



Features:

NSAS Director's Note: NSAS celebrating 40 years strong as ag organization 1

In Memory of Don Vetter 8

Give a farm tour... You'll mow your lawn 9

Support NSAS by purchasing a membership 9

Looking for recipes for NSAS Cookbook 10

Regular Columns:

OCIA News: Been sprayed? You'll have to prove it first 6

Opinion: Why the slow spread of cover crop use? 12

By William Powers

NSAS DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

NSAS celebrating 40 years strong as ag organization

As I write this, a thunderstorm rolls through our small farm near Ceresco. A dry winter is suddenly turning into a wet spring — which I'll take.

Seemingly any day now we'll be grazing, and the cows keep reminding me there is grass to be eaten. I think they grow weary of sharing a living space with the chickens and the horses, both groups whom also are ready to spring into Spring at the Springs!

This past January and February, NSAS was quite busy.

Lincoln and Hastings nominated and selected to participate. Folks left full and happy, in support of NSAS and the chefs who support NSAS.

Planning is already underway for next Producers' Choice Chef event, scheduled for Nov. 1, 2015, in Omaha.

Healthy Farms Conference

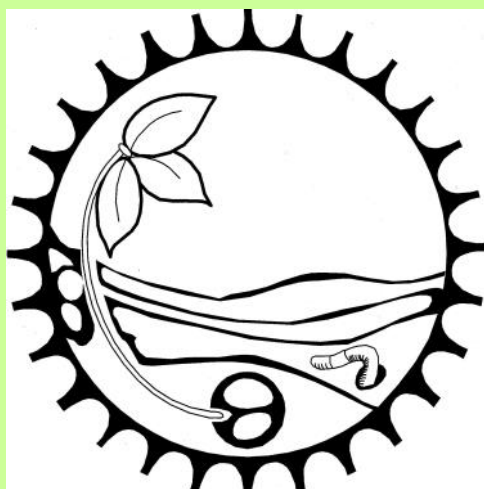
February brought the annual Healthy Farms Conference. With an emphasis on the growing trend of growing your own, and revitalizing urban communities through agriculture, the conference had more than 350 in attendance for the two-day event.

Also held at Metro, it featured three dynamic keynote presentations, none better than Omaha's own "Growing Cities" film team, a film about urban agriculture spearheaded by young farmer Dan Suseman. Conference attendees learned first-hand the benefits and challenges of farming in urban America.

Producers' Choice Chef Award

The annual Producers Choice Chef Award was once again held at the Metropolitan Community College's Institute for the Culinary Arts in Omaha. Featuring NSAS member-nominated chefs, the event was a dedication to a robust and sustainable local foods system. These chefs came together for a tapas-style fundraising meal. We had chefs from Omaha,

Continued on page 2...



Promoting agriculture and food systems that build healthy land, people, communities, and quality of life for present and future generations.



Continued from page 1...

We added a track of breakout sessions this year as well, which allowed for a more indepth view of the nuances of sustainable urban farming. With presentations ranging from beekeeping and aquaponics to tractors for small farms and community gardening, the sessions provided a diverse insight into urban agriculture as well as possibilities in rural communities.

Our annual awards highlight farms and individuals, who along this journey of sustainability, are standing out. This year, Ben Schole was honored with the Farmer of the Year Award. Big Muddy Urban Farm was honored with the Beginning Farmer of the Year Award. And Brian O'Malley was honored with the Educator of the Year Award.

In 2016, NSAS will be having a celebration of 40 years to include and be recognized at the annual conference. The conference will be held at the Lied Lodge



and Conference Center in Nebraska City and will feature several familiar faces from NSAS's history, including several founding members, past directors and board members.

We'll be getting back to our roots with the breakout sessions as well including



Continued on page 4...



The **NSAS Newsletter** is a bimonthly publication of the [Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society](#) (NSAS), a private non-profit organization. Our mission is to promote agriculture and food systems that build healthy land, people, communities, and quality of life for present and future generations. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform our readers on sustainable agricultural issues, resources, and activities. This newsletter is a NSAS [membership benefit](#).

