



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

June 2011
Number 131

In This Issue

A Word from the President	1
High Tunnels in Nebraska	2
Holistic Management....	3
Conference Sponsors	4
Values for 10 cents/day.....	4
Events	5
Aid & Assistance with flooding....	5
Cover Crop Mixtures	6
Cover Crops continued	7
Women Caring for the Land....	8
Farm to School	9
A Friend Passes	10
2012 Conference Update	11
Agro Forestry Update	11

The NSAS Newsletter is a bimonthly publication of Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, a private, non-profit organization. Our mission is to promote agriculture & food systems that build healthy land, people, communities & quality of life, for present & future generations. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform its readers about sustainable agriculture issues, resources & activities. Members receive this newsletter as a benefit.

And now, a word from the President

By Joe Mazour

I believe NSAS is in for a great year we have a great board with several new members who were introduced in the last newsletter and at the annual conference. The Board of Directors has extensive knowledge and passion for NSAS and sustainable agriculture as a whole that will help us grow as an organization. We have a great membership which relies on our neighbors and fellow farmers if someone needs to know about something they are trying new or something they have been doing for a while. There is someone in the NSAS membership that has probably tried it and can help so they don't make the same mistakes. It seems in today's agriculture realm this doesn't happen as much as everybody is out for themselves. We are a community. We are a family.

I also believe that in this time of getting ready for the 2012 Farm Bill we are in the right place at the right time because more people want to know where their food comes from and are willing to spend money for the products they want and can feel good about. I think the 2012 Farm Bill should be "What's for dinner, you decide!" instead of what we have now "the more crops you produce the more government payments you get." I always wondered how this is sustainable. This is where we come in. We need to produce the food people want in a sustainable way that is good for the farmers, the consumer, and the environment. This is the only way we can get more new farmers. I wish everybody had the chance to produce a product that is good enough that you are willing to put your farm or ranches name on it and are able to make a living doing what you love to do. I have learned a lot being President of NSAS and look forward in serving each and everyone in the future. We have a great thing going and the future is as bright as ever.

The board and staff of NSAS would like to tell everyone in this busy time to be safe and take time to tell everyone you work around thanks for all they do. I know this doesn't always get said but without someone to help, it makes your day to day jobs a lot harder. I know this first hand as my father has injured his back and it has made a lot more work for me. When you have worked around someone for a long time it seems like they know what you are thinking and the work gets done that much faster when you are a team with the same goal in mind. I hope everyone has had a safe and great spring and look forward in getting to see a lot of you soon.

NSAS Board & Staff

Joe Mazour, President

Jim Peterson, Vice-Pres.

Jo Lowe, Treasurer

Jessica Jones, Secretary

Kevin Fulton

Martin Kleinschmit

Laurie Hodges

Bob & Kristine Bernt

Ben Schole

Scott Willet

Rita Brhel

Gary Lesoing

Roger Wilson

Charles Wortmann

Brian O'Malley

Advisory

Laura Demmel

Alexandra McClanahan

Staff

William Powers,
Executive Director
402.525.7794

HealthyFarms@gmail.com

Jill Wubben,
Bookkeeper & Membership
jillw@hartel.net

Sandy Patton,
Farm-to-School Coordinator
sandyp@threeriverwb.net

www.HealthyFarms.org

High Tunnels in Nebraska

Increasing the Availability of Nebraska's Specialty Crops through High Tunnels

A series of webinars and workshops are being offered as part of a Specialty Crop Block Grant the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society received in partnership with the UNL Nebraska Cooperative Development Center. "Increasing the Availability of Nebraska's Specialty Crops through High Tunnels" aims to increase the number of producers in Nebraska using these high tunnel technologies. The objectives of this project are to: Increase awareness about high tunnels and how they can be used to extend specialty crop production in Nebraska. Increase the technical skill level among specialty crop farmers growing or starting to grow crops in high tunnels.

