

# MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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February, 2005 Volume 19, No. 1

## A Note From The Board

Winter has arrived. It's time to slow down a little, take a deep breath, review the last growing season and plan for next year.

On behalf of the entire MFVGA Board of Directors, we encourage you to join us in St. Cloud, Minnesota at the St. Cloud Civic Center for the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show on February 3 & 4, 2005. If you're just getting started in fruit and vegetable production, considering going into commercial production, or just need a good review of the basics, consider attending the Beginning Grower Workshop on February 1 & 2, 2005, also at the St. Cloud Civic Center.

Why should you attend the educational conference?

It's a valuable resource for your operation. It's a great place to meet old friends and make new friends, exchange ideas and share experiences. It's a place to evaluate which strategies and ideas worked during the last growing season and which ones didn't. Learning from someone else's mistakes is much easier, and less expensive, than learning from your own. Can you make your operation more efficient and more profitable? Are other growers using some innovative marketing strategies that might work for you? Digging in the dirt won't make you a successful farmer, but learning how to build your soil to provide the nutrients your crops need will benefit any grower.

Can you afford NOT to attend this conference? Can you afford to sit at home while your competition finds out about the latest varieties and production practices? With decreasing resources available to fruit and vegetable producers, can you afford to skip this opportunity to talk with Extension specialists, other growers and the vendors at the trade show?

This will be an excellent conference with a wide range of topics – don't miss it. Remember, if you look at the schedule and wish you could be in two or three places at the same time, all you have to do is bring other people with you!! Additional people from the same member farm attend the educational sessions for a nominal fee.

The complete conference schedule is included on pages 3 & 4. See you in St. Cloud!!

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## SESSION SPOTLIGHTS:

### GROWER SHOWCASE:

#### Isabel Barrett-Prescott - Riverview Orchards in Rexford, New York

Located in upstate New York, Riverview Orchards is an apple farm and country store open year round. Riverview Orchards has been an apple farm for almost 100 years. Originally settled by the Dutch, the farm is located on an old Indian trail along the Mohawk River. After the Erie Canal was built, the farm was used as a stopping point for stabling the horses and mules that pulled the packet boats. Around the turn of the century, the Lerversee family planted apple trees on the gently rolling land. In 1945, the Barrett family purchased the farm and grew both wholesale and retail apples and other produce for the next 40 years.

Today the farm is run by that same family, and is a favorite place for parents to bring their kids to visit, a step back to Grandma's day, where the land is open, the food is homemade, and there's lots of old-fashioned goodness.

Riverview Orchards has Pick-Your-Own apples, a bakery, a beehive and a honey house. They do hayrides, theme birthday parties and school tours.

Isabel Barrett-Prescott will talk about the Riverview Orchards operation during the general session on Friday morning, February 4, 2005, during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. She will share additional marketing ideas during the Direct Marketing session on Friday afternoon. The full conference schedule can be found on pages 3 and 4.

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

**Registrations received before  
January 7, 2005  
qualify for the  
"Early Bird" Drawing –  
a gift certificate for  
a night at the Kelly Inn.**

## Dynamic Farmers' Markets Spring Conferences

Mark your calendar to attend one of the spring Dynamic Farmers' Market Conferences which will be held in Staples, MN on Tuesday, April 5 and Waseca, MN on Wednesday, April 6, 2005. The conferences will start at 9:00 a.m. and continue to 3:30 p.m. Keynote speaker will be Monika Roth from Cornell University in New York State. Monika will talk about displaying your products at the farmers' market for top sales, individual signage and how to effectively use color in your displays.

Other topics for the day will include

- Operational guidelines for farmers' markets,
- Overview of the two \$5,000 exclusions for farmers' markets and the new pickle bill,
- Being in compliance at farmers' market events,
- Sampling at farmers' markets, and
- Conducting a survey at your farmers' market.

For more information, contact Terry Nennich or Mary Gieske from the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Center in Crookston at 1-888-241-0781. The Conference is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and USDA Risk Management Agency.

*Exhibitors – It's not too late to sign up for the 2005 Trade Show. Contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 for more information.*

### Results of Worker Protection Standard Inspections Conducted at Fruit and Vegetable Farms

The Minnesota Dept of Agriculture completed fifteen (15) Worker Protection Standard (WPS) Inspections in 2003 and 2004 at fruit and vegetable farms. The results of these inspections will be presented during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference on Friday, February 4, 2005. A check list will be provided to determine if your farm needs to be in compliance with WPS.

A summation of the 15 inspections conducted identified the most common WPS violations as follows:

- No pesticide safety training provided to workers
- Lack of information at a central location
- No notification provided to workers of pending pesticide applications.

When the aforementioned violations occur together it indicates that the level of compliance is low or nonexistent.

The complete program schedule for the conference can be found on pages 3 & 4.

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

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

## SESSION SPOTLIGHTS:

### Taking the Hoe Hoe Hoe Out of Growing Pumpkins

Weed control has always been a major problem with pumpkin producers in Minnesota. In this session Terry Nennich will focus on the different herbicides available for pumpkin production and how to use them in combination to develop a season-long weed control strategy. See pages 3 & 4 for details on the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference.

### Controlling the Protein Content in Your Sweet Corn – The Real Truth About Corn Earworm Control

Corn earworm is a major concern for fresh market sweet corn producers in Minnesota. Terry Nennich and Bill Hutchison will look at the CEW cycles, how they get here and how to monitor for them. Recently, CEW has been picking up some resistance to the customary insecticides that producers have been using for the last several years. It is extremely important to understand why this is happening and how to control CEW on your farm this next season. The Sweet Corn sessions are on Friday, February 4th. The complete program can be found on pages 3 & 4.

### Please Pass the Horseradish

Ever wonder how horseradish really grows? Ever think about incorporating some horseradish into your farmers' market, roadside stand or other direct sales? Did you know Minnesota is one of the larger horseradish producing states in the US and major production areas are in far Northern Minnesota? Join Terry Nennich in the Specialty Crops session as he presents the basic aspects of horseradish production and marketing. (No hotdogs allowed in the session.) The Specialty Crops schedule can be found on page 4.