NSAS Staff

William Powers, Ceresco
Executive Director
402.525.7794
healthyfarms@gmail.com

Ali Clark, Omaha
Urban Agriculture Intern
a.clark0425@gmail.com

Newsletter services provided by Rita Brhel, rita.brhel@gmail.com



Pelleted Manure



www.bejuplantfood.org
308-534-3561



Continued from page 2...

cover cropping, rotational grazing, no-till and more.

Have a topic from your farm you'd like to see a session on? Let us know. We are constantly working to improve the conference and the activities at it. With being around for 40-plus years, we are proud of our diversity and inclusiveness on the multitude of ideas and projects within sustainable agriculture. The diversity of breakout sessions, speakers and keynotes has allowed for an even greater inclusion of ideas. Please let us know how we can do even more!

Farmers Night Out!

The past three years, we've held our Nebraska Young Farmer Nights at farms across the state with the idea of expanding on the networking and connecting held at our events, such as the conference, the Sustainability Happy Hours or others.

This year, we are changing the name of Nebraska Young Farmer Nights to "Farmers Night Out!" with

the same ideas, same awesome opportunities.

We will kickoff the season with our first "night out" in the beginning of June.

The Farmers Night Out! events will be held at farms — urban and rural — throughout Nebraska and typically involve a farm tour or pasture walk, a potluck meal, and a time for building community and connecting.

In 2014, we held 18 Nights across the state. From Gering to Omaha, we had a total of more than 800 folks in attendance! We anticipate just as many for 2015.

The idea behind the Farmers Night Out! is to continue to build a community of farmers — young and seasoned — farm interns, and folks interested in food and farming in Nebraska. We see each other at conferences, events and local foods establishments but rarely spend time together or see the amazing work we are all doing. Farmers Night Out! events are a way for us all to get to see

Continued on page 5...

NSAS Board of Directors

Krista Dittman, Raymond
President
branchedoakfarm@gmail.com

Jon Yoachim, Deshler
Vice President
jkyoachim@gmail.com

Brent Luebbert, Omaha
Secretary

Jo Lowe, Lincoln
Treasurer
jo.lowe@nebraska.gov

Bob & Kristine Bernt, Spalding
rk_bernt@yahoo.com

Kevin Fulton, Litchfield
fultonfarms@hotmail.com

JoAnn Garvey, Omaha
joa346@live.com

Benjamin Godfrey, Fort Calhoun
bgodfrey@oppd.com

Marnie Jensen, Nebraska City
marnie.jensen@huschblackwell.com

Martin Kleinschmit, Hartington
martink@hartel.net

Joe Mazour, Deweese
walnutcreekorganicranch@hotmail.com

Ben Schole, Hooper
blschole@yahoo.com

Advisory Committee

Laura Demmel, Grant
Alexandra McClanahan, Neligh
Brian O'Malley, Omaha

About NSAS

NSAS is a non-profit, grass-roots membership organization. Initiated more than 30 years ago by farmer members, NSAS has grown into a dynamic organization with members from all across Nebraska. We welcome farmers and non-farmers alike... Everyone eats!

Our mission: To promote agriculture and food systems that build healthy land, people, communities and quality of life, for present and future generations.

NSAS Programs

[Healthy Farms Conference](#), the annual NSAS meeting

[Western Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Conference](#), a joint NSAS-University of Nebraska-Organic Crop Improvement Association event held annually in the Panhandle

[Farm Beginnings Nebraska](#), a joint NSAS-University of Nebraska 10-week course for beginning farmers

Farmers Night Out!, a series of gathering events for seasoned and beginning/aspiring farmers

Producers Choice Chef Award, recognizing local foods chefs—**save the date: November 1, 2015**

Nebraska Beginning Farmer Mentorship Program, connecting beginning/transitioning farmers with mentors in sustainable practices

[Market Nebraska](#), an online interactive map of Nebraska's local foods outlets

[NSAS Memorial Library](#), a collection of books housed at Ceresco, many donated by the family of the late holistic grazing expert Terry Gompert and by longtime sustainable agriculture advocate George Meyers

