

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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October, 2005 Volume 19, No. 4

A Note From The Board

October marks the winding down of the 2005 growing season and the beginning of a new MFVGA membership year. As you harvest the pumpkins, apples and the rest of the fall produce, think about what this association has done for you in the last few years and what we can offer for the future.

We have an exciting year planned – packed with a variety of opportunities for you to learn from specialists and talk with other growers! Highlights include the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show and a workshop on estate planning and transferring farm businesses. The Beginning Grower Workshop will be presented for the second year.

We are planning a Berry IPM Field Day for the spring of 2006 and a “Pickle Bill” Food Processing Workshop which will also be held in the spring.

If you are connected with a farmers’ market, we are working with the Minnesota Farmers Market Association and the University of Minnesota Extension Service to offer workshops for market managers and vendors.

Past partnership agreements with the USDA-Risk Management Agency and the USDA-RMA Community Outreach & Assistance Partnership Program have put valuable resources directly into the hands of MFVGA members. Watch future issues of the MFVGA Newsletter for resources that will be available for 2006, including the recently updated publication *Nutrient Management for Commercial Fruit & Vegetable Crops in Minnesota*.

Your membership dollars –

- Help connect producers and consumers
- Help provide quality education on a variety of topics
- Help put valuable resources at your fingertips
- Helped develop the Minnesota Grown produce bag
- Help support group orders of berry plants and produce bags
- Helped to obtain the Section 24 (c) registration for use of Stinger on strawberries in Minnesota
- Help you better manage risk and improve the success of your operation
- Provide leverage to apply for state and federal dollars to provide further benefits for area producers.

If you haven’t already sent in your dues, we encourage you to send them in today. Your support of MFVGA shows your commitment to and support of this industry and your fellow producers. The strength of MFVGA is its members. If you know fruit and vegetable producers who are not members of MFVGA, please encourage them to join. A membership application can be found on page 9.



Mark Your Calendars

Fall Dynamic Farmers’ Market Conference

U of M, SROC, Waseca, MN – November 15, 2005

T. Maxwells, Staples, MN – November 16, 2005

Featured speaker: Robert Chorney, Executive Director of Farmed Markets Ontario

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

St. Cloud Civic Center, St. Cloud, MN

February 2 & 3, 2006

High tunnels
Berries
Organics
Specialty Crops
Marketing & Technology
And much more...

Beginning Grower Workshop

St. Cloud, MN

January 31 & February 1, 2006

See page 6.

Estate Planning Workshop

St. Cloud, MN

February 1, 2006

See page 2.



Is Your Shop Safe?

Cleaning, inspecting and repairing your farm shop now can prevent serious injuries later. The National Safety Council offers the following suggestions for keeping your shop safe:

- Organize your workshop – give everything a designated place. Make sure items are secure so they will not fall on anyone.
- Clean walkways to reduce tripping and falling.
- Have an operable fire extinguisher and smoke alarm present.
- Secure a first aid kit for the shop or restock the one already in place.
- Inspect electrical cords and replace any that are damaged. Equip your shop with ground fault circuit interrupters to help prevent electrical shock.
- Make sure the shop is well lit. If it is heated, ensure that it is vented properly. Keep flammable liquids out of the shop area.
- Store all chemicals kept in the shop in a locked cabinet.
- Secure the appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE) for use when performing repair jobs. Standard PPE for a farm shop should include leather gloves, chemical-resistant gloves, safety glasses, face shields, earplugs or earmuffs, steel-toed boots, respirators, a hard hat, a protective apron and welding shields.

When working on agricultural equipment, remember to turn off the equipment, making sure that all rotating parts have stopped moving and safety locks are put in place. Keep all guards and shields on power equipment in place. And use hand tools only for their intended purposes.

For more tips on how you can make your farm safer, visit the National Safety Council's web site at www.nsc.org/farmsafe/facts.htm

(Reprinted from the August 2005 "Minnesota Farm Bureau Voice of Agriculture", Vol. 25, No. 7)

Check Out MFVGA.org

MFVGA.org has a new look. The renovation and expansion of the website was funded through a partnership agreement with the USDA-Risk Management Agency. We hope the site becomes a more useful tool for you. If you have suggestions for changes and improvements, please let us know.

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.



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.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

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.

Information on the Farm Service Agency can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Transferring the Farm Business: Beginning the Process

Are you struggling with how to transfer your farm business to the next generation? The University of Minnesota Extension Service will present a practical and in-depth workshop on Wednesday, February 1, 2006 in St. Cloud, MN.

