

October 27, 2010



University of Minnesota

West Central News

Stakeholders Participate in USDA Biomass Community Forum

Joel Tallaksen, Biomass Gasification Project Coordinator

On September 23rd, the West Central Research and Outreach Center hosted a forum for the USDA on expanding the US biofuels market. The forum followed the release of the most recent USDA plans for helping develop a biomass market throughout the country. The USDA is hosting similar meetings throughout the country to get feedback on their plans to meet federal renewable energy mandates. Preceding public questions and comments, a panel of regional stakeholders addressed issues related to creating a market for biomass. A copy of the USDA document can be found online at: <http://tinyurl.com/USDABiofuels>.

The audience included a wide variety of business, government, scientists, and farmer representatives. Commenting on the plans released by the USDA, the feeling by staff from several biomass facilities was that the USDA seemed to focus heavily on making transportation fuels from biomass. However, most facilities that are operating or being considered would use the biomass for heat or power. Looking at the wider issue of how the USDA could help establish biomass markets, most agreed that stability in the market was the most important factor. As an example, many cited the Biomass Crop Assistance Program as a case where the USDA could create some stability. However, the implementation of the BCAP program was suspended for one season to re-write program rules. The resulting instability over the last season may scare biomass suppliers away from participating in the program. The range of knowledge and experience from the audience and panelists resulted in a very good discussion of biomass issues and some areas that the

USDA may want to focus on in future revisions to their renewable energy planning.

I've given you just a small summary of the issues that were discussed, please feel free to e-mail or call me if you would more information the meetings and the report: tall0007@umn.edu or 320-589-1711.

THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone at WC for years of special experiences and the retirement event that you so kindly provided. The gift pitcher from Tokheim stoneware is inscribed "Hugnad heime er dagleg gjestebod", which says a lot. Special thanks for the dairy cow being donated to a family in the developing world through the ELCA, cash gifts of nearly \$500 split between Stevens Food Shelf and our local Habitat for Humanity chapter, and smaller gifts designated for Stevens Historical Museum and the Hort fund. Watch for me "out to pasture".



Cows help families to escape hunger for good. Cows produce milk, meat and fertilizer for farmland. Families with cows can sell milk to make a living. Some families make enough money to purchase farmland or send their children to school—an opportunity for the future that they never would have had before. Very True ---I've seen examples in Kenya and Bolivia.

Carole & Dennis



Minnesota Master Naturalist Program wins Awards

Submitted by Amy Rager, Extension Educator, Environmental Science Education

The Minnesota Master Naturalist Program has been around just five short years, but has begun to show its value in a number of ways. This past year the program has received the national award for outstanding short publication from the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (ANREP), then the Linnaeus Lists received the national Outstanding Support Materials Award from the Association of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP). Followed, more locally back home in Minnesota, the same publication was chosen to receive an award from the Minnesota Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (MANREP). and finally the team who worked to develop those materials was chosen by the Minnesota Association for Environmental Educators and Epsilon Sigma Phi to receive the state's teamwork award!

The team consists of state faculty, Rob Blair, Karen Oberhauser and John Loegering all in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation Biology, Extension Educators, Amy Rager, Andrea Lorek Strauss, Nate Meyer and Department of Natural Resources Education Coordinator, Dawn Flinn. Support staff Lynette Lothert, Julie Larson, Savannah Kisgen and Melissa Rivero are also critical players in the program's success.

The Linnaeus List series is a set of three non-comprehensive field guides to each of Minnesota's major biomes. The books each contain over 100 species/formations that are important to the ecosystem it represents, either from a biological or historical standpoint. The pocket sized field guides are being sold at bookstores throughout the state, at state park gift stores, and on line at the Extension Store.



Award Winning Publication:

ANROSP

2010 Outstanding Program Support Materials

ANREP

2010 Bronze Award - Short Publication

MNREP

2010 Outstanding Program Support Materials

Linnaeus Lists - \$5.00 each

AgCountry Auditorium

Nov. 1—Master Gardener Meeting

Nov. 3—Google Training

Seminar Room

Nov. 1, 8—Renewable Energy

Nov. 1— Hort Advisory