### Join us for the "Bull Session"

If you are coming to the Educational Conference and plan to be in St. Cloud on Wednesday, February 2, 2005, 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.

**Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and  
Vegetable Growers Conference  
February 3 & 4, 2005  
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  
USDA - Risk Management Agency

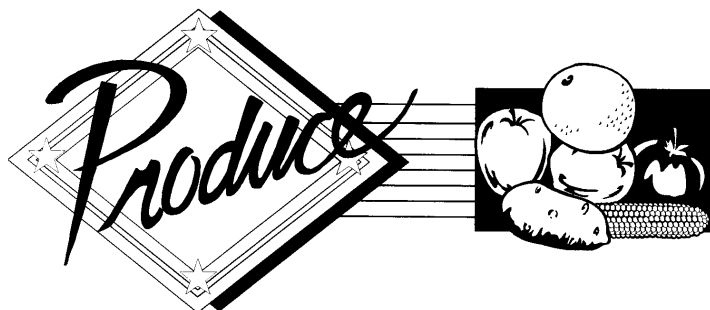
*These institutions are equal opportunity providers.*

**Thursday morning, February 3, 2005**

- 7:00 a.m. Registration Opens
- 8:15 – 10:00 GENERAL SESSION**
- 8:15 – 8:30 Welcome / Announcements  
8:30 – 9:00 What's New at the U – Dr. Thomas Michaels, University of Minnesota, Dept. Head of the Horticultural Science Department.  
9:00 – 10:00 Keynote:  
Innovative Risk Management Programs – Craig Rice, Director, USDA-RMA St. Paul Regional Office  
Building a Framework for Success in Agriculture – John Monson, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency
- BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW**
- 10:45 – 12:00 SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION**
- 10:45 – 11:45 Year in Review – Grower Participation  
11:45 – 12:00 SARE Update – Bill Jacobson & Kevin Edberg
- 10:30 – 12:00 SESSION II: TOMATOES**
- 10:30 – 11:00 Disease and Variety Trial – Dr. Janna Beckerman, U of M – Dept. of Plant Pathology  
11:00 – 11:30 Ripening and Postharvest Handling – Dr. Cindy Tong, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science  
11:30 – 12:00 Plasticulture and Rowcovers – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service
- 10:30 – 12:00 SESSION III: MELONS**
- 10:30 – 11:00 Maximizing the Benefits of Plastics and Row Covers – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service  
11:00 – 11:30 Melon Varieties – Jake Jordan, Jr.  
11:30 – 12:00 Pollination – Dr. Marla Spivak and Gary Reuter, U of M – Dept. of Entomology
- Noon – 1:15 LUNCH in the Trade Show Area**

**Thursday afternoon, February 3, 2005**

- 1:15 – 4:45 SESSION I: BERRY PRODUCTION & MARKETING**
- 1:15 – 2:00 Grower Profile: John Cooper – Strawberry Tyme  
2:00 – 2:30 Foliar Feeding – Dr. Thaddeus McCamant and Sabrina Ruis  
2:30 – 3:00 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW  
3:00 – 3:45 How to Set Up On-Farm Trials for Berry Growers – Dr. Thaddeus McCamant, Northland Community Technical College  
3:45 – 4:15 Best Mistakes I Ever Made – Ideas that didn't quite work, but have potential – Grower Participation  
4:15 – 4:45 Small Fruit Variety Update – Strawberries & Blueberries – Dr. Jim Luby, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science
- 1:15 – 4:45 SESSION II: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**
- 1:15 – 2:45 Return on Investment: What's the Real Bottom Line? – Karl Foord, U of M Extension Service  
2:45 – 3:15 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW  
3:15 – 4:45 Estate Planning – Gary Hachfeld, U of M Extension Service
- 1:15 – 4:30 SESSION III: PUMPKINS**
- 1:15 – 1:45 Insect Pest Update: Advantages of Living "Up North" – Dr. William Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology  
1:45 – 2:15 Diseases – Dr. Janna Beckerman, U of M – Dept. of Plant Pathology  
2:15 – 3:00 BREAK TO THE TRADE SHOW  
3:00 – 3:30 Using Herbicides to Develop a Season-Long Weed Control Strategy – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service  
3:30 – 4:30 Pumpkin Variety Discussion – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service
- 1:15 – 2:45 SESSION IV: ORGANICS WORKSHOP**  
Led by Dr. Sieglinde Snapp, Michigan State University, Horticulture Dept.
- 1:15 – 1:45 Cover Crops, Crop Rotations, Fertility  
1:45 – 2:15 Soil Biology  
2:15 – 2:45 Manure Management
- 4:45 MFVGA Annual Business Meeting**
- 5:15 Social Hour in the Trade Show Area**
- 6:30 "Minnesota Grown" Banquet  
Entertainment: Comic Magician Tim Gabrielson**



**Friday morning, February 4, 2005**

**8:00 – 9:00 GENERAL SESSION**  
Grower Profile - Isabel Barrett-Prescott, Riverview Orchards in Rexford, New York

**9:00 – 9:45 BREAK**

**9:45 – 12:15 SESSION I: BERRIES / GRAPES**

9:45 – 10:15 Raspberry Variety Trials – Dr. Brian Smith, UW-River Falls – Dept. of Plant & Earth Science

10:15 – 10:45 Strawberry IPM Procedures – Growers’ Attitudes – Dr. Thaddeus McCamant, Northland Community & Technical College

10:45 – 11:15 Results of Worker Protection Standard Inspections Conducted At Fruit & Vegetable Farms – Steve Poncin, MN Dept. of Agriculture

11:15 – 11:45 Asian Ladybeetle Update – Ted Galvan, U of M – Entomology Dept.