Workshops which include tours of high tunnels have been scheduled for June 28th & 29th

June 28th - Lincoln, NE East Campus Union 5:30pm - 9:30pm (Register by June 24th - there is a \$5 parking permit fee)

June 29th - Norfolk, NE (Place TBD) 5:30pm - 9:30pm (Register by June 24th)

These trainings are FREE but registration is requested to ensure there are plenty of materials for participants. The workshops will provide more in-depth training building off of the webinars, which will include production and marketing ideas.

Register to William at healthyfarms@gmail.com

Recorded Webinars

Webinar 1:

High Tunnels & Cold Frames: Tools to Extend the Growing Season, Presented by Stacy Adams UNL Extension (Recorded April 20, 2011)

<http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/p26096626/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal>

Webinar 2:

Choosing the Right High Tunnel- Components and Design, presented by Stacy Adams UNL Extension (Recorded May 18, 2011)

<http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/p40393250/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal>

Working on a Sustainable Farm!

I am interested in working on a farm. My goal is to open a sort of community farm table restaurant that features local & sustainable food & want more hands on experience with the food itself. It is very important to me I work with those who are mindful in their farming practices. Hard working & enthusiastic. Call Jacob at 402-416-3047 or email jacobcammack2@gmail.com

Creating a Sustainable Civilization

*An Introduction to
The Holistic Management ©
Decision-Making Process*

By Allan Savory



Copyright 1996
All Rights Reserved

WHY HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT?

- Improving soil health and biodiversity of rangelands and pastures.
- Increasing grazing and wildlife capacity.
- Increasing annual profits and enhancing livelihoods.
- Optimally using rainfall and conserving water.
- Growing healthier crops and achieving higher yields.
- Reversing desertification in brittle environments.
- Breaking the cycle of food and water insecurity.
- Enhancing family relationships.
- Resisting and positively affecting global climate change

HOLISTIC LAND MANAGEMENT

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1832 WEST 9TH ST
HASTINGS, NE 68901
(308) 379-1361

This program is being presented independently by Bob Shields and Paul Swanson, who assume full responsibility for its content and all related financial, contractual and other obligations. Neither Mr. Shields nor Mr. Swanson are employees or under contract with Albuquerque-based Holistic Management International.

Photos and text in this brochure are provided by Holistic Management International and are used with the express permission of HMI.



healthy land.
sustainable future.

HOLISTIC LAND MANAGEMENT

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



INCREASING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND LAND

Phone: 308.379.1361

Enhance our precious land and water
resources with Holistic Land
Management.



2011 Conference Sponsors

We would like to thank the following individuals and businesses who sponsored the 2011 Rural Advantage & Healthy Farms Conference!

The Grain Place, www.grainplacefoods.com/

The mission of Grain Place Foods is to provide to its customers grain products that are grown and produced in an ecologically sustainable and socially responsible manner - with the conviction that how your food is produced does matter! Dave Vetter, 888-714-7246, DVetter@grainplacefoods.com

Northeast Nebraska RC&D, www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/rcd/northeast_rcd.html

The mission of the Northeast Nebraska RC&D is to provide leadership by seeking technical and financial assistance to create new opportunities in agriculture, employment, area development and protection of the environment. Martin Kleinschmit. 402-254-3310, martink@hartel.net

Roberts Seed Inc.

We process grain for seed, feed & human consumption. We supply certified organic, non-GMO, & specialty grain & grain related products to domestic & international markets. We understand the processing methods & equipment needed to insure consistent, high quality products that meet our customer's specifications. Joe and Leisha Roberts. 308-743-2565, robertsseed@gtmc.net

Slow Food Nebraska, www.facebook.com/SlowFoodNebraska Crystal Powers, slowfoodnebraska@gmail.com

Great Plains RC&D, www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/rcd/nebraska_great_plains_rcd.html

The mission of the Great Plains Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is to serve as models of positive, proactive leadership for other rural towns in the Midwest region, sharing resources, successes, and opportunities to energize the area. Scott Willet. 402-367-0510, scott.willet@ne.usda.gov

Blue River Hybrids, www.blueriverorgseed.com/

At Blue River Hybrids, we are committed to producing seed that offers exceptional value to organic farmers in North America. Cheri Johnson. 800-370-7979, cheri@blueriverorgseed.com

Center for Rural Affairs, www.cfra.org

Our mission is to establish strong rural communities, social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and genuine opportunity for all while engaging people in decisions that affect the quality of their lives and the future of their communities.