The full-day workshop covers topics including

- Farm business transfer strategies
- Tax issues related to the farm transfer
- Wills, trusts, life insurance, power-of-attorney and long-term care issues
- Developing a written transfer plan
- Treatment of heirs in the transfer process.

This workshop will be held the day before the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show. Additional information and a registration form will be included in the December issue of the MFVGA newsletter. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend.

MDA Accepting Applications for Sustainable Agriculture Grants

St. Paul, MN – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for grants from Minnesota farmers, researchers, educators and non-profit organizations that have innovative ideas for sustainable farming systems. The MDA's Agricultural Resources Management and Development Division has up to \$70,000 to award this year.

Individual grants up to \$25,000 are available for three-year projects that benefit the environment, increase farm net profits through cost reduction or enhanced marketing, and improve the farm family quality of life. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to enterprise diversification; organic production; cover crops and crop rotations to increase nitrogen uptake, reduce erosion or control pests. Other projects might include conservation tillage and weed management, integrated pest management systems, livestock production and manure management systems, nutrient and pesticide management, and alternative energy production opportunities.

MDA Commissioner Gene Hugoson encouraged participants to consider making an application.

“Grants provide producers with an opportunity to display their creative approaches to agricultural and environmental enhancement,” Commissioner Hugoson said. “Each year the application process leads to innovative approaches to caring for our environment.”

Since 1989, 236 grants have been awarded to individuals for projects throughout Minnesota. An example of a past project is Laura and Brian Wilson, organic farmers from Alexandria who successfully grew strawberries using alternatives to conventional pesticides and fertilizers. Tim Gieseke from Buffalo tested two water management practices, a rock inlet waterway system and contour curbs to collect runoff and direct it into a storage basin. Kent Dornick from Preston raised market hogs in hoop houses and in finishing barns to compare production systems and determine which was the most profitable for his operation. The results and details of past grant projects are highlighted in the Greenbook publication, which is free and available to the public.

Applications and more information are available on the MDA website, <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/esap>, or by contacting the Agricultural Resources Management and Development Division at 651-296-7673. Completed applications must be received by December 16, 2005.

Strawberry & Raspberry Plant Orders Provide Research Dollars

Over 332,000 high quality strawberry and raspberry plants were ordered through the MFVGA this spring and distributed to area growers.

Proceeds from the plant sales help fund several on-going small fruit breeding and management studies. Projects headed by Dr. David Wildung at the North Central Research & Outreach Center in Grand Rapids, MN include cultivar and selection trials in strawberries and blueberries, variety trials with strawberries and blueberries and evaluations with other small fruit crops. The funds also support strawberry and blueberry breeding and evaluation projects directed by Dr. Jim Luby.

These funds provide critical support to insure the supplies and labor are available to manage the research plots at the North Central Research & Outreach Center in Grand Rapids, MN; the Horticulture Center in Victoria and the Sand Plains Station in Becker. Research is also conducted at Pine Tree Orchards in White Bear Lake, MN.

As you make plans for 2006, consider ordering your strawberry and raspberry plants through MFVGA. You get quality plants at affordable prices and the proceeds help fund small fruit research at the University of Minnesota. The U of M research benefits berry growers throughout the region. Berry order forms will be mailed out this winter.

MFVGA Members Contribute to Minnesota Grown Booth

We extend a very special “Thank You” to the producers who donated items for the Minnesota Grown booth at this year’s “Great Minnesota Get-Together.” The State Fair booth wouldn’t be possible without the help, support and cooperation of the many people who donate items for the display and take the time to staff the booth.

A list of producers who donated items and volunteers who staffed the booth is included in the Minnesota Grown Notes on pages 7 & 8.

“Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lessons afterward.”

– Vernon Law

NAP Sign Up Dates

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) sign up dates for 2006 are approaching. The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) NAP program provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by natural disasters. This federally funded program covers noninsurable crop losses and planting prevented by disasters. An eligible producer is a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

For more information and sign up dates for your crops, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or go to FSA’s website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

AGR-Lite Update

An application to make the AGR-Lite insurance program available to Minnesota producers is in process.

We anticipate that the program will be implemented for the 2007 crop year. The University of Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management is currently moving ahead with "Phase 2" of the application process. This phase compiles a list of crops and acreage. Accurate information will result in better rates and producers will be asked to participate in this phase.

Information on the AGR-Lite program and what you can do now to prepare (record keeping, etc.) will be included at the 2006 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference on Feb. 2 & 3, 2006 at the St. Cloud Civic Center.

"There is no such thing in anyone's life as an unimportant day."