Farmer Support Group, an in-person discussion group for all farmers and growers that meets monthly at Ceresco

Western Nebraska Fruit and Vegetable Group, an in-person discussion group for growers in the Panhandle

Nebraska High Tunnel Project, workshops and a webinar educating growers on high tunnels

Farm2School Project, connecting local foods producers with interested school cafeterias

“Since the beginning, we’ve been a farmer-led nonprofit dedicated to reconnecting to the land, the places and the people. **We rely on annual memberships.**”

Continued from page 4...

and learn from one another and get off our own farms for an evening.

The model for each event — which moves around to different farms in Nebraska — is to eat dinner together, usually potluck style, and have a farm-related activity, such as a tour of the fields or a presentation on something that works well on your farm), before ending the evening by hanging out, perhaps around a bonfire or by playing cards.

The Farmers Night Out! events are meant to be a jumping off place for us to collaborate, network and connect.

In the past, locations have varied from farm to farm, as well as from brewery to local foods restaurants such as Grey Plume and Dante. At last year's events, such as the Healthy Farms Conference, Sustainability Happy Hours and Farmer Support Group events, the connections and friends made led to collaboration, such as tool borrowing/trading, brainstorming on pest management, fed cooperatives, shared practices and more.

The Farmers Night Out! events are hosted by NSAS and are a part of grant projects from new Belgium and Farm Aid.

The schedule is filling up, but there is still time to sign up if you are interested!

It's Time to Get Involved

NSAS is growing, and sustainable agriculture is seemingly more and more a part of the conversation. In Nebraska that conversation has been happening for more than 40 years, even prior to the creation of the Nebraska Organic Agriculture Association, now known as NSAS.

In town halls and churches throughout Nebraska, farmers and eaters alike were meeting to discuss the ever-changing landscape of agriculture and our food. Folks were concerned and saw a farming culture on a very slippery slope. A group of farmers took a leap of faith and formed what is now known as the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, or NSAS.

Through the years, NSAS has created numerous opportunities and projects

aimed at not only traversing that slippery slope, but providing a lift in the form of sustainable and organic farming practices and principles. With the goal of changing the narrative of our food and farming climate, NSAS laid the foundation for what we see today with local foods, with community gardening and with organic agriculture throughout the state.

From the creation of the very first farmers markets in the state to the Healthy Farms Conference, from the Nebraska Food Cooperative to City Sprouts, NSAS has worked across the spectrum of agriculture.

Since the beginning we've been a farmer-led nonprofit dedicated to changing this narrative — of reconnecting to the land, the places and the people. We have relied on our members since the beginning, both in dues and involvement.

With more 2,000 farmers and eaters alike on our mailing list, we can have an even larger impact than ever before. We welcome farmers and eaters alike to join us on this journey and in this ever-changing narrative of food and farming. Please consider joining NSAS on this journey. You can contact Jo Lowe at jo@4jl.net to get details about an NSAS membership or gift membership.

We are all in this together,

William





OCIA News

Organic Crop Improvement Association
Nebraska Chapter #1

Board of Directors

Terry Mosel, Page
PRESIDENT
402-338-5321

Jerry Lahners, Hebron
VICE PRESIDENT
402-356-2023

Larry Stanislav, Linwood
SECRETARY & CROP IMPROVEMENT CHAIR

Gail Lockard, Lincoln
TREASURER
402-477-2128

Randy Fendrich, Linwood

Neil Reiners, Juniata

Joe Roberts, Axtell

Staff

Kim Mosel
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
86536 State Spur 45A
Page, NE 68766
402-620-2701
ociane1@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER CONTACT:
Liz Sarno, Concord
UNL Extension Educator &
Organic Project Coordinator
402-309-0944
www.esamo2@unl.edu

OCIA Research & Education, Inc.

Angela Tunink
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
1340 N. Cotner Blvd.
Lincoln, NE 68505
402-477-2323, Ext. 320
atunink@ocia.org
www.ocia.org/RE

By Elizabeth Sarno

Been sprayed? You'll have to prove it first!