11:45 – 12:15 How Can Grapes Fit Into Your Operation? – John Marshall, Great River Vineyard

**10:00 – 12:00 SESSION II: SPECIALTY CROPS**

10:00 – 10:30 Potatoes – Dr. Carl Rosen, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

10:30 – 11:00 Peanuts – Dr. Thomas Michaels, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

11:00 – 11:30 Cut Flower Production – Dr. John Erwin, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

11:30 – 12:00 Horseradish – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service

**10:00 – 11:30 SESSION III: SWEET CORN – Part 1**

10:00 – 10:30 The Real Truth About Corn Earworm Control – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service

10:30 – 11:00 Types of Sweet Corn – Dr. Vincent Fritz, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

11:00 – 11:30 Soil Fertility – Dr. Carl Rosen, U of M – Dept. of Soil, Water & Climate

**10:00 – 12:00 SESSION IV: APPLES AND OTHER TREE FRUIT**

10:00 – 10:30 Year in Review – Grower Participation

10:30 – 11:00 Tree Supports – What type of materials do you use and when do you use them? – David Bedford, David Macgregor and Grower Participation

11:00 – 11:30 Commercial Apple Varieties for the Upper Midwest David Bedford, U of M – Hort. Research Center

11:30 – 12:00 Plums – Dr. Brian Smith, UW-River Falls – Dept. of Plant & Earth Science

**Noon – 1:15 LUNCH in the Trade Show Area**

**Friday afternoon, February 4, 2005**

**1:15 – 4:30 SESSION I: DIRECT MARKETING**

1:15 – 1:45 Minnesota Grown Opportunities for Direct Marketers – Paul Hugunin

1:45 – 2:30 Marketing New York Style – Isabel Barrett-Prescott, Riverview Orchards

2:30 – 2:45 Break

2:45 – 3:45 Making Your Customers A Key Part of Your Marketing Program – Karl Foord, U of M Extension Service

3:45 – 4:30 Marketing to the Metro Consumer

**1:15 – 4:30 SESSION II: HIGH TUNNELS & PLASTICULTURE**

1:15 – 1:45 High Tunnel Raspberry Production – John Cooper, Strawberry Tyme

1:45 – 2:15 Minnesota Research Update – Dr. David Wildung, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

2:15 – 2:45 Minnesota Research Update – Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service

2:45 – 3:00 BREAK

3:00 – 3:30 General Information on Colored Mulches, etc. – Dr. Vincent Fritz, U of M – Dept. of Horticultural Science

3:30 – 4:30 Drip Irrigation – Jerry Wright, U of M Extension Service

**1:15 – 2:15 SESSION III: DOING ON-FARM TRIALS**

1:15 – 1:45 How to do On-Farm Trials – Dr. Emily Hoover, U of M, Dept. of Horticultural Science

1:45 – 2:15 SARE Grower Grants – Beth Nelson, MISA, University of Minnesota

**1:15 – 3:00 SESSION IV: SWEET CORN – Part 2**

1:15 – 1:45 Get a Handle On Your Sweet Corn Production Budget: Key Costs and Income Potential – Dr. William Hutchison & Terry Nennich

1:45 – 2:15 Beneficial Impact of Silk Clipping by Rootworm Beetles...plus Other Recent Insect Control Trends – Dr. William Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology

2:15 – 2:45 Canopy Density & Competition – Dr. Vincent Fritz, U of M Extension Service

2:45 – 3:00 3 Years of Research Data With Row Covers & Sweet Corn - Terrance Nennich, U of M Extension Service

**3:00 – 4:30 SESSION V: PUMPKIN REDUX**

3:00 – 3:30 Growing Pumpkins on Plastic

3:30 – 4:00 Diseases – Dr. Janna Beckerman, U of M – Dept. of Plant Pathology

4:00 – 4:30 Insect Pest Update: Advantages of Living "Up North" – Dr. William Hutchison, U of M – Dept. of Entomology

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**TRADE SHOW HOURS:**

**Thursday – Feb. 3: 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Friday – Feb. 4: 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](http://www.mfvga.org).

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

February 3 & 4, 2005 – 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, USDA-Risk Management Agency*



Attendee's Name (Please print)

Attendee's Name (Please print)	Full Registration Conference & Trade Show (Thursday & Friday) February 3 & 4			Thursday Night Banquet	One-day Registration Circle One Thursday Friday			Trade Show Only	Total
	First member* from farm/company	Each additional mbr. from farm/comp.	Non-member (Per person)		First member* from farm/company	Each additional mbr. from farm/comp.	Non-member (Per person)		
	\$85.00	\$20.00	\$160.00	\$25.00	\$65.00	\$20.00	\$90.00	\$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 28th, to be considered pre-registered.

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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, 2004 - September 30, 2005

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** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Be sure to tell our advertisers  
"I saw your ad in the MFVGA Newsletter"**

**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. Scholarships may also be requested for the Beginning Grower Workshop on February 1 & 2, 2005. 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.

Scholarships will be used to pay a portion of the registration fee. Scholarships for the Thursday and Friday session 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 2005 conference must be received in the MFVGA office and approved before January 21, 2005. 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](mailto:mfvga@worldnet.att.net).

**BEGINNING GROWER WORKSHOP**  
**February 1 & 2, 2005**

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

**Sponsored by the**  
**Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers**  
**Association**

**U of M Extension Service**  
**USDA – Risk Management Agency**

**Who Should Attend?**

This workshop is for people thinking about starting a commercial fruit or vegetable operation and people already in commercial fruit & vegetable production. It is for people with no experience in farming, people transitioning from a “large garden” to commercial production, people who are transitioning from other types of agricultural production as well as commercial fruit & vegetable producers who are looking for a good review of the basics.

This workshop will help growers learn to identify a variety of potential problems and learn options and methods to control those problems and help minimize the potential for economic loss.