– Alexander Woolcott

Midtown Global Market Set to Open in Spring, 2006 Market Developers Searching for Food & Art-based Businesses

St. Paul, MN--The Midtown Global Market, a 58,000 square foot year-round public market, will be opening in the spring of 2006. The Market will feature fresh and prepared ethnic foods, arts and crafts and also serve as a community gathering place.

The Market is being referred to as a key component of The Midtown Exchange—a development project that will convert the former Lake Street Sears Building into a vibrant, multi-use facility. The building's largest tenant, Allina Healthcare, will provide a daytime employee base of nearly one thousand people. Over one hundred residential condominiums, hundreds of apartments, an on-site Sheraton Hotel as well as other office and retail businesses will also make up the tenant mix.

"The Midtown Global Market is going to be a great addition to the City of Minneapolis," stated Mike LaFave, project coordinator for the Neighborhood Development Center. "Project developers are diligently working to insure that the Market will address all senses; the sights, sounds, tastes and textures that make a visit to a public market such an enjoyable experience."

Market developers are currently in search of produce, cheese and specialty grocery business owners who are looking to expand. "The Midtown Global Market will provide businesses with the opportunity to retail their products to a group of very diverse markets," added LaFave. "From local neighborhood residents and nearby employees to Twin City "foodies" and tourists, The Midtown Global Market will become a destination visited by people from all backgrounds."

For more information, interested parties are encouraged to contact Mike LaFave at the Neighborhood Development Center, 651-379-8424 or visit the project's website--www.midtownglobalmarket.org.

USDA Selects Watersheds for 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) Two Northwest Minnesota Watersheds are Selected for the 2006 CSP

St. Paul, MN – Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner announced on August 25, 2005 in Palmar, Alaska that 110 watersheds, with at least one in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico, are eligible for the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP).

In Minnesota, two CSP watersheds have been selected, the Red Lakes Watershed and the Thief Watershed. Both of these watersheds are located in northwest Minnesota and represent 463,073 acres of cropland and pasture land. There are 1,013 producers who are potentially eligible for the 2006 CSP program in the Red Lakes and Thief Watersheds.

"This voluntary program recognizes farmers and ranchers for their ongoing stewardship activities on working agricultural lands," said William Hunt, State Conservationist, Minnesota NRCS. "Natural resource conservation efforts by America's producers benefit everyone through healthier soil, cleaner air and water and improved fish and wildlife habitat. CSP successfully demonstrates a cooperative public-private conservation partnership," said Hunt. The signup period will take place early in fiscal year 2006. These watersheds represent more than 120,000 of the Nation's potentially eligible farms and ranches, covering more than 46 million acres that are evenly split between cropland and grazing land.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service held the first CSP signup in 2004. This CSP announcement brings the number of watersheds enrolled to 330 across the Nation, covering 250 million acres that have been eligible for the program.

The 2006 CSP will include a renewable energy component. Eligible producers will receive compensation for converting to renewable energy fuels such as bio-diesel and ethanol, for recycling 100 percent of on-farm lubricants, and for implementing energy production, including wind, solar, geothermal and methane production.

CSP will be offered each year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. Additional information on the CSP, including a national map of the fiscal year 2006 watersheds and eligibility requirements, is on the Web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.



Minnesota Water Resource Data Available on the Web

Minnesota's invaluable water resources are monitored by a variety of local, state and federal agencies. These agencies operate observation networks, often volunteer-based, that collect data related to the quality and quantity of Minnesota's lakes, streams, wetlands and ground water.

Nearly all of the water resource data gathered by the observation networks are made available to interested parties via the internet. Many of the data, especially those related to water quality are available from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Division of Waters (DNR Waters) website at www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/data/index.html

Some of the data sets found at this website include:

Ground Water Level Data – hydrographs and tabular data for wells in the DNR Waters Observation Well Program. Check out the website observation well from Otter Tail County near Perham.

Ground Water Use Data – maps and tabular data depicting water use information assembled by the DNR Waters, Water Appropriation Permit Program.

Stream Flow Data – maps of weekly stream flow and links to other stream flow data resources. The products are prepared by the DNR Waters Stream Hydrology Program.

In addition to water quantity data, visitors to this site will find a link to water quality data and conditions of Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams; an excellent product hosted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

(Reprinted from the Minnesota Irrigator Fall 2005 issue.)



Minnesota Organic Certification Cost-Share Program Accepting Applications

Program helps farmers, processors pay for organic certification

St. Paul, MN – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications from certified organic Minnesota growers and handlers for organic certification cost-share payments.

MDA Organic and Diversification Specialist Meg Moynihan said the cost-share funds benefit a fast-growing organic industry.