Normally I would look forward to spring after a cold winter. Waiting for some of the first signs of spring on my farm, such as the wild plums blossoming, the meadowlarks starting to sing, I can't wait to open my windows in the house and let in the fresh, clean air — but is it really fresh and clean?

Spring is the start of the spraying season, and it is open season on your farm and your health. Everything is fair game from drifting on your certified organic crops, market garden or fruit trees.

Instead of feeling like I am living in the idyllic, peaceful countryside, I feel like I live in a chemical war zone.

Here is a real, “fun” fact: Your crops and livestock may be violated by spray drift, but you will have to prove it.

Believe me, I try to take the positive proactive approach to educate the farmers around me about my organic production practices and the problems spray drift causes to my certification status. I either mail or hand-deliver an annual spray letter to all the coops, aerial and private applicators, utility companies, county weed boards, neighbors and renters in my area.

The informational letter lists all of the organic farms and market gardens in their area. It includes the operator's name, contact number and plat map coordinates. The letter explains to the spray applicator that we operate certified organic operations in their area, that we must follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program (NOP) regulations and will need to report any spray incidents to our certifiers. Any overspray of a prohibited material may cause us to be decertified and cause economic loss.

Additionally, I post my organic ground with “Do Not Spray” signs, and I am registered with Nebraska Drift Watch — <https://ne.driftwatch.org/map>.

Drift Watch is a voluntary communication tool that enables crop producers and beekeepers to alert applicators about their pesticide-sensitive crops or apiaries. For more information about this program, contact Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Environmental Programs Specialist Craig Romary at 402-471-6883 or craig_romary@nebraska.gov.

What did I get last year for my effort of sending all those letters and talking to coop managers?

I got buzzed by an aerial applicator who did not like my informational letter. My goat herd and house were buzzed at 7:00 a.m. The pilot had the goats running through fences; luckily they did not get hurt.

I immediately went to the farmer who rents the ground to inform him of what happened. I asked him what he was spraying for and who he hired. I then called and reported this incident to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Lincoln at 402-475-1738.

The FAA inspector was sympathetic but told me I had to have proof. Seriously?!

I asked him what kind of proof he needed. After all, here were the facts: This was the only small plane hired by the local coop to spray a fungicide on soybeans in the area at that time of day near my house. My farm should not have even been in the flight pattern; the pilot made no effort to avoid my property. The inspector told me they recommend pilots to stay away from



OCIA News

Organic Crop Improvement Association
Nebraska Chapter #1

residential areas.

The inspector told me that I needed to have more than my word. I needed a picture of the pilot buzzing my house. When I asked how fast this plane would be flying, he thought it would be around 120 mph. So, it turns out that I should have ran back in the house and grabbed my cell phone or camera and took a picture of the plane, making sure to get the identification number on the plane, as it was flying over my home at 120 mph.

Even without the photographic evidence, I still filed a complaint. The inspector did his job and visited the hanger where the plane originated from. I hope this will persuade the operator of the plane next time to not harass me for my production practices.

The reality of living in the heart of farming country for many years is that I can go out on any windy day with wind gusts over 16 mph plus and see fields being sprayed by aerial and ground applicators. I can clearly see the spray traveling in the wind and wonder how much is actually reaching the ground of the farmer that requested the application and how much is drifting into the neighbor's field.

Unfortunately spray drift is not an isolated event, and when the spray affects the neighbor's crop — whether conventional or organic — it causes economic loss. How do we compensate farmers with pesticide-sensitive crops?

I regularly buy vegetables from a young farmer who has a large market garden. Last year, several rows of his organic tomatoes were damaged by 2,4-D, because it volatilized and drifted in from over a mile away. The farmer applicator either did not understand how this product would drift or simply did not care.

How can you repair the damage done to his crops, loss of customers and fear of reoccurrences?



This young farmer decided not to complain, because it was his neighbor.

I hear this statement many times from the affected farmer. The farmer would rather say nothing than make trouble.

