota Grown” logo that includes the “Fresh From Your Neighbor” tag line. The bags are 23” x 7” x 12”. Bags must be ordered in increments of 1,000. If you plan to customize the bags with your farm name, etc., the minimum order is 5,000. You have the option of having the bags drop-shipped directly to you or you can pick them up at a location in the Twin Cities area. Contact MFVGA for pricing information.

Over 350,000 bags were delivered to Minnesota Grown producers last year with rave reviews. Samples of the bags and order forms will be available at the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 & 6, 2004. The deadline for ordering bags is February 20, 2004.

"Goals are dreams with deadlines."

– Diana Scharf Hunt

★ ★ ★ Session Highlights ★ ★ ★

Pumpkins & Other Cucurbits

Broadleaf weeds in pumpkins, squash and other cucurbits have plagued producers for the past several years. The recent release of Sandea herbicide can give producers the edge for control of many annual weeds. This session will address the proper use of Sandea and discuss weed control and crop safety trials in Minnesota and around the Midwest. The “Pumpkins & Other Cucurbits” session will be held on Thursday afternoon, February 5th, beginning at 1:15. Other topics covered during the session include information on the Cucumber Beetle (monitoring, etc.), efficient harvesting techniques for pumpkins, a grower panel on varieties and a presentation on ornamental gourd varieties. Plan to attend. The complete educational program is printed on pages 5 and 6.

Multi-colored Asian Lady Beetles

Robert Koch is a Ph.D. student in entomology studying under the guidance of Drs. Bill Hutchison and Bob Venette at the University of Minnesota. Robert’s work focuses primarily on the impacts, both positive and negative, of an exotic insect, the multicolored Asian lady beetle (MALB). Robert has been working with MALB for the past four years. As part of his research, he is identifying selective insecticides, which should promote biological control offered by MALB in sweet corn and other cropping systems. He has also identified MALB as a potential hazard to monarch butterfly populations developing in agricultural systems. His presentation, “The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle: A Recent Invader and Pest of Fruit Production” on Friday, February 6th, at 10:30 a.m. will highlight recent results from his research examining the impact of MALB on fruit production, including grapes, apples and raspberries.

Tangible Benefits of Belonging to MFVGA

Membership in the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association has always included tangible and intangible benefits. In 2004, MFVGA offers more tangible benefits to growers than ever before.

Dollars available through partnership agreements with the USDA – Risk Management Agency will allow us to put valuable resources directly into the hands of MFVGA members and fruit and vegetable growers who register to attend the educational sessions at the 2004 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. Non-members who attend the trade show only will not receive the materials.

Materials include the *Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers*; the *Strawberry Field Guide* (for identification of pest insects, diseases and beneficial organisms in Minnesota strawberry fields), and the *Integrated Pest Management Manual for Minnesota Strawberry Fields*; the *Apples Field Guide* (for identification of pest insects, diseases and beneficial organisms in Minnesota apple orchards) and the *Integrated Pest Management Manual for Minnesota Apple Orchards*.

You were asked to indicate your primary crop or type of crop (vegetables, apples, berries) and other crops you grow on the membership application so we can match the materials to your needs.

In addition, we will be able to provide a copy of the *Risk Management Toolbox for Specialty Crop Growers* to all MFVGA members and educational conference attendees. The Toolbox introduces specialty crop growers to an understanding of the USDA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Program (NAP) as well as sound risk management principles. It includes fact sheets on how to keep reliable and verifiable records, understanding and determining Actual Production History (APH), how to file a notice of loss and more. Also included is the USDA's 20-page Introduction to Risk Management. Real life examples make it easy to understand the concepts and processes.

Materials will be distributed at the MFVGA educational conference in February. For members who are not able to attend the conference, materials will be mailed following the conference.

Other tangible benefits include a reduced registration rate for the educational conference. The conference also gives you a wonderful opportunity to share information and ideas with other growers, extension specialists and others. You have the opportunity to talk with vendors and find out the latest information on new varieties and equipment. You can order a variety of supplies for the coming year.

Don't miss this opportunity. Plan to attend the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show in St. Cloud, MN on February 5 & 6, 2004. The complete schedule of educational sessions is included on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.



LOOK FOR SESSION HIGHLIGHTS throughout this issue of the newsletter

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

Registrations received before January 9, 2004 qualify for the "Early Bird" Drawing – a gift certificate for a night at the Kelly Inn.



NOTICE TO NON-MEMBERS

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

PLEASE NOTE:

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

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