“Certified organic operations bear their own burden of proof and must pay a third party to verify their organic status,” said Moynihan. “Certification is not cheap. Costs can range from several hundred to several thousand dollars each year.”

Both certified organic farmers and certified organic handlers (processors, distributors and retailers) may participate. Applicants are eligible for reimbursement of 75 percent of their certification-related costs, up to a maximum of \$500. Organic farmers holding a processing certificate are eligible for two payments, but must submit two separate applications.

The MDA is administering the program with funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture made available by the 2002 Farm Bill. In 2004, 241 certified organic farmers and 33 certified organic processors participated in Minnesota's program, which distributed almost \$116,000. This year, funds are limited and will be paid on a first-come, first-served basis, so interested parties are encouraged to submit their applications promptly.

To qualify, applicants must provide copies of a valid organic certificate and copies of itemized bills dated between October 1, 2004 and September 30, 2005. Eligible expenses include membership, application and inspection fees, as well as user fees connected with the crops or products covered by the qualifying certificate. Applications must be postmarked by November 15, 2005.

Application forms and other program details are available on the MDA organic web site at www.mda.state.mn.us/esap/organic. Interested growers and handlers may also call Meg Moynihan at 651-297-8916 to request an application or ask questions about the program.

ATTENTION TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS

The 2006 Upper Midwest Regional
Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show
will be held February 2 & 3, 2006 at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN.

Have we received your application? Return it as soon as possible to reserve your booth(s).

If you need an application or more information, contact the MFVGA office at 763-434-0400.



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

If you are a member of MFVGA, MAGA, MGGA, Northern Plains or Area II Potato Growers Associations, or a Farmers Market organization, you received a survey from the University of Minnesota Extension Service in March 2005. The purpose of the survey was to determine what kinds of educational needs growers have, and whether the University of Minnesota Extension Service has been a source of information you turn to.

To get an idea of needs, we asked about how often and what kinds of questions growers had. Of the growers returning the survey, 57% sometimes had production questions, 26% frequently had questions and 16% rarely had questions. Forty-three percent of respondents attended one, and 40% did not attend any educational seminars in 2004. When growers did go to educational programs or talks, it was generally their organization's annual meeting. Despite not going to educational talks, 51% and 38% of respondents were very interested or somewhat interested, respectively, in obtaining more information! Fifty percent or more respondents deemed themselves somewhat knowledgeable about marketing, finance, soil testing and fertilizer requirements, disease and insect management, postharvest handling, variety selection, and weed management.

Topics considered very important by greater than 50% of respondents were disease, insect, and weed management, soil testing and fertilizer requirements, and variety selection. Sources of information used more than three times in 2004 by at least 30% of respondents included other farmers, grower magazines, this newsletter (yeah!), other newsletters, and non-University of Minnesota Extension Service websites. Growers wanted speedy responses to questions by people experienced with farming, and most likely turn to University of Minnesota Extension specialists for information on soil testing and fertilizer recommendations, and disease and insect management. One's own experience or education was the preferred source of information by more than 40% of respondents for marketing, human resources, and finance, and by more than 30% of respondents for postharvest handling, variety selection, irrigation and crop insurance.

Although the majority of respondents (85%) did not write in other production topics they wanted to learn more about, the topic written in most often was organic or low input practices. Thirty-five and thirty-eight percent of respondents would be willing to travel less than 50 miles or between 50 and 100 miles, respectively to attend an educational program. More than 60% stated that they'd be very or somewhat likely to obtain information from short publications, the Internet, field days, or site visits. More than 50% of respondents actually paid for information in 2004 from magazines and books.

We Extension Service personnel will be closely studying your survey responses! We will be meeting later this month to talk about how to best meet your educational needs based on these responses. Thanks to all who filled out and returned this survey. We really appreciate that you took the time to do so.

Beginning Grower Workshop Planned

A two-day Beginning Grower Workshop is planned for January 31 and February 1, 2006 in St. Cloud, MN. This two-day workshop will include discussions on developing your future plans and identifying the opportunities for your farm based on farm size and location, soil type, micro climate and area population. We are also planning educational sessions on soils, season extension, weed control, insect control, water management, disease identification, post harvest handling and more.

This workshop will address the needs of the beginning grower. More experienced growers who attend the workshop will have the opportunity to review basic, yet very important, concepts.

Further information on the workshop and a registration form will be included in the December 2005 issue of the MFVGA Newsletter. The Beginning Grower workshop is sponsored by MFVGA, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the USDA – Risk Management Agency. These organizations are equal opportunity providers.