How much of a “neighbor” is the person who has drifted on your crop? They have such little regard of your livelihood.

Yes, we do have many educational programs conducted by UNL Extension educators yearly. However, if you are farming many acres and need to get your crop sprayed at the proper time, you may not have the time to care. Also, it seems that regulations are not, or cannot be, enforced or perhaps fines are just not big enough to make a difference.

My last concern is that there are many studies that tell us what these herbicides and insecticides will do to weeds or insects in the crop, but what about my lungs? What will this do to people living and breathing the air in rural areas over time?

In the spring, when we go outside we should be smelling the fresh air and flowers, often I hear people complain that they had to go inside with their children, because they could smell the chemicals being sprayed over a mile away.

Ultimately with our reckless use of herbicides and insecticides, I fear as a society we will we look back at our input approach to agriculture and ask what species would deliberately, voluntarily, poison itself?

There are many scholarly articles that support a multi-crop, multi-year rotation with a cover crop integrated into the cropping system that will reduce the amount of herbicide needed and will improve soil health.

(Here is a little reading material on this subject: “Increasing cropping system diversity balances productivity, profitability and environmental health” at www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/10-11-2012/benefits-of-longer-rotations.)

If a farmer has a truly integrated a multi-crop and multi-year rotation with a cover crop, they should be able to manage pests and reduce their need for these harmful inputs.

Hopefully your spring will go well and your neighbors will respect your farming practices. **But if you get drifted on: Report it!**

By Rita Erhel

IN MEMORY OF DON VETTER:

Fascinating where life's journeys take us

Marquette is this little bitty town with a population of about 200. It isn't much of a town in many people's eyes. It isn't going to be drawing a lot of people in anytime soon. But it does have a gem tucked in there called Grain Place Foods.

Its founder, 94-year-old Don Vetter, died on March 11.

Grain Place Foods started out as just any other conventional grain farm. Then in 1953, Vetter began questioning the status quo of the agricultural practices of the day and decided to grow organic instead. He was joined by his son in 1975 after David came home with his bachelor's degree in agronomy and Master of Divinity. For David, organic farming was the perfect combination of his biological and theological interests.

The Vetter farm was eventually certified organic in 1978, among the first in the Midwest, and renamed The Grain Place in 1979 when the Vettters added grain-cleaning and storage facilities to serve small-scale, organic farmers and specialty organic food distributors and processors in the region.

In 1987, The Grain Place transitioned again, being renamed Grain Place Foods with the addition of value-added manufacturing services.

Today, Grain Place Foods — www.grainplacefoods.com — employs 24 people, several of whom have been with the company for more than 15 years. Grain Place Foods products include organic, specialty grains from barley, flaxseed and millet to quinoa, rye and triticale. There

are even some non-grain items like freeze-dried blueberries, cane sugar and cold-pressed vanilla extract.

I think Grain Place Foods has an amazing story, and I am continually impressed by the creativity and innovation shown by people who are brave enough to question the status quo and determined enough to step out on their own, often in the face of immense criticism or even ridicule.

Reading back into his obituary at first glance, Don Vetter didn't seem to have an extraordinary youth or another reason that would predispose him to change his life's course at age 33. He was active in 4-H as a teenager, showing cattle and doing livestock judging. Of course, a lot of it could have something to do with his innate temperament and the childhood environment that his parents gave him.

I'm just speculating, but it seems like Don probably had parents who encouraged him to think outside of the box and that his pursuance of a college education gave him additional foundation in that area. He definitely had a sense of honor to his country in his military service and also a sense of responsibility in supporting his family. And he just seemed like someone who was inclined to be active in a lot of different creative ventures, someone with an entrepreneurial spirit, if you will.

I like seeing where people's life journeys take them. I find it fascinating. And Don Vetter's life story is definitely worth reading about.

Donald Vetter

Donald Vetter, 94, of Marquette, passed away on March 11, 2015, in Aurora.

Funeral services were held March 14th at the Aurora United Methodist Church.

Interment was in the Aurora Cemetery. To send condolences, visit his full obituary at <http://highbymortuary.com/vetterd0311.html>.