**What’s Included?**

Registration includes two full days of educational sessions, meals (supper on Tuesday and lunch on Wednesday) and a copy of the newly revised and expanded Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Manual for the Beginning Grower. (One manual per farm.)

Class is limited to 40 participants.  
 Scholarships are available.  
 Contact the MFVGA Office at 763-434-0400 or [mfvga@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mfvga@worldnet.att.net) for more information.



The Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show will be held on Thursday and Friday, February 3 & 4, 2005. We encourage you to review the schedule included in this newsletter and attend both the Beginning Grower Workshop and the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. Special registration is offered for those attending both the Beginning Grower Workshop and the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference.

**Workshop Schedule**

**Tuesday, February 1, 2005**

- 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. Registration
- 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Why Are You Here?
- Introductions and discussion
- 1:45 – 2:30 p.m. Developing Your Future Plans
- 2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Break
- 2:45 – 3:30 p.m. The Basics of Marketing
- 3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Your Farm and It’s Opportunities
  - Location • Farm Size
  - Soil Type • Micro Climate
  - How the Area Population Impacts Your Business
- 4:15 – 4:45 p.m. Educational Resources for Beginning and Advanced Producers
- 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Supper (Included with registration)
- 6:30 p.m. Grower Panel – How I Got Started and Where I Went Wrong

**Wednesday, February 2, 2005**

- 8:30 – 9:15 a.m. Soils 101
- 9:15 – 10:00 a.m. Season Extension Options
- 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m. Weed Control Strategies
- 11:00 – 12:00 noon Risk Management Strategies – Record Keeping and Crop Insurance
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch (Included with registration)
- 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Insect Control
- 1:45 – 2:30 p.m. Water Management
- 2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Break
- 2:45 – 3:30 p.m. Disease Identification 101
- 3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Handling the Crop from Harvest to Sale
- 4:15 – 5:00 p.m. Developing a Cash Flow Strategy for Your Operation
- 5:00 p.m. Evaluation and Wrap Up

**Registration Fee:**

- Tuesday Only Registration: ..... \$100 per person
  - Wednesday Only Registration: ..... \$100 per person
  - Tuesday and Wednesday Registration: ..... \$150 per person
- Add the Thursday and Friday Conference sessions and Trade Show for a full four-day package: ..... \$250 per person  
 (Includes one year of MFVGA membership for new members.)

**Beginning Grower Workshop**  
**Registration Form:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**One-Day Registration**

Tuesday only \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$100 = \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday only \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$100 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Two-Day Registration**

Tues. & Wed. \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$150 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Four-Day Package**

Tuesday – Friday \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$250 = \_\_\_\_\_

**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**

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

## February 3 & 4, 2005

### SESSION SPOTLIGHTS:

#### GROWER SHOWCASE:

**John Cooper - Strawberry Tyme, Inc. in Ontario, Canada**

#### Beginning Grower Workshop

##### February 1 & 2, 2005

ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT

**Best Western-Kelly Inn 320-253-0606**

Room block will be released 1/1/05

Single Rate – \$72.00 Double Rate – \$78.00

**The Radisson Suites Hotel**

**320-654-1661 or 800-333-3333**

Room block will be released 1/1/05

Single Rate – \$94.00 Double Rate – \$104.00

Parking Fee – \$4.00 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.

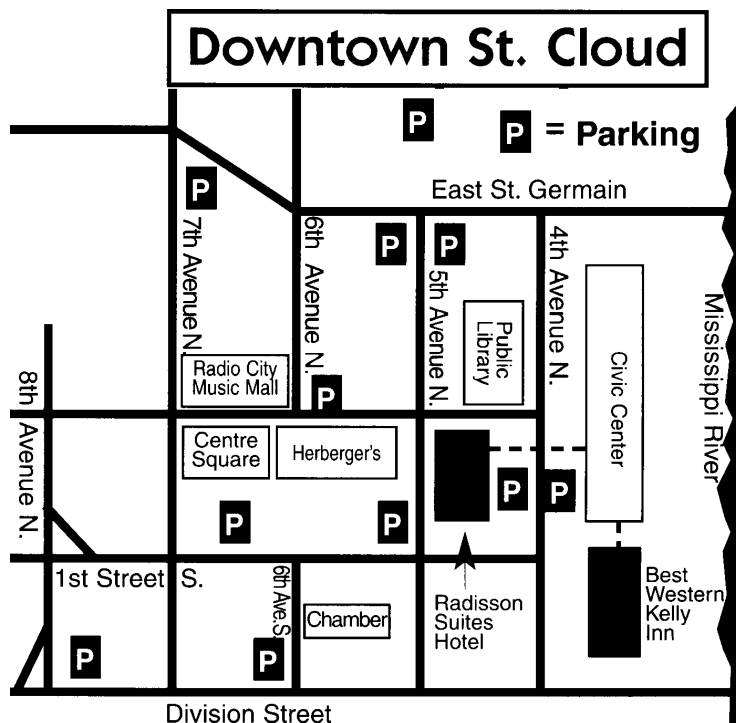


Strawberry Tyme is a partnership of John and his wife, Diane, and John's parents, Gary & Sandra Cooper. They grow nursery plants of strawberry, raspberry, asparagus, and black currants and they broker different raspberries, blueberries and rhubarb plants. They also grow June

bearing strawberries, day neutral strawberries, summer & fall bearing raspberries, grape tomatoes and slicer cucumbers. They have a processing facility to process strawberries, a pack line for cucs, a pack line for tomatoes and they operate a custom cooling business. Strawberry Tyme is now farming about 925 acres including grain and rotational crops. They employ seven people year round, ten people for ten months, twenty people for eight months and 70-100 people for five to six months during the harvest season.

Strawberry Tyme is also the Canadian distributor for a tunnel company from England selling multi bay crop tunnels. These tunnels are used to protect many crops including strawberry, raspberry, blueberry, cherry, flowers & high value vegetables. They now have 4.6 acres of fall bearing raspberries under tunnel & are in the process of putting up 12 more acres for strawberries, raspberries & tomatoes. They are undertaking a three-year program to erect 10-15 acres of tunnels per year for the next three years.