Fall Dynamic Farmers' Market Conference Planned

The Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (MFMA), is planning two regional one-day conferences to be held this fall, tentatively scheduled for November 15, 2005 at the U of M Southern Research & Outreach Center in Waseca, MN and November 16, 2005 at T. Maxwell's restaurant in Staples, MN.

The fall conferences will feature Robert T. Chorney, Executive Director of Farmers' Markets Ontario. Mr. Chorney has helped organize more than 80 new farmers' markets and he has consulted to farm, government, business and community groups across all of Canada and in many parts of the United States. He keenly recognizes how a farmers' market contributes to the soul of a community, and his inspiring message helps motivate community leaders to take the necessary steps to make a farmers' market part of their success story.

Conference information, including the agenda and registration form, will be posted on the MFMA website (www.mfma.org) and the MFVGA website (www.mfvga.org) when details are finalized. Information will also be mailed to market managers and to market vendors who attended last year's meetings.

Co-sponsors of the one-day conferences are the Minnesota Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the USDA-Risk Management Agency. These organizations are equal opportunity providers.



Initiatives Aim to Increase Sales of Local Foods to Food Service

Although efforts to promote Minnesota Grown products in grocery stores or through on-farm markets usually get the most attention, there is a great deal of interest and activity related to food service. Following are a few examples of how the Minnesota Grown Program is actively engaged in these efforts to expand marketing opportunities for Minnesota products.

Corporate Campuses: The MDA's Minnesota Grown Program was recently awarded a grant from USDA's Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) to explore opportunities for expanded sales to corporate campuses. The grant builds on a previous FSMIP project conducted by the MDA several years ago. The original project helped corporate health/wellness personnel encourage employees to consume more fresh, local foods as a way of improving employee health. A series of web-based resources were developed for use by corporations interested in seeing their employees utilizing more locally grown foods. As a result, several corporations distribute the *Minnesota Grown Directory* or conduct on-site events with a grower.

The new FSMIP grant builds on the first project by working with corporate cafeterias and the distributors who supply them. If successful, we will have created a two-pronged approach where we work simultaneously with a company's management and its foodservice provider to increase sales of locally grown foods. The Minnesota Grown Program is partnering with the Food Alliance Midwest to work with corporate cafeterias and their distributors. We will evaluate results by measuring sales before and after the project, and by surveying employees to determine what actions they are taking to purchase more local foods.

Convention Centers: The Minnesota Grown Program hired noted local foods consultant JoAnne Berkenkamp to research opportunities and barriers to selling more Minnesota Grown foods to convention centers and the caterers and distributors that serve them. The finishing touches needed to prepare the report for distribution are happening as this article is being written. For a copy of the report, give me a call or e-mail at 651-297-5510 or paul.huginin@state.mn.us

Heartland Food Initiative: The MDA is part of the steering committee of the Heartland Food Initiative – a unique and exciting attempt to facilitate and reward chefs who feature locally grown foods. The project is being carried out by The Minnesota Project with involvement from Minnesota Farmers Union, Food Alliance Midwest, and Minnesota Grown. The effort is reaching critical mass and will be ready for a public launch within the next few months. I'll provide an update in the next MFVGA newsletter.

Dine Fresh Dine Local: The second annual *Dine Fresh Dine Local* event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 2005. Sixteen restaurants are participating in this year's event, up from the thirteen that participated last year. Participating restaurants donate a portion of the day or evening's proceeds to the Land Stewardship Project, Food Alliance Midwest and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Grown program for their work in promoting sustainable farming and healthy local foods. During the event, gift bags containing a *2005 Blue Sky Guide*—the Coupon Book for Healthy Living, and a *Minnesota Grown Directory* will be given to diners. Details about this event, including a list of participating restaurants can be found at www.dinefreshdinelocal.com

Minnesota Cooks: Tuesday at the Minnesota State Fair has become synonymous with "Minnesota Cooks", a fun event that allows Minnesota chefs to showcase their talents while promoting locally grown foods. The event is coordinated by Food Alliance Midwest and Minnesota Farmers Union. Along with the chefs, several Minnesota Grown member producers were highlighted on-stage during the program, including Gary Pahl, Brian and Leslie Axdahl, Cedar Summit Farm, and Pastureland Cooperative. Chef Andrew from FOX9 television served as emcee for the day.

Thank You to State Fair Volunteers and Product Donors!!

Thanks to a fantastic group of volunteers and to the generous donation of produce to display, the Minnesota Grown booth at the State Fair was a success. Approximately 5,000 copies of the *Minnesota Grown Directory* were distributed and thousands of people came past the beautiful display of Minnesota produce during the 12-day "Great Minnesota Get-Together."