Donald Roy Vetter was born to George Arthur and Inez Lenore (Hill) Vetter near Murphy on September 12, 1920. Donald grew up near Aurora, where he was active in 4-H showing cattle and judging livestock, and attended country school and graduated from Aurora High School in 1939.

He then attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, in the ROTC for two years. He graduated from the Lincoln Aeronautical Institute in 1941. Donald enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 serving during World War II in the South Pacific in the 5th Photographic Technician Squadron. Donald was Honorably Discharged on November 24, 1945.

Donald was married to Mary Alice Lewis on March 9, 1946, at Colorado Springs, Colorado. They had four children. Donald worked as a traveling salesman. They lived in Aurora, before moving to a farm near Marquette, where he farmed until the early 1960s. Upon moving to Marquette, he managed the grain elevator until 1964. He was vice-president of Hy-Brid Sales Company in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and moved there in 1965. Mary Alice passed away on August 3, 1970. Donald returned to Aurora in 1971 and worked for Century Manufacturing until he returned to the farm near Marquette in 1979.

He and his son, David, started The Grain Place, Inc. where he served as the CEO until his death.

On February 21, 1981, Donald married Marie Lienert at Longmont, Colorado. They lived on a farm near Marquette. Marie passed away on September 14, 1996.

Donald volunteered as a 4-H leader where he taught photography. He attended the United Methodist Church in Aurora. He was also a member of Prairie Plains Resource Institute and the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society.



“NSAS lost a true pioneer of organics and sustainable Agriculture, one of NSAS's founding fathers and a great friend. We were all saddened to here of Don Vetter's passing. He was a great man who loved his family, God, the land and photography and never knew a stranger. He start Grain Place Foods with his son, David. It was always great to visit Don when visiting to The Grain Place, hearing stories from the past and what was new with him and his family. That is what we love about the NSAS — we are one, big family. Don will be missed, but it is our job to continue his work making the land better for the next generation than how we received it.”

~ NSAS Board of Directors

By Elizabeth Sarno

Give a farm tour... You'll mow your lawn

I never pass up an opportunity to attend a farm tour, even when I think I am too busy. Yes, farm tours are always offered when I need to put up hay or move cattle. However, when things are growing that is the best time to show people what you are doing on your farm.

I always learn something new or get inspired to try a different approach or production practice. Another good reason to host a farm tour is you will learn things about your own farm. People will ask questions that get you thinking and defending your practices.

You may ask yourself: Why am I doing this? Or how can I do this better? I think we walk by the same place everyday and lose a sense of newness. Hosting a farm tour gives you the opportunity to have a fresh pair of eyes sharing your farm. I find it invigorating.

Last June, I had that inspiring moment at Dennis Wacker's tour of his Prairie's Edge Organic Farm near Plainview. Dennis is new to organic but not new to innovation. His cropping system is a strip-cropping system of corn, soybean and oats.

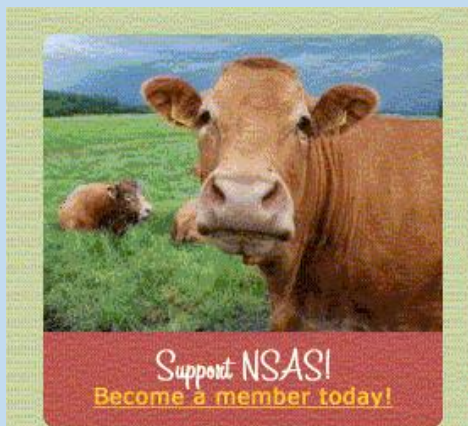
It was Dennis's appreciation of the environment and pollinators that inspired me to look at my own farm and get excited about areas that I could put into permanent pollinator habitat. I had been wanting to do this for a long time, so seeing the benefits of Dennis's habitat has me planning out my own this spring.

Dennis shared his farming philosophy and demonstrated his cultural practices. He even set up his cultivator, so if someone wanted to try cultivating, they could give it a try. This was an excellent opportunity to ask questions and converse with other organic farmers.