Hear about Strawberry Tyme during the Thursday afternoon berry session on Feb. 3. John will also talk about his experiences with high tunnel raspberry production on Friday afternoon, February 4. The full educational program is on pages 3 and 4.



# Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference

## 2005 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 3 & 4, 2005. We anticipate the educational program will be presented as scheduled, see pages 10 and 11, but unexpected changes are sometimes necessary.

**Isabel Barrett-Prescott** grew up in the orchard business and her forte is local marketing. Riverview Orchards has been an apple farm for almost 100 years and has been run by the Barrett family since 1945. Located in upstate New York, Riverview Orchards is an apple farm and country store open year round. The store carries produce from their farm and other local farms as well as a gourmet food and gift shop. The operation includes pick-your-own apples, a bakery, a beehive and a honey house. They do hayrides, theme birthday parties and school tours.

**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.

**David Bedford** has been an apple breeder and research scientist in fruit crops at the University of Minnesota for more than 20 years. He was responsible for the development and release of Honeycrisp and Zestar apples and he has conducted numerous research projects on apples involving cultural and physiological problems.

**John Cooper** graduated from the University of Guelph in 1985 with a diploma in Horticulture. He immediately went to work on the family farm, Strawberry Tyme, Inc. in Ontario, Canada. Strawberry Tyme grows nursery plants of strawberry, raspberry, asparagus and black currants and they broker raspberries, blueberries and rhubarb plants. They grow June-bearing strawberries, day neutral strawberries, summer and fall bearing raspberries, grape tomatoes and slicer cucumbers. Strawberry Tyme is the Canadian distributor for a tunnel company from England selling multi-bay crop tunnels. They also have raspberries under tunnel and are aggressively expanding their high tunnel production.

**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.

**Dr. John Erwin** is a floriculture physiologist and extension specialist responsible for coordinating the commercial floriculture extension program at the University of Minnesota. His research interests emphasize environmental physiology of greenhouse crops. He received his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 1989 and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Horticultural Science at the University of Minnesota.

**Karl Foord** is a Regional Extension Educator in Horticulture with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Karl received his Master's degree in Horticulture from Rutgers University and his Ph.D. in Genetics from the University of California at Davis. He worked for a biotech company in the San Francisco bay area for eight years where half of his assignments were international. While working in the research department, his curiosity was piqued about the way that business decisions were made. He moved to Minnesota, joined Extension, married a Minnesota woman, and earned a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) in finance and entrepreneurship. His

area of emphasis is customer awareness and customer retention. Karl is based at the Regional Extension Center in Farmington.

**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.

**Ted Galvan** is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota working on his Ph.D. in Entomology. His research includes work with the multi-colored Asian lady beetle.

**Gary Hachfeld** is a Regional Extension Educator specializing in the area of Ag Business Management. His main focus is farm transfer/ estate planning, grain marketing (pre and post harvest), crop insurance, risk management, government programs and program evaluation/ impact. He has 33 years of experience with the Extension Service and can be reached at the Mankato Regional Center.

**Dr. Emily Hoover** teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in general biology, plant propagation, fruit production and teaching techniques at the University of Minnesota. She is also the Director of Education at the Landscape Arboretum. Her research has focused primarily on evaluation of winter hardiness and winter protection/ adaptation to enhance profitability, efficiency, and sustainability of fruit cropping systems. Areas of emphasis include using apple rootstocks to increase efficiency of apple cropping systems, utilizing grape root stocks to improve winter survival, and weed control strategies for strawberry cropping systems. Integrated pest management systems (IPM) for apples and berry crops are being adapted from models developed in eastern states.

**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 is a co-editor of the "Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable IPM News." 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 the current President of the MFVGA Board and a past-president of 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.

**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

Speaker Directory continued on 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.

**John Marshall**, his wife Barb, and son Donovan, own and operate Great River Vineyard / Nursery, located three miles north of Lake City, Minnesota in the Mississippi River Valley at Lake Pepin. Nearly 30 years of experience growing grapes and more than 20 years of marketing the varied products from their farm, at Farmer's Markets and on the local wholesale scene, has been a one-of-a-kind experience. They specialize in table grapes, grape juice, wine grapes and other grape specialty products. Pick-your-own grapes have become an important part of the business. They also operate a grapevine nursery, which specializes in cold hardy grapes for the North.

**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.

**Dr. Thomas Michaels** is a Professor and Department Head of the Horticultural Science Department at the University of Minnesota. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1981. Dr. Michaels develops new molecular marker-based plant selection methods, contributes to the *Phaseolus* genome mapping project and breeds improved common beans for commercial production. He has taught courses ranging from undergraduate level introductory plant agriculture to graduate level quantitative genetics, and has led several curriculum development initiatives. He is the chief administrator of the Department of Horticultural Science.

**John Monson** was appointed as the State Executive Director of the Minnesota Farm Service Agency on February 20, 2001. He was the County Executive Director in Dodge County from 1992 until his appointment to State Executive Director. Growing up in northeastern Minnesota, he has a deep concern for the rural community of Minnesota and is dedicated to the issues facing producers today. He sees his current role as a great opportunity and challenge and he intends to continue to work conscientiously on behalf of producers in our State to insure that the Farm Service Agency maintains its high level of service in the delivery of programs to Minnesota producers.

**Beth Nelson** represents the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). MISA is a unique partnership between the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at the University of Minnesota and the Sustainers' Coalition, a group of individuals and non-profit organizations. The purpose of MISA is to bring together the diverse interests of the agricultural community with interests from across the University community in a cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture in Minnesota and beyond.

**Terry Nennich** is a Regional Extension Educator in Commercial Horticulture and Marketing 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 can be reached at the Crookston Regional Extension Center.