The centerpiece of the booth was an 8-foot refrigerated cooler filled with Minnesota Grown produce donated by the following producers:

Boorsma Farm, Victoria, MN
Dehn's Garden, Inc., Andover, MN
Green Barn Garden Center, Isanti, MN
Hydrosun USA, Grasston, MN
Jewel Lane Farm, Chisago City, MN
Marshall's Farm Market, Eden Prairie, MN
Pahl Farms, Inc., Apple Valley, MN
Pine Tree Orchards, Inc., White Bear Lake, MN
Riverside Farms, Elk River, MN

Minnesota Grown continued on page 8

Minnesota Grown continued from page 7

The booth also showcased beautiful cut flowers donated by Marshall's Farm Market and several landscaping plants donated by the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association.

A special thank you to all those who volunteered for a four-hour shift in the booth handing out Directories and promoting Minnesota agriculture:

Bill and Nancy Bauer, Bauer Berry Farm
Marilynn and David Boorsma, Boorsma Farm
Don Buck, Don Buck Beef
Jean Froehlich, Hydrosun USA
Shelly Gifford, Giffords Tree Farm
Sylvia Hasse
Dennis Havlicek, Happy Hill Orchard
KenMarie and Willard Hedquist, Green Pastures Dairy
Elise Jensen, Bee Prepared Hive Products
Kathy Kubal, Trumpeter Swan Farm
Lucille Lauer, Blueberry Meadows
Maple Grove Farmers' Market: Jana Michaelis, Judy Michaelis,
Bob Michaelis, and Carol Morris
Gary McDougall, McDougall's Apple Junction
Dottie McKinley, Meadowood Farm
Minnesota Association of Meat Processors: Foley Locker,
George's Meat Market, Erdman's Country Market,
McDonald's Meats, Big Steer Meats, and Greg's Meats
Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association: Minnesota Valley
Garden Center, Wagner Greenhouses and Out Back Nursery
Connie & Laura Mobry-Bathke, Tukaho Hills
Sharon and Tom Pogreba, Hugo Animal Farm
Marilyn Running, Garden in the Grove
Maria Stewart, Hand N Home
Lew and Sheryl Williams, Four Seasons Farm Market

Television Update

It's been a full season of advertising and promotion with our media partners FOX9 and UPN29. Ads for gardenminnesota.com, farmers markets (sponsored by the St. Paul Farmers' Market and Minneapolis Farmers' Market), and summer grocery store produce have all aired this summer. An ad promoting apples, wineries and pumpkin patches begins in mid-September, followed by a November ad promoting Minnesota apples in grocery stores. The final ad of the year begins in late November to promote Christmas trees.

Beyond the ads, we've had a great deal of "extras" on the two stations. Here's a sampling of these important extras:

- M.A. Roscoe, feature story reporter on FOX 9's morning news program, had talked about the Directory twice on-air
- Chef Andrew has featured the Directory and Minnesota Grown members Bauer Berry Farm, Shady Acres Herb Garden, Axdahl's Farm Market and others in separate features during his part of the morning news show. He's been great about mentioning the Directory on TV as well as on his Saturday afternoon radio program that airs on FM 107.

- Several events (including the opening of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Maple Grove farmers markets) have been highlighted on the FOX 9 Community Calendar on their web site. We've also been featured during the FOX Official Meteorologist program which includes mentions during the 9:00 p.m. news as well as the morning news. Berries, apples, and farmers markets have all been featured during Official Meteorologist segments so far.
- Tile ads on FOX9.com and UPN29.com began in mid-April and will continue to highlight Minnesota Grown products throughout the year.

Nearly All Directories Distributed, Work on 2006 Directory Begins

The new Minnesota Grown Directories have been flying out the door and into the hands of interested consumers. Over 160,000 of the 170,000 copies printed have already been sent to fill individual requests as well as bulk orders placed by businesses such as Travel Information Centers, libraries, realtors, and clinics and other locations that distribute Directories. Contact Brian Erickson at brian.j.erickson@state.mn.us or 651-296-4939 if you would like copies for distribution. Directories are available in boxes of 75, although we gladly send out other quantities upon request.

Renewals for 2006 will be mailed in late November or early December to anyone in the 2005 Directory or licensed to use the Minnesota Grown logo. If you didn't participate last year, contact Brian Erickson for information at 651-296-4939 or at brian.j.erickson@state.mn.us

Berry Cost Share

Just a reminder to submit your invoices and a copy of the ad for reimbursement if you participated in the cost-share advertising program. Contact Paul Hugunin at paul.hugunin@state.mn.us or 651-297-5510 for details.

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 2006 Minnesota Grown Marketing Conference on Tuesday, March 14 at the Continuing Education Center in St. Paul. More details to follow in the next newsletter.