Open Harvest Natural Foods Cooperative Grocery, www.openharvest.coop/

Open Harvest is a member-owned retail cooperative dedicated to equitable employment practices, support of local producers, consumer education, and sustainable agricultural practices. Jackie Barnhardt. 402-475-9069, outreach@openharvest.coop

Lower Platte South NRD, www.lpsnrd.org

"The general purpose of the Lower Platte South NRD shall be to conserve, develop and manage the water and land resources of the District for the common good of all people."

Glen Johnson. 402-476-2729, gjohnson@lpsnrd.org

Support Your Values for less than 10 cents per day!

For ten cents per day you can get one small cup of coffee per week, a happy meal per month, or if you are lucky you may get one tank of gas per year. I have observed people dropping a dime on the floor and not even exerting the energy to pick it up. Though ten cents may not buy a lot in today's economy, that is all it costs to share your values through NSAS publications & activities. If you are not a member, consider joining NSAS. If you are a member, consider building NSAS membership through a gift membership. Email Jill today to find out how, jillw@hartel.net, or visit <http://nebsusag.org/join.shtml>

Events, Opportunities & Listings

Pollinator Week

June 20-26, 2011. National and International. Pollinator Week has now grown to be an international celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles. Pollinator Week is a week to get the importance of pollinators' message out to as many people as possible. The Pollinator Partnership encourages people to organize and sponsor pollinator events at their school, church, store, or garden. A list of events in states across the country is posted online at http://pollinator.org/pollinator_week_2011.htm

National Value-Added Agriculture Conference

June 26-28, 2011. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The conference is open to anyone with an interest in value-added agriculture and targets Extension personnel, university faculty, economic development agencies and other service providers. The focus of the 2011 conference will be the economic impact of value-added agriculture and will include sessions related to direct marketing, value-added processing and supply and distribution channels. <http://guest.cvent.com/d/pdqggd>

Coming Home to Farm Farmer-Veteran Retreat

July 15-16. Des Moines, Iowa. This retreat for veterans starting out in all aspects of the agricultural industry will be centered between Des Moines & Ames & will focus on organic & sustainable farming practices. Besides tours of organic & sustainable grain, vegetable, pork & wine production, classes will be given on how to become organically certified & how to turn production techniques into marketing advantage. This retreat is free for all veterans & active-duty military personnel interested in or currently farming. Materials, all meals & a campsite. www.crazyroosterfarm.com/ <http://www.farmvetco.org/latest-news/>

Nebraska Poultry Growers Cooperative

West Point, Nebraska. It is a poultry processing center where you can process your poultry for legal resale in grocery stores, institutions and farmers markets, and the Nebraska Food Coop within the state. For more information contact Mark Kvam at 402.685.5263

Involvement with Sustainable Ag.

We are Roger & Sharon Kappelman & we live near Grand Island. We are interested employment in the organic area - farming, greenhouse -whatever might be available. We want to be involved in organics & learn more about it. Roger has been involved in farming his whole life. He has been working for a Valley Irrigation dealer for 18 years. Has been a truck driver for many years & currently has his CDL. Operated many types of big equipment. Has done carpenter work, cement work, mechanics. Lots of experience with cattle and hogs. Email is rskap@charter.net. Phone is 402-886-2768.