**Steve Poncin** received his B.S. in Agronomy from the University of Minnesota and a Masters degree in Continuing Studies from Mankato State University. He has been with the Minnesota Department of

Agriculture since 1990 and assumed leadership of the Worker Protection Standard in 1994.

**Craig Rice** is the Director of the St. Paul Regional Office of the Risk Management Agency. The St. Paul RMA office serves producers in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

**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.

**Dr. Brian Smith** grew up on the family produce farm near Mitchell, SD. Dr. Smith's childhood interest in his father's on-farm watermelon and strawberry breeding programs greatly influenced his later career choice. He received his B.S. in Horticulture from South Dakota State University and M.S. and Ph.D. in Horticulture with an emphasis in Plant Breeding from the University of Minnesota. He currently teaches fruit and vegetable production courses at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls and serves as a State Extension Fruit Specialist. His research programs involve strawberry, raspberry and stone fruit breeding, apple evolution and compost use feasibility for commercial strawberry production.

**Dr. Sieglinde Snapp** is an Assistant Professor in the Plant and Soil Sciences Department at Michigan State University. She received her M.S. in Plant Physiology in 1985 from the University of Minnesota and her Ph.D. in 1992 from the University of California, Davis. She did a postdoctoral fellowship in Horticulture at Penn State University and then spent five years in Southern Africa as a regional scientist on integrated crop and soil fertility management. Dr. Snapp's research and extension interests involve integrated management of vegetable systems, including potatoes, snap beans, sweet corn and other important vegetables.

**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. Cindy Tong** is an Extension Postharvest Specialist for the University of Minnesota Extension Service. She has been with the University of Minnesota for 13 and a half years.

**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.

**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 recent 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.

# Minnesota FSA Quick Facts

## 2003/2004 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM

On October 14, 2004, President Bush signed legislation that authorized a Crop Disaster Program (CDP) for 2003 and 2004 crop yield and quality losses. The sign-up period for this program will be announced at a later date, most likely in the spring of 2005. In the meantime, producers should prepare for the application process by reviewing their 2003 and 2004 crop records to determine eligible losses. Like the 2001/2002 CDP program, producers will have to choose one of the two years to take payment, 2003 or 2004.

For crops that were insured under a multiple-peril crop insurance (MPCI) policy and were indemnified, FSA will receive loss record information from the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and will be prepared to process the CDP application. For crops that were not insured or did not qualify for crop insurance indemnity payment, producers will need to have actual production evidence to support their application. In addition, if the crop was affected by quality, evidence must be provided to show the extent of the quality loss.

Payments under the crop disaster program will be calculated using two formulas, one for determining if the crop qualifies for the low yield payment and the second to determine the quality loss payment. A low yield payment may be issued for the unit when production for the unit falls below 65 percent of expected production. A quality loss payment may be issued for the unit when quality losses are in excess of 20 percent. However, a low yield and quality payment can not be made on the same unit loss; the higher calculated payment will be issued. Fruit and vegetable crops are typically only eligible for quality loss payments if the harvested production was marketed differently than intended; for example, a crop intended for the fresh market, but was sold in the processed market due to quality issues.

Certain payment limitations and reductions apply to CDP payments. Each "person," as determined by FSA, is limited to \$80,000 in CDP payments. In addition, each crop unit application is limited to a "95 Percent Cap," by which the CDP payment is reduced if the total income from disaster, crop insurance indemnity and crop production to count value exceed 95 percent of the expected value for the crop. 95 percent of the expected value of the crop is calculated by multiplying the participant's crop unit acres, by county or participant's historical yield, by the established crop price, by 95 percent. Finally, CDP payments are factored down if the affected acreage was either prevented from planting or not harvested due to an eligible cause of loss to account for crop production expenses not incurred.

Under the quality loss program, producers are eligible for payment when the quality loss exceeds 20 percent. Eligible producers need to provide county committees with written documentation substantiating the quality of production. Producers will need to sort the affected production to each applicable insurable or basic unit. Affected production will be calculated using the smallest measurable unit such as a truckload, grain elevator scale ticket or measured grain in storage. Examples of acceptable documentation to support the quality loss include: grading receipts from a warehouse or licensed grader, sales receipts providing the grade of the crop, university or commercial lab test results acceptable to the

county committee, and sales receipts showing disposition to a secondary market because of poor quality.

Quality affected production that is farm stored or will be fed must be made a matter of record. The quality loss criteria can be met if the commodity has been measured and production and quality were determined by an MPCI company. The criteria can also be met by paying FSA to measure, sample and determine the quality and applicable grading factors tested before disposition. The producer is responsible to pay for the service. Another option is for the producer to draw a sample from each storage facility and have it graded with quality factors determined. The grade and quality factors can be made by grain labs or licensed warehouses. For each sample tested, producers must document the location the sample was drawn from and the crop year of the commodity. Hay producers need to sample each individual cutting of hay.

Production that does not have quality determined and documented, such as grading and value determining factors, will not be eligible for compensation. For example, if production evidence contains only price information and has no grade or value determining factors, the production will not be eligible for compensation.

Some examples of quality, grade and value determining factors that will be required for calculating crop disaster payments for various crops include: test weight, total damaged kernels, hard and vitreous kernels (HVAC), falling numbers, thin kernels, plump, vomitoxin, aflatoxin, oil content, sclerotinia, feed value or total digestive nutrients (TDN).

Those participants who did not have crop insurance or NAP coverage for the crop year they receive CDP payment (2003/2004) will be required to purchase applicable coverage for the next two crop years. If they fail to purchase coverage as required, their CDP payment will need to be refunded.

FSA county office personnel will provide additional information during the signup process.

(This information was provided by the Minnesota Farm Service Agency. For more information, contact your local FSA office.)

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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

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

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



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

You may have heard us Extension types and other farmers say that growing fruits and vegetables isn't the hardest part of being a commercial grower; the hardest part is marketing the stuff you grow. Being innovative in marketing gives sellers an edge. How many of us have had an advertising jingle stuck in our heads (and have irritated the people around us as we sing it)? It's not easy to come up with innovative marketing ideas. The University needs to do it, the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association needs to do it, and individual growers need to do it.