If you are still making excuses why you cannot give a farm tour, here's one more reason: You will get your lawn mowed at least once this season.



Raise money for NSAS while you search or shop [online!](#)



Please invite your friends and customers to help support sustainable agriculture by joining as a **NSAS Member!**

What a great deal!

- ◆ A list serv connecting you with hundreds of experts in every field.
- ◆ A conference with amazing people and fascinating topics.
- ◆ A newsletter to keep you informed, connected to farmers and help you remember all of the great ideas learned through experience.
- ◆ Discounted rates at conferences and events in sustainable agriculture.
- ◆ A network of friends for fun!

Each of these should be priceless, but NSAS only asks \$45 per year. **You** may choose a membership at higher level.

NSAS creates more food farmers!

Memberships effective March 1 to Feb. 28.

Membership information and payment available on our website: www.nebsusag.org/

OR send a check in **any** amount to:

NSAS
C/O Jo Lowe, Treasurer
5321 Deer Ridge Drive
Eagle NE 68347

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS:

Looking for recipes for NSAS Cookbook

Hello NSAS Friends,

This year, we are celebrating our 30th year as NSAS — and 40th year as an organization, previously known as Nebraska Organic Agriculture Association! All year, we will be sharing tidbits of history with you as well as sharing ideas for the future of our small, but mighty, organization.

To provide former, current and future NSAS members a book for this special anniversary, a full-color, hard-cover commemorative cookbook is in development that will be available for the 2017 NSAS Healthy Farms Conference. A project this big will take time for our small volunteer committee to develop, and we definitely need your input.

We are asking for submissions from you, our membership! What will make this commemorative cookbook special and different is that we are planning to weave in a narrative history of NSAS and highlight people, projects and events that have made our ag and food communities grow through time.

We would like to ask you for pictures, stories, videos or reflections that we would be able to use as “raw data” for this project. Additionally we would love you to share that special *scratch* recipe that has been handed down through your family.

For more information or to send submissions electronically, email NSAScookbook@gmail.com.

Please submit your contributions NO LATER THAN September 30, 2015.

Thank you for your support and contributions. We look forward to publishing a high-quality, commemorative cookbook that will stay with your family for generations.

NSAS Commemorative Cookbook Committee members,

**Krista Dittman
Joe Roberts
Caryl Guisinger**

NSAS Commemorative Cookbook — Recipe Submission

Standard Abbreviations

c.	cup
ctn.	carton or container
doz.	dozen
env.	envelope
gal.	gallon
lb.	pound
oz.	ounce
pkg.	package
pt.	pint
qt.	quart
T.	tablespoon
tsp.	teaspoon

Recipe Categories

- appetizer
- beverage
- bread
- dairy
- dessert
- eggs
- fermented
- fruit
- grain
- main dish
- salad
- snack
- vegetable

Submission Information

Please include the following:

- Full first and last name of contributor(s)
- Farm name, if applicable
- Email
- Phone number
- Recipe category/categories

Since all recipes included in this commemorative cookbook are SCRATCH RECIPES HANDED DOWN IN YOUR FAMILY, please include a short history of your recipe — please, no more than 500 characters long.

Recipe Writing Tips

To ensure recipes are accurate, clear, and uniform, please:

1. Include a descriptive title.
2. List ingredients in the order used and make sure all ingredients are included in the directions. Use as many LOCAL ingredients as possible.
3. Include all amounts and container sizes: 2 (8-oz.) bottles, 1 (6-oz.) package. Use parentheses to separate amounts.
4. Abbreviate measurements in the ingredient list (see standard list to the left), but spell them out in the directions.
5. Be consistent with names and ingredients.
6. Use ingredient names in the directions, for example, use “Combine flour and sugar” rather than statements such as “Combine the first two ingredients.”
7. Include temperatures and all cooking, chilling, baking or freezing times.
8. Make sure ingredients and directions are clear, thorough and accurate. Since all recipe submissions are scratch recipes, don’t make the assumption that the reader knows how to “make yeast bread,” for example.
9. Write the recipe directions in paragraph format. Please do not submit recipes in steps, columns or charts.
10. Use this format: Times New Roman, 11 point font, 1½ line spacing; no bold, italics or other formatting, please.