Aid & Assistance Available for farmers affected by the flooding

NSAS is offering aid and assistance for any farmers affected by the flooding. The board and staff of NSAS, as well as a dedicated pool of volunteers are ready and willing to assist. If you know of someone who needs assistance or if you yourself need assistance please contact us today at [402.525.7794](tel:402.525.7794). You do not have to be a member of NSAS to need aid or assistance, nor farm a certain way. Anyone who needs help, please let us know, and please let us know how we can help. We are, after all, all in this together. Also, if you would be interested in helping assist farmers affected by the flooding in Nebraska we could also use volunteers.



OCIA News

Organic Crop Improvement Association, Nebraska Chapter #1 Newsletter

OCIA NE #1 Board of Directors

Terry Mosel, President
Page, NE
402.338-5321

Jerry Lahners, Vice President
Hebron, NE
402.356-2023

Ken Thiltges, Secretary
Rulo, NE
402.245.5460

Gail Lockard, Treasurer
Lincoln, NE
402.477.2128

Marvin Lange
Fordyce, NE
402.357.2150

Neil Reiners
Juniata, NE
402-744-2070

Joe Roberts
Axtell, NE
308-743-2565

Crop Improvement Committee
Tami Highstreet, Coordinator
Larry Stanislav, Chair, Linwood, NE
Mike Ostry, Bruno, NE

Tami Highstreet, Chapter Administrator
2766 E Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
402.474.0113
tamih_events@yahoo.com

OCIA News contact:
Liz Sarno, UNL Extension Educator
Organic Project Coordinator
Email: www.esarno2@unl.edu
Cell: 402-309-0944

OCIA Research and Education, Inc
Angela Tunink, Executive Director
1340 N. Cotner Blvd.
Lincoln, NE 68505
402-477-2323, Ext. 320
Email: atunink@ocia.org
Web: <http://www.ocia.org/RE>

Cover Crop Mixtures: Increasing Diversity and Improving Weed Management in Organic Cropping Systems

Sam Wortman

Many organic farmers are looking for early season management practices that improve weed suppression and crop competitiveness while minimizing fuel consumption and the number of field passes required by heavy machinery. There is also growing interest in management practices that enhance biodiversity across the farm landscape. To meet both of these growing demands in the organic farming community cover crop mixtures have great potential, but there are many practical management questions that need to be addressed. For example: *Which cover crop species should be included in mixtures?* – and – *When and how should the cover crops be terminated to maximize agronomic and environmental benefits?* In 2010, researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln received a three-year Ceres Trust Organic Research Grant to investigate potential answers to these and many related research questions on cover crop mixtures.

The goal of this project is to develop a cropping system and cultural practices that will enable the profitable use of cover crop mixtures on organic farms in Nebraska and throughout the Midwest. However, cover crop plantings in the Midwest are typically limited due to the long growing season required of our main summer annual agronomic crops, corn and soybean. In Lincoln, NE the average first and last freeze are April 27th and October 6th, respectively. Because corn and soybeans are typically planted prior to the third week of May and harvested in mid- to late-October, many farmers are left with a narrow window, if any, for growing cover crops. As a result, farmers and researchers are forced to develop creative methods for incorporating cover crops into corn- and soybean-based rotations. One potential method for overcoming this challenge is the use of early-spring planted cover crops, an option that is investigated in this research project.

Many previous research studies have demonstrated the weed suppressive potential and fertility contributions of individual cover crop species, but the value of diverse cover crop mixtures has received less attention in the scientific community. The objective of this study was to determine the effects of increasing cover crop diversity and two cover crop termination methods on weed suppression, soil nitrogen availability, soil water content, and grain yield within a certified organic sunflower – soybean – corn crop rotation. To accomplish this objective, researchers are conducting a three-year field experiment at the UNL Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, NE. In this study spring-planted mixtures of 2, 4, 6, and 8 cover crop species are planted in late-March, terminated in late-May using a field disk or sweep plow V-blade undercutter, and grain crops are planted within one week. Cover crop mixtures are a 1:1 ratio of species from the mustard and legume families. For example, the 4-species cover crop mixture includes two legume species, hairy vetch and field pea, and two mustard species, Idagold mustard and Pacific Gold mustard. The seeding rate for each species in a cover crop mixture is determined by taking the recommended seeding rate as a monoculture and dividing by the number of species in the mixture.