Who are the consumers that advertising companies like to target? If you're a parent, you know that one big target are tweenies or children younger than tweenies! Well, the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey (yes, New Jersey *is* the Garden State) developed a great advertising vehicle, The Story of Freshman Coloring and Activity Book. Freshman is a farmer named John who gets caught in a tornado. Instead of going to the land of Oz, he undergoes a transformation into a being that is part plant and part farmer with super powers. Freshman uses his super powers to save his farm and those of his neighbors. There's an 8-inch soft toy of Freshman that is available for \$ 9.95 plus shipping. The purpose of Freshman is to teach people about farming issues in New Jersey. The New Jersey growers association also sells cookbooks.

Okay, so maybe you think that Freshman is corny, you don't want to be preachy, or you don't want to tell the world about the problems you face as a grower. On the other hand, maybe it would be fun to develop a coloring book illustrating a year on a "typical" (okay, so there's no such thing) Minnesota fruit and/or vegetable farm with stickers of fruits, vegetables, picking baskets and a market stall. Would this be something you would be willing to sell at your farmstand? Would this be something kids would want in the age of video games? Hmmmm... maybe we should develop a game. How about coming up with new lyrics to extoll the virtues of fruits and vegetables or the eating of them? Maybe we should hold a songwriting contest.

If you have great new ideas for advertising Minnesota fruits and vegetables, send them in! At the very least, we have to admire the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey for trying a new advertising vehicle.

## Conservation Security Program Self-Assessment Workbook Available For Producers

Washington, Dec. 6, 2004 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Bruce Knight today announced that the self-assessment workbook is available for potential participants in the 2005 winter sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP). CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources.

"The workbook is significant because self-assessment is a new way of doing business with NRCS. Used as a pilot that proved successful in last year's program, farmers and ranchers can assess their potential eligibility by themselves on their own time at their convenience," Knight said.

The initial self-assessment will help producers identify whether their individual agricultural operation meets sign-up criteria and answer the question, "Have I fully addressed the minimum requirements for both soil quality and water quality on the land I manage?" By going through the workbook, producers will get an initial idea about whether they are eligible for CSP at this time. NRCS state offices will be preparing supplements to the self-assessment workbook that further explain program requirements and add any needed emphasis or explanation for local conditions.

Producers who may not be eligible at this time can find out about other USDA programs that can help them achieve a higher level of conservation so that they may apply for CSP in the future.

To apply for the program, NRCS asks potential participants to complete the self-assessment to determine if their operations meet the requirements of the program and qualify for program participation. The self-assessment process is completed using a self-screening questionnaire for each land use to be enrolled.

NRCS provides up-to-date technology, tools and resource information to meet the conservation needs of the nation's producers. Soil quality assessment information at [http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/soil\\_quality/assessment/index.html](http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/soil_quality/assessment/index.html) includes the Soil Conditioning Index, a tool used to predict the consequences of cropping systems and tillage practices on the status of soil organic matter. Water quality resources, including a Manure Management Planner, are at <http://wmc.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/wq.html>.

On Nov. 2, 2004, USDA announced that the fiscal year 2005 CSP will be available to eligible farmers and ranchers in 202 watersheds across the nation during a sign-up to be held this winter. A sign-up announcement will be published along with the final rule that will detail specific program requirements in these watersheds. The program will be offered each year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows.

The CSP self-assessment workbook is available in hardcopy or compact disk (CD) from local NRCS offices and online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>. Also at that Web site is a map of the CSP watersheds and additional information on the program.



## Plan Now to Order Your Minnesota Grown Produce Bags

We are currently planning our third group order of the “Minnesota Grown” produce bags. Over 500,000 bags have been distributed during the last two growing seasons to producers licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo. These bags are designed to hold a dozen ears of sweet corn without tearing, but they’re not just for produce. Producers have been very happy with the quality of the bag.

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. The bags can be customized to include your farm name, market name, etc. The minimum for customized orders 5,000 bags. 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.

If you have ordered bags in the past or have expressed an interest in the bags, you will receive an order form. The order information will include ordering deadlines. It is very important that you place your order by the deadline.

Samples of the bags and order forms will be available at the Upper Midwest Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show in St. Cloud, MN on February 3 & 4, 2005. Samples can also be requested from the MFVGA office. You must be licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo to order the bags.

If you are interested in the bags and want more information, please contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400 or [mfvga@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mfvga@worldnet.att.net) and you will receive information when the details are available. If you contact the office via e-mail, please reference the produce bags in the subject line.

## Are You Making A Profit on Fresh Market Sweet Corn????

Fresh market sweet corn is one of the major vegetables grown and consumed during the growing season in Minnesota, but what are your actual net returns? Are you just going through a fun exercise in production? There are many factors that add or subtract from the bottom line in fresh sweet corn production. Come and see how your operation rates. Get answers to many questions like, “what do I really need to charge my customers?” “Can I save money on insect control and still produce high-quality product?” Terry Nennich and Bill Hutchison will discuss the economical aspects of fresh market sweet corn production on Friday afternoon, February 4, 2005 during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. The full program schedule can be found on pages 3 and 4.


## Keep It Funny!

Comic magician Tim Gabrielson has one goal in mind when he steps on stage: “Keep it funny!”

We are fortunate to have Tim as our banquet entertainment for the 2005 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. Tim’s quick wit, dry sense of humor, and captivating delivery, presents a high energy, side-splitting comedy magic show, appropriate for all ages. Tim’s audience driven, interactive performance will leave you in an uncontrollable state of laughter.

Whether he is on stage in Las Vegas or entertaining nationwide at state fairs, colleges, or corporate events, Tim has an amazing ability to captivate and hold any audience throughout his entire performance.