Minnesota Grown information is supplied to MFVGA by Paul Hugunin (651-297-5510) and Brian Erickson (651-296-4939) from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Ag Marketing Services Division. If you have any questions about Minnesota Grown, contact them at the numbers listed above.

MFVGA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2006

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)

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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.) \$ _____

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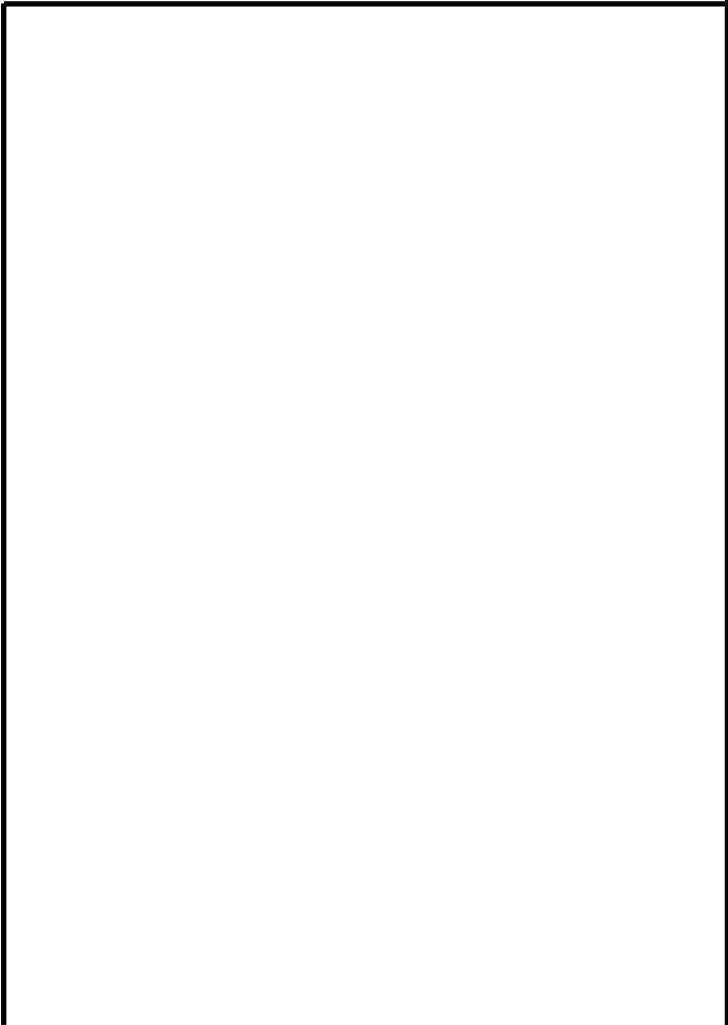
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Time Management: Making the Most of a Limited Resource

By Dale M. Johnson, Regional Extension Farm Management Specialist, Western Maryland Research and Education Center and James C. Hanson, Extension Farm Management Specialist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland at College Park

When we talk about economic resources, three types of resources usually come to mind: land, labor, and capital. But a fourth resource – time – may be more important than all the others. A common saying among farmers is, “I already know how to farm better than I am farming right now. I just don’t have the time.” Obviously, farmers understand the economic value of time. To make the best use of our limited time, we should manage it just as effectively as we manage our land, labor or capital.

Time management experts have developed a model called a time management matrix. This model helps us prioritize our activities and use our time more effectively. Through the model we can evaluate our activities in terms of importance and urgency. Everything we do is either important or not important. Important activities are those that contribute to our mission, objectives and goals. Our activities can also be characterized as urgent or not urgent. Urgent activities are things that demand immediate attention – they put pressure on us for a response RIGHT NOW!

Important activities may be either urgent or not urgent. Urgent activities may be either important or not important. Figure 1 shows a time management matrix illustrating these concepts. Each of our activities can be distinguished as one of four types, represented by the four quadrants of the time management matrix.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	A – Important/Urgent Deadline-driven tasks Important daily chores Demanding problems Crisis management Delayed field operations Daily care of livestock Last-minute financing Last-minute repairs Paying past-due bills	B – Important/Not Urgent Preparation and planning Crisis prevention Deadline-avoiding activities Timely field operations Winter repair work Work with consultants Marketing Labor management Skill improvement
Not Important	C – Not Important/Urgent Interruptions Minor pressing tasks Some phone calls Some meetings Some mail Some salespeople Some repairs and clean-up	D – Not Important/Not Urgent Busy work Time wasters Junk mail Some phone calls

Figure 1. Time management matrix

Type A activities are both important and urgent. These include deadline-driven tasks and important daily chores. For example, the important activity of harvesting is often pressed to urgency by looming bad weather. On a dairy farm, milking and feeding the cows is important to maintaining productivity. It is also urgent because we cannot postpone milking and feeding even a few hours. Type A tasks include demanding problems and managing crisis such as last-minute repairs, past-due bills, and last-minute financing.