Questions, contact Sam directly at, sam.wortman@huskers.unl.edu o 402-981-8037

Continued on Page 7

Research results during the first two years of this study have been promising. Within the mixtures, the mustard species have been much more productive than the legume species in all years of this study. This suggests that mustard species are an excellent choice for achieving maximum biomass and soil coverage during the early spring months in eastern Nebraska. In 2009, cover crop termination with the sweep plow undercutter only decreased weed biomass by 4% ($\pm$ 2.5% standard error) relative to the no cover crop control treatment at 34 days after planting cash crops. However, the combined effects of increasing cover crop diversity and termination with the sweep plow undercutter substantially increased weed suppression at 23 days after cash crop planting in 2010; growth of the 8-species mixture and termination with the sweep plow undercutter reduced weed biomass by 46% ($\pm$ 12.6% standard error) relative to the no cover crop control treatment. In addition to the weed management benefits of undercutting cover crops, this termination method also increased soil nitrate availability relative to cover crop termination with a field disk. Full soil incorporation of the cover crop residue with the field disk resulted in soil nutrient immobilization and obvious nitrogen deficiency in the cash crops throughout early vegetative growth. All cover crop mixtures reduced soil water content prior to main crop planting, while cover crop termination with the sweep plow undercutter conserved soil water by as much as 7.3% ($\pm$ 0.2% standard error) compared to termination with a field disk during early cash crop growth. Most importantly, cover crop termination with the sweep plow undercutter increased corn and soybean yields by as much as 32% ($\pm$ 7% standard error) and 34% ($\pm$ 16% standard error) compared to the no cover crop control treatment, respectively. These research results suggest that cover crop mixtures managed as a surface mulch have the potential to increase on-farm biological diversity, while also providing substantial agronomic benefits to the system.

There are currently on-farm trials underway on two organic farms in eastern Nebraska to test the effectiveness of spring-planted cover crop mixtures compared to individual cover crop species. Larry Stanislav of Linwood, NE is comparing biomass and nutrient differences between his traditional field pea monoculture green manure crop and a field pea/dwarf rape mixture. Larry was also planning to compare a single mustard species with a four species mustard mixture planted prior to soybean for improved weed control, but quickly found that a late cover crop planting (May 9th) does not allow enough time for growth of these cover crop species prior to soybean planting in early June. Dave Welsch of Milford, NE experimented this spring with a gradient of increasing cover crop diversity by comparing an oat monoculture with mixtures of three and five cover crop species. While Dave was able to plant these cover crops in late-March, he found that even by May 16th (when Dave was ready to plant corn in this field) there was a relatively small amount of cover crop biomass growing in his field. This was a relatively cool spring, but these results also emphasize the importance of delaying traditional planting dates to maximize growth and potential agronomic benefits of a spring-planted cover crop.



Cover crop mixture research trial at the University of Nebraska Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, NE. Results of cover crop termination on May 22, 2009 with a sweep plow V-blade undercutter (middle) and field disk (left and right) can be seen above.



Cover crop mixture research trial at the University of Nebraska ARDC near Mead, NE. Results of cover crop termination on May 22, 2009 with a sweep plow V-blade undercutter (middle) & field disk (left & right).

