



## DECEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER



### News From The Orchard

Interview with Greg Nolan by phone:

*What do you see as the current status of the 100 Orchards project?*

I see that we have a large number of trees in the ground and growing – and this is encouraging. I see a lot of great communication between people, and a real potential for continued growth. I see continued workshops as important to keep people motivated and connected.

*What do you think are the strengths of the 100 Orchards Project?*

We are established with good ideas that people recognize and are interested in – community wants us to do it.

We have found some amazing people with knowledge and willingness to pass it on.

*What are its weaknesses?*

We are not sustainable economically yet. I am also not sure that very many of the trees grafted in our workshops have survived.

We have not yet developed a system which guarantees successful orchards.

We need to consider selling bench grafted trees.

*What do you see for the future of the 100 Orchards Project?*

We need to go back and see how well we've done and see what we could do better. – like investigate percentage of viable grafted trees. Maybe we should sell bench grafted trees or lean more and more on plants that are not grafted. They come true from their roots (e.g. certain varieties of plums, cherries, or Saskatoons). We should investigate things that are not apples. Climate change will drive changes in what people grow. The trees could serve as a buffer – focus on plants that are hardy. Find that kind of information and pass it out to the people. Our food supply is vulnerable – so we need to work toward long term sustainability.



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### LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To: Central Chapter Members

Following lengthy review and deliberation during the past year, the board is recommending that the Central Chapter drop its 501c3 status and function as an SFA chapter under the state organization's 501c3 status for the following reasons:

- 1) Diminishing grant revenue Under the current economic climate, grant awards are expected to be smaller, fewer, and more competitive in future years.
- 2) Event liability Yearly insurance coverage for chapter-sponsored events would cost \$700-\$1000. This would eat up a significant portion of our budget. We have been creative over the past few years dealing with this, however, event liability insurance has and will continue to be an obstacle to sponsoring future chapter events and activities. There has been some question that we are not qualified to sponsor chapter events under the state's liability insurance because we are a separate 501c3 entity. Operating under the state's 501c3 would clearly qualify us to sponsor activities and events under their liability coverage.
- 3) Simplified interaction with the state organization We would function more like a chapter of the state organization and less like a separate legal entity. There would be

- simplification of paperwork and bookkeeping, e.g. membership list.
- 4) Chapter funds The state organization officially recognizes that chapter revenues belong solely to the chapters.
  - 5) Cost savings Reduced paperwork for chapter treasurer and coordinator will leave more money available for the organization. Accounting costs would also be reduced. The state treasurer would handle the money and write the checks. IRS paperwork has become cumbersome. The state organization would handle the IRS paperwork and annual 501c3 fees. The website and domain fees would be eliminated because the chapter would use the state website. This may also prove less confusing to the public. In light of current and anticipated revenues, these and other cost-saving measures will be essential to maintain the chapter's mission and viability.

The board fully understands and appreciates the effort and reasons behind the history of pursuing and maintaining its independent 501c3. The changing economic climate has and is ushering in a new era for SFA and the Central Chapter. The board looks forward to your thoughtful consideration and discussion of this issue at our annual meeting in January 2010. Thank you for your careful review of this matter.

Kent Solberg, Chair



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### OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting for the Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota will be held at Camphill Village near Sauk Centre, Minnesota on **SATURDAY January 9 2010 from 10AM-3PM**. The meeting will begin with a keynote address from the new Executive Director of SFA of Minnesota – John Mesko. The business meeting will follow including election of new board members and dropping our separate 501c3 status. After lunch, we will have a number of breakout sessions on topics including: the 100 Orchards Project, value added marketing, and so on.

The cost for the day is \$8 for adults, children are free. Camphill village is located at 15136 Celtic Drive Sauk Centre. Their phone number is 320.732.6365

**Directions:** From Interstate 94, exit at Highway 71 (Sauk Centre), go north approximately 10 miles to Cedar Lake Road (unpaved), turn right, go about 1 mile to Celtic Drive, turn left. You are now in the Village. On the right is a reddish house. Straight ahead is a stone/wood building with a small parking lot to the side. This is the Administration Building where you can get further directions if you are looking for a particular house or building.



### FESTIVAL OF FARMS 2009

On September 13 – SFACM hosted a festival of farms in the Browerville/Long Prairie area with Mike Stine's Stonebridge farm as the starting point. Five farms participated including three dairies, a hog operation, and a grass fed beef operation. Approximately 100 people attended and enjoyed the tours given by the local farmers. SFACM also served 51 locally produced meals. The board brought the idea of trying to do this on a statewide basis to the state SFA board, where it was well-received. You'll be hearing more about this project!



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### **100 Orchards Project Apple Harvest Workshop**

An apple harvest workshop took place in Pine River on October 24. Participants learned how to store apples, dry apples, freeze apples, can apples, and press apples. The workshop drew 14 people and was rated a 4+ out of 5 by the participants. More workshops are planned for Pine River in March, and elsewhere in the central Minnesota region throughout the winter. Please contact Sue Peterson if you would like to learn more ([azariahsue@yahoo.com](mailto:azariahsue@yahoo.com)) or 320 355-2980.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

January 9 10-3 SFACM ANNUAL MEETING to be held at Camphill Village near Sauk Centre

#### **Minnesota Organic Conference and Trade Show**

January 15-16 at the civic center in St. Cloud , the conference will feature sessions on topics ranging from growing organic foods and enterprise planning to human nutrition. Keynote speakers will be agricultural journalist Alan Guebert, whose "Farm and Food" opinion column is syndicated in more than 70 rural and farm publications, and Angie Tagtow, a registered dietician who helps audiences connect the dots between healthy soils, healthy foods, and healthy people. The conference will also offer more than 35 breakout sessions for crop, livestock, fruit and vegetable growers. A concurrent trade show will feature seed companies, machinery dealers, fertilizer suppliers, grain and dairy buyers, certifying agencies, and educational displays. Watch the

[conference web site](#) or call 651-201-6012 for information about attending the conference or exhibiting at the trade show.

#### **Year Round Grazing Systems – Business Management Seminar**

January 19-20 at Central Lakes College in Staples Can you graze 365 days a year? Would you like to extend your grazing season and save feeding costs, labor and fuel through a grazing system where cattle feed themselves? This seminar is for you! Topics include: Human Resources, Economics and Finance, Grazing Management, Pasture Rejuvenation/Weed Control, Cell Designs/Water Systems, and Swath Grazing/Bale Grazing. Presenter: Steve Kenyon, International speaker from Greener Pastures Grazing Management Ltd of Canada . Sponsors: Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MN Association of RC&D's, WesMin RC&D Council, Leader Lions, Cattleman's Association, U of M Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Farm Service Agency, Crow Wing Basin Forage Council, Cass County Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Central Lakes College Farm Business Management. For more information contact [Barb Cline](#), Customized Training at 218-894-5120 Central Lakes College Staples Campus, 1830 Airport Road Staples, MN 56479. Cost \$50 per person. With optional hands-on course work January 21 -- \$50 per farm unit.

January 30 8-4 Back to Basics in Pine River go to [www.happydancingturtle.org](http://www.happydancingturtle.org) for more information

February 20 SFA of MN Annual Meeting 2010 – St. Olaf College, Northfield , MN For more information and to register visit [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org).