Type B activities are important but not urgent. These activities are characterized as preparation, planning, crisis prevention, and deadline-avoiding tasks. Examples are timely field operations, financial management, winter repair work, work with consultants, effective marketing, labor management, and skill improvement.

Type C activities are not important but urgently press upon us and interrupt our more important activities. These include responding to a salesperson, phone calls, meetings, and mail that do not increase our productivity and effectiveness. Some odd jobs around the farm – such as minor repairs and cleanup – may appear urgent, but may be only marginally important.

Type D activities are neither important nor urgent. Busywork, time wasters, junk mail, and some phone calls are the type of activities that fall in this quadrant.

Categorizing our activities in these quadrants reminds us what is important and helps us avoid unimportant endeavors. It also helps us prioritize important activities. Five practical observations can be made about these concepts:

1. Type A and B activities may be equally important. Some type B activities may even be more important than type A activities, they just may not be urgent.
2. Type A activities (important and urgent) almost always come first.
3. Spending most of our time on type A activities causes stress and burnout. It leads to crisis management and “putting out fires.”
4. Focusing on type B activities (important and not urgent) can reduce the number of type A activities in the long run.
5. The way to make time to focus on type B activities is to avoid all unimportant activities (type C and D).

Time Management Practices

The concepts illustrated by the time management matrix can be practically applied using to-do lists. A to-do list is a simple method of keeping track of tasks that need to be done, but it is more than simply scribbling a list on a scrap of paper. It is a concerted effort to prioritize and complete tasks in an organized way, day in and day out.

To-do lists should be kept in a small notebook that fits in your pocket and can be carried at all times. (Figure 2)

Time Management continued on page 11

Save the Date!

**Success Strategies for Small and Limited Resource
Farmers and Ranchers**

Midwest Regional Outreach Conference

November 1 & 2, 2005

Airport Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center

Des Moines, Iowa

The two-day conference will focus on successful risk management strategies for small and limited resource farmers and ranchers. Those attending the conference will be farmers and ranchers from throughout the Midwest, community based organizations, agribusiness leaders and USDA representatives. The conference is presented by the USDA-Risk Management Agency, Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Leading specialists will focus on five primary areas of agricultural risk management:

- Financial
- Legal
- Production
- Marketing
- Human Resources

November 1 – Participants will have the option to choose among fifteen workshop sessions.

November 2 – Partake in the bounty that is Midwest Agriculture! Learn new ways to market your products. Participants will have an opportunity to choose between two educational bus tours. A workshop on various ways to market your products will also be available.

There will also be exhibits focusing on USDA programs and resources to assist small and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

Additional information and a registration form is available on the RMA website at www.rma.usda.gov

Scholarships are available for small farmers and ranchers through the Northeast Iowa Community College to cover two nights at the Holiday Inn Airport Hotel and the registration fee. Scholarship information is included with the registration form.

2006 Conference Preview

The **2006 Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference** will be held on February 2 & 3, 2006 at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN. Sessions are planned on marketing, berry production, apple and other tree fruit production and vegetable production including sessions on asparagus, sweet corn, carrots & onions, specialty crops and pumpkins. Several grower profiles are included in the program.

Expanded high tunnel production sessions will address the needs of producers new to high tunnel production as well as those who have used the technology for several years.

The organic sessions will include an organic overview and discussions on cover crops, compost and weed biology. We will also discuss alternatives to organic certification, how to deal with customer perceptions and starting and running a CSA.

Additional sessions will focus on displays and merchandising and how new technology can help you better manage your operation. The trade show will run on Thursday and Friday, February 2 & 3, also at the St. Cloud Civic Center.

Two separate workshops will be held in St. Cloud, MN right before the Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference. A **Beginning Grower Workshop** will be held on January 31 and February 1, 2006 and an **Estate Planning Workshop** will be held on February 1, 2006. Details will be included in the December newsletter.

The Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference is sponsored by MFVGA in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the USDA-Risk Management Agency. These institutions are equal opportunity providers. Further information on all of the upcoming educational workshops and conferences will be included in the MFVGA Newsletter and posted to the MFVGA website at www.mfvga.org as plans are finalized.

“Quality is never an accident. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

– Willa Foster

MINNESOTA FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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