Women Caring for the Land

Women who own or manage farmland in Saunders, Lancaster, Sarpy Douglas, Cass & Butler and surrounding counties are invited to participate in a free conservation discussion and field tour on Thursday, June 30, from 8:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the Ceresco Covenant Church in Ceresco. The program is called Women Caring for the Land. Women own almost a third of farmland in Nebraska, and often express strong conservation values in meetings and surveys. However, many are unsure of exactly how to reach their conservation goals and what resources are available to help them. Women Caring for the Land offers a peer-to-peer, informal discussion format to allow women landowners to talk about their individual land stewardship goals, facilitated by women conservation experts who can share resources available such as USDA cost-share programs, state loans, and other tools. All interested women are welcome, including owners, operators and inheritors of farmland, regardless of their degree of knowledge about conservation. A free lunch will be provided. In order for us to get an accurate meal and transportation count, please RSVP by Friday, June 24, by [402.525.7794](tel:402.525.7794). Our meeting begins with registration and coffee at 8:30 a.m. At the Ceresco Covenant Church, 208 West Pine Street, Ceresco. Conservation topics will include cover crops, pasture management, prairie plantings and more. After lunch, the afternoon will feature a field tour to see innovative practices at nearby farms. We will finish the day with a wrap-up and dessert around 3:00 p.m. This session of Women Caring for the Land is sponsored by Women, Food and Agriculture Network in partnership with the Center for Rural Affairs, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and assistance from the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. The series is funded by a grant from the USDA's North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.

Farm2School

Progress continues to be made during the summer months to connect the four pilot schools, Central City Public, Auburn Public, Centura Public and Norris School District with food producers in their area through the Nebraska Sustainable Ag Society and the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative Farm2School program.

“By the end of this project we hope to get local foods into several other schools in addition to the four pilot schools,” said Sandy Patton, who is working with several producers on the project. “There are several foods that could be cost competitive for schools to purchase.”

The Northeast Iowa Farm to School Chapter compiled a list of 15 foods that they are targeting as foods that local farmers can produce at a price point that is competitive with the conventional market. The list consists of apples, broccoli, carrots, bell peppers, red and green cabbage, cauliflower, cherry and field tomatoes, radish, summer and winter squash, table grapes, cucumbers, watermelon and cantaloupe and honeydew. While other products are certainly a possibility, the list compiled by our counterparts from the neighboring state provides a good starting point to start connecting Nebraska local food producers with local schools.

The Farm2School program began this year by serving local dairy products in all four pilot schools. Featured products included milk from

Praireland Dairy in Firth, NE and cheese from Jisa Farmstead Cheese in Brainard, NE which were delivered by the Thompson Food Company located in Grand Island, Nebraska.

“One of the hurdles for local food producers,” stated Patton, “can be the distribution system.” Thompson Food Company is a distributor for most of Nebraska’s schools, many restaurants and other institutions. A group of producers and Farm2School representatives recently toured the Thompson Food Company facility and met with Tom Wald, VP of Sales and Marketing to discuss plans of working with the Thompson Company. Wald stated that “the company is very excited about being able to offer local foods to their long list of clients.”

This type of distribution may not work for everyone but for anyone interested in finding out more about this or the Farm2School program contact Sandy Patton at sandyp@threeriverwb.net.

Work is also being done to develop educational materials and tips for schools and producers. These resources can be found on the website: http://localfoods.nebraska.edu/nebraska_foods/farm2school/ or by contacting Caitlin Falcone at the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative.

By: Sandy Patton

NSAS Farm2School Coordinator,
sandyp@threeriverwb.net

A Friend Passes.

A Tribute to Terry Gompert, Fellow Extension Educator



By: Liz Sarno

Even if you had just met Terry for a few minutes you would have felt comfortable with him. He had a way of making you feel special. He truly cared about the people he met and wanted to help them find solutions to their problem or encouraged them to try different things. His knowledge about cattle and natural grazing systems inspired many of us. He was a great teacher, at so many of his workshops you would see that twinkle in his eye as he challenged you to think outside of your comfort zone and try something different.

I have known Terry Gompert for years and instantly felt a kinship to him because we both agreed that cows are ruminants and should eat what they were made to "grass". However, Terry took this concept and made it his own and took this message to so many of us on how to improve our farms and ranches and system of grazing. He introduced us to Holistic Management, Intensive Grazing, Mob grazing, using milk as a fertilizer to improve pastures – he just made you stop and look at cattle and how you fed them in a whole new different light.