Join us for the banquet on Thursday night, February 3, 2005, for good food, first-class entertainment from Tim Gabrielson and laughter galore. Tickets are required. The registration form can be found on page 5.



**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.**

## SESSION SPOTLIGHTS:

### **Pumpkin Varieties:**

Come prepared to talk about your favorite pumpkin variety (or most un-favorite pumpkin variety) at the Thursday afternoon Pumpkin session during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. After a brief presentation of the new pumpkin variety releases, the session will be opened for grower participation. The full program schedule is included on pages 3 and 4.

### **High Tunnel Production of Fruits and Vegetables**

is gaining interest in Minnesota as producers use this technology to increase the length of the growing season and control production risk. The high tunnel session at this year's educational conference will explore how high tunnel production can be expanded to other crops such as raspberries with a presentation by John Cooper from Strawberry Tyme, Inc. Dave Wildung and Terry Nennich will give presentations on their recent research results using different crop mixes in high tunnel production. Drip irrigation is a key to successful high tunnel production and Jerry Wright will discuss drip tape designs for high tunnels. Vince Fritz will discuss the use of colored mulches in high tunnel production. Increase your high tunnel knowledge during the High Tunnels & Plasticulture session on Friday afternoon, February 4, 2005. The complete educational program can be found on pages 3 and 4.

**Plastics and row covers** have been used in fruit and vegetable production for a number of years, but are you getting the maximum benefit from those expensive plastics and row covers? Discussions on the use of plastics and row covers will be featured during the Melon and Tomato sessions at this year's Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. If you're interested in increasing earliness, yields and quality of your melons and tomatoes, be sure to attend these sessions. The schedule for the Melon and Tomato sessions can be found on page 3.

### **Short and Long-Term Improvements in Soil Quality: Can you have your cake and eat it too?**

Dr. Sieglinde Snapp from Michigan State University will be joining us to conduct an organics workshop during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. Her focus will be on organic cropping systems and the ingredients for building soil quality. Her presentation will include a balanced program of mixed quality organic amendments that enhance soil aggregation for immediate improvements in soil quality, and improve soil organic matter over the long-term as well. The gains from a mixture of soil-improving cover crops, including brassicas, legumes and small grains or grasses will be discussed. The integrated use of manure and cover crops will be emphasized, and practical examples given from Michigan cropping systems, both vegetable and field crop systems. Dr. Snapp looks forward to learning from organic farmers who are building soil quality on their farm, as well as sharing the latest in research on soil quality.

The Organics Workshop will be on Thursday afternoon, February 3, 2005. A full schedule of the educational sessions can be found on pages 3 and 4.

### **MFVGA Policy on Conference Registration Cancellations and Refunds:**

MFVGA will refund registration fees for the 2005 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in full if the MFVGA office is notified before Friday, January 28, 2005. If the MFVGA office is notified after January 28, 2005, but before January 31st, 75% of the registration amount will be refunded. No refund will be issued if registrations are cancelled after Monday, January 31, 2005.

### **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.

### **Order Your Berry Plants Through MFVGA**

MFVGA is coordinating another group order of strawberry and raspberry plants for the 2005 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](mailto:mfvga@worldnet.att.net). If you send an e-mail, please reference berry plant orders in the subject line.

# SESSION SPOTLIGHTS:

## Estate Planning – Why You Need To Think About It Now

A recent study by *Successful Farming* magazine shows that two-thirds of all US farmers and food producers have not named a successor for their business. In addition, more than half of those producers have no estate plan. If you think about the billions of dollars in assets held by farm producers, the findings of the survey are certainly concerning. If your family and business goals are to keep the farm business in the family and insure the business continues on, a current transfer plan and associated estate plan are essential. If you die without a will, the State of Minnesota has a very inflexible will that they would initiate. It would likely not transfer your business according to your desires and wishes. The process could result in the termination of the business. In addition, dying without a will could very well result in substantial estate tax consequences that can effectively be prevented or greatly reduced using current planning strategies. Furthermore, what happens to your family and your business if you are severely injured resulting in incapacitation including the inability to make your own decisions about your financial, business, and health care matters? Again, a sound estate plan including durable power-of-attorney can get you through this potential problem area as well. If you have ever wondered about long-term health care issues, how life insurance can help in a business transfer, wondered about transfer strategies that are available, and more, plan to attend the Estate Planning session on Thursday afternoon, February 3, 2005 because all these items will be discussed. The complete schedule of educational sessions presented at the 2005 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference can be found on pages 3 and 4.

## Dr. Brian Smith from UW-River Falls to Speak at February Conference

Dr. Brian Smith, an Extension Fruit Specialist at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, will share information on his work with raspberry cultivar trials and plums on Friday, February 4th, during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference.

Dr. Smith grew up on the family produce farm near Mitchell, SD. Major crops grown included strawberries, watermelons and tomatoes. Dr. Smith's childhood interest in his father's on-farm watermelon and strawberry breeding programs greatly influenced his later career choice. He received his B.S. in Horticulture from South Dakota State University and M.S. and Ph.D. in Horticulture with emphasis in Plant Breeding from the University of Minnesota. He currently teaches fruit and vegetable production courses at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls and serves as a State Extension Fruit Specialist. His research programs have involved strawberry, raspberry and stone fruit breeding, apple evolution and compost use feasibility for commercial strawberry production.

## How Your Customers Impact Your Business

Without customers to purchase your products, a direct-market business can't survive. To flourish, you need those customers to come back over and over throughout the season and you need them to tell their friends about you. You focus your marketing to attract customers, but how can you use your loyal, returning customers to strengthen your marketing efforts? What do your returning customers really mean to your business and how can you build those relationships to effectively include your customers in your marketing plan, increase your customer base and grow your business? Karl Foord, Regional Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will share his insights and strategies during the Direct Marketing session on Friday afternoon, February 4, 2005 during the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. The entire program schedule can be found on pages 3 and 4.

### MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

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