NSAS members may submit more than one recipe, although only one recipe per family will be published. Recipe submission does not guarantee publication. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines may be rejected.

NSAS Member News

Share what's going on in your lives, your communities, and on your farms. We are especially interested in:

- Happenings on your farm or ranch, such as research/experiments you're trying, new practices, varieties or breeds you're putting into place, fields days, successes and lessons learned.
- Community or family events, such as marriages, graduations, births, community activities, and educational pursuits.

Send contributions to healthyfarms@gmail.com or by postal mail to: NSAS, 414 CR 15, Ceresco, NE 68017.

Recipe Submission Form

Please follow the above guidelines and submit this recipe submission form to: NSAScookbook@gmail.com

Submission Information

Contributor(s) (first and last name):

Farm Name (if applicable):

Email:

Phone Number(s):

Recipe Title:

Recipe Category/Categories (see above categories):

Ingredient List:

Instructions (*paragraph format*):

Recipe History (*500 character limit*):

Opinion: Why the slow spread of cover crop use?

I look outside the window of my home, with cornfields lining three sides of my pastured property, and I don't see a cover crop in sight. Come to think of it, I've never seen a cover crop in use with my own eyes. I've only seen photographs and Powerpoint presentations at farm conferences.

I hear that cover crop use is growing, though still slowly. While the CTIC Cover Crop Survey reports a 30% increase in cover crop adoption per year, I've read elsewhere that the number of acres where farmers use cover crops still accounts for less than 2% of the total farmland in the United States. Some cover crop use is better than none, though, and obvious from tools such as the CTIC survey, cover crop use is steadily increasing.

Everyone knows that people, especially as they grow older, don't like change. Once they find something that works, the idea is "don't fix what isn't broke." And to many farmers, especially where I live, not using cover crops or other alternative farming practices is a reflection of living to this motto. Tillage, irrigation, ample herbicide and fertilizer use has been working for decades and continues to work, in their minds, so there isn't a need for them to do an overhaul on their crop management system to incorporate cover crops.

And I can see that point. I could point out to a local farmer the water, herbicide and fertilizer savings that could be seen with cover crop usage, and he would likely nod his head in agreement but without any real inclination to change his farming practices — because it's not an urgent need.

There is also, undoubtedly, a sharp learning curve that comes with changing farming tactics from a purely conventional, input-heavy model to one that relies less so on commercial chemicals to get the same job done. However, that yield boost that comes with cover crops may change some minds. An average of 11 bushels per acre more in corn fields on a drought year, and 5 bushels per acre more on a normal-moisture year!

But cover crops aren't viewed as easy by conventional producers. There is cost involved, particularly in seed cost, and cover crops are management-intensive. Producers have to plan their crop rotations out years ahead of time, and it's not just planting to be aware of but also termination and how the cash crop fits into the cover crop timeline.

That's why there are programs like NRCS's EQIP that provides financial assistance to producers who want to get into cover crops. It's a lot easier to manage the risk of trying something new when

you're not funding the whole "experiment" with your own money.

I've heard great things about cover crops, that despite the challenges of learning a new way of doing things, that there are great benefits — both in the short- and long-term. And as a sustainable-minded person, I would like to see more farmers trying out and adopting cover crops and other alternative methods of commodity crop production.

But I also know from experience in social justice that for something like cover crops to be successful, it is the slow but steady growth you want to see. Something that comes quickly is probably going to burn out quickly, but the changes that are going to stay and make it are going to have some growing pains with it. Producers have to see their neighbors have success with a different way of doing things before they're going to try it, which is why cover crops are slowly making its way across the Midwest.

I hope it will only be a few years before I look out on the corn field across the road from my house and see a different kind of crop growing there — a cover crop protecting and nurturing the soil in preparation of the next corn crop.

I'll keep watching.

Opinion piece by Rita Brhel