When I joined the University six years ago as an Extension Educator I remember sitting down next to Terry at my first statewide extension meeting and having him joke that "finally there was someone more controversial at the university than me". Terry was not swayed by present views he was visionary and kept true to his vision, a vision which made perfect sense to finish cattle on grass. He showed us practical, sustainable ways to work within our farm's natural system and by doing so we could pass down our farms and ranches to the next generation. He gave workshops on how grazing cattle can protect our farm's natural resources and how to eliminate the need for costly infrastructure and best of all how these low-stress systems improved the health of our cattle thus letting us and our families enjoy them.

We have lost one of the nation's most valuable resources for grass-finish beef but we have not lost his message. Terry has started a movement in natural livestock systems and has inspired and challenged us to continue to think outside the box. It is not often we get to know such a Hero in our lifetime. I want to thank Terry for his many years of service to us and challenge us all to keep his message alive.

NSAS Newsletter Update

After careful consideration and lengthy discussion on behalf of the NSAS Board of Directors and Staff we have decided to continue the Bi-Monthly Newsletter as an electronic newsletter. This means it will be available on the website, and/or by email. A primary factor in this decision is reducing our costs as well as reducing our impact on the environment. Periodic mailings on upcoming events and the conference will proceed as normal. If you wish to continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter you must contact William at 402.525.7794 or healthyfarms@gmail.com. Hard copies of the newsletter will be made available for members and by request only. Please contact us today to let us know.

Save the Date! February 10th & 11th, 2012

We are excited to announce the date and location for the next annual conference. The 2012 Rural Advantage & Healthy Farms Conference will be held in Nebraska City at the Lied Lodge & Conference Center on February 10th and 11th, 2012. We are also pleased to announce that Fred Kirschenmann will be headlining the conference.

Nominations for the annual awards are due by November 1st. Awards include; Beginning Farmer of the Year, Educator of the Year, and Farm Family of the Year. Please send nominations to me at healthyfarms@gmail.com

Interested in doing a presentation? Have a particular topic in mind for a session? Let us know!

The room rate for this year is \$89 for a single and \$99 for a double. The rate is good from February 7th to February 12th, so make it a vacation! To reserve a room call, 800-546-5433 and reserve a room under "The Rural Advantage / Healthy Farms reservations."

USDA Releases Plan to Promote Agroforestry as Means to Improve the Environment, Make Better Use Of Land & Help Landowners Find Other Sources Of Revenue

WASHINGTON, June 6, 2011 – USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan today unveiled a plan that will help farmers, ranchers and woodland owners enhance productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship by using the practice of agroforestry. Agroforestry intentionally combines agriculture and forestry to create integrated and sustainable land-use systems that take advantage of the interactive benefits from combining trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock.

Merrigan unveiled the [USDA Agroforestry Strategic Framework](#) during the North American Agroforestry Conference, in Athens, Ga. The framework is the USDA guide to advance agroforestry knowledge, practices and assistance that lays the roadmap to influence the long-term health and sustainability of all lands for future generations.

"Agroforestry does not sacrifice farmland for forests or forests for farmland," Merrigan said. "Rather, agroforestry is the marriage of disciplines that, in the end, will protect our natural resources, benefit our communities and allow for the development of other sources of income for farmers, ranchers and woodland owners. Agroforestry can enhance values for any landowner."

Agroforestry practices may appear like a living patchwork quilt across entire watersheds. For instance, managed forest canopies in a woodland area can protect a range of crops grown for food, landscaping, and medicinal use — plants such as shiitake mushrooms, ramps, ginseng, goldenseal, curly willow and Galax. Likewise, farmers and ranchers who plant pine trees on land used for livestock and forage production can add to their profits by selling pine straw and high-value saw logs.

For more information, http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2011/06/0229.xml&navid=NEWS_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&deployment_action=retrievecontent