

# MVSKOKE FOOD

*Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative*



FRESH VEGETABLES

ENSURING QUALITY OF LIFE

Your Kitchen ~ Your Recipe

## MFSI to host Food Sovereignty “Food & Fitness” Symposium

MELODIE READER, MFSI COMMUNICATIONS

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative will host the 3rd Annual Food Sovereignty Symposium from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., February 18-19, 2011 at the Mound Building located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Okla.

The event will host a myriad of speakers concerning topic relating to this years theme “Food and Fitness.”

Keynote speakers include noted journalist and non-profit management consultant Jackleen de La Harpe, Extension Outreach Specialist and President of Kiowa Native Farms Randall Ware, Lead Coordinator for DINE, Inc. Jamescita Peshlakai and

Pawnee Nation Corn Seed Restoration Project Keeper of Seeds Deb Echo Hawk.

Many more presenters will speak concerning sustainable agriculture, grass-fed beef, organic gardening, permaculture, Farm 2 School, the Wilson Project, fitness in daily life, food policy, seed sovereignty and what other tribes are doing to retain food and seed sovereignty.

The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily with lunch provided Sat., Feb. 19, 2011.

Between



### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Monthly Events



Feb. 18-19

#### MFSI “Food & Fitness” Symposium

Multiple guest speakers will discuss hot topics in the sustainable farming and ranching industry. For more information, call Melodie Reader at (918) 752-6113, (918) 756-5915 or email [mreader@mvsokofood.org](mailto:mreader@mvsokofood.org)

Feb. 25

#### Wilson Community

Dr. Ann Wells, DVM will teach a 10-week course on Sustainable Livestock Production from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Lunch is pot luck. For more information, call Robyn Withrow at (918) 650-9221 or Rita Williams at (918) 759-1891.

March 25-26

#### Hanna Farms

Hanna Farmers and Ranchers Outreach with a Food Heritage Class. E.C. Hessom will speak. For more information, call Melodie Reader at (918) 752-6113, (918) 756-5915 or email [mreader@mvsokofood.org](mailto:mreader@mvsokofood.org)

# MFSI Staff attend 30th Annual Horticulture Industries Show in Ft. Smith, Arkansas

The staff of Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative recently attended the 30th Annual Horticulture Industries Show in Fort Smith, Ark., Jan. 14-15, 2011 along with local farmers MFSI sponsored.



**The theme this year** was “Four Seasons Farming: Meeting the Demand for Locally Grown Specialty Crops Year Round.”

Educational sessions, keynote presentations and a trade show rounded out the events. Sessions covered general topics such as Christmas tree farms, organic fruits and orchards, sustainable agriculture, public gardens, master gardeners and vegetable and farmers markets.

Keynote speakers Paul and Alison Weidiger of Au Natural Farms in Kentucky discussed the advantages of “Farming for Localvores 52 Weeks a Year.” The Weidiger’s also discussed the idea of hoop house gardening, along with traditional farming, to help expand their farming operation’s growing season to help keep up with the demand for healthy, locally-grown food utilizing organic methods.

John Lee of the USDA also spoke concerning the issues surrounding the “Know your farmer, Know your food” debate. Lee discussed the importance of knowing the farmer and their practices, which helps ensure that the buyer receives healthy and organic fruits, vegetables, grains and meats.

Throughout the sessions, attendees were able to peruse the vendor booths and network with other event attendees.

Both days, a luncheon was served utilizing foods from area growers. This helped reinforce the “buy fresh, buy local” motif, which is such an integral part of sustainable farming.

Many topics were covered during each of the concurrent sessions, but construction and utilization of high tunnel hoop houses were a large part of the event, as well as organic farming techniques, pest management, soil management, government resources, gardening with native plants, farm to school programs, weed management, botanical gardens and internet website options for growers.

“I think that the best thing I took away from the event, is that I can truly go

organic with my berries and orchard and still have means to manage my pest and fungal problems in both the garden and the green house,” said Melodie Reader, MFSI Communications, Marketing and Research Coordinator. “I really enjoyed meeting new people and learning how they maintain their farms and gardens. I am ready to take that information home and teach others how to make sustainable agriculture work for them.”

## MFSI YOUTH ROOTS Going Wild for wild onions!

MFSI Youth Roots has been going full throttle in the month of January! We have been examining the history of Wild Onions and created fact sheets for youth to take home to their parents. With over 50 youth participating from two Tulsa schools, Eufaula Dormitory, Wilson school, MFSI has began planting the seed of knowledge of the land, earth, agriculture and wellness! We hope 2 grow with our Youth ROOTS program and expand to other area youth. For more MFSI Youth, contact Cassandra Thompson at (918) 759-8334 or [cthompson@mvsokokefood.org](mailto:cthompson@mvsokokefood.org)



### FEBRUARY HEALTH TIPS

- 1.) Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains every day.
  - 2.) Limit foods and drinks high in calories, sugar, salt, fat and alcohol.
  - 3.) Incorporate exercise into your weekly regime.
- [www.cdc.gov/family/tips](http://www.cdc.gov/family/tips)

## Four Season Farming: Meeting the Demands for Locally Grown Specialty Crops Year Round

By H. June Marshall

*The Four Season Farming: Meeting the Demands for Locally Grown Specialty Crops Year Round*, 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Horticulture Industries Show, held in Fort Smith, January 14-15, 2011, emphasized the four seasons. I attended the Sustainable Agriculture educational sessions and learned from one session regarding women in Ag: The role of the woman in farming is changing. Since the Show was held in Arkansas, statistics are reflective of that state: Female farmers have increased 19 % since 2002. Nationwide, farm women are 14% of 2.2 million farm operators. Women are taking over more and more responsibilities on the farm such as: family management, decision making, community involvement, and farm production. Speaker for this session was Carrie Hirmer, Executive Director Arkansas Women in Agriculture. Next year, the conference will be held in Tulsa, so make plans to attend.

sessions, attendees will be encouraged to participate in small fitness games and exercises to help keep the blood pumping.

MFSI Staff have will have a small food sale with sour cornbread and sofke to help raise funds for services provided. Craft vendors and sustainable agriculture vendors will be located in the foyers of the Mound Building as well.

For more information on this event, please contact MFSI at (918) 756.5915.

### MFSI ATTENDS 2012 FARM BILL SUMMIT

**M**vskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Projects Manager Vicky Karhu attended the 2012 Farm Bill Summit Jan. 13 – 14, 2011, hosted by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. which focused on issues in the 2012 Farm Bill, which is currently a work-in-progress.

This invitation-only event had 116 participants, with Karhu as the only attendee from MFSI and Oklahoma. Karhu writes and manages all grant-funded programs for MFSI as the Projects Manager and participates in policy work under the Communities Creating Healthy Environments Program.

MFSI was the only non-profit group representing tribal interests at this summit. Meeting with other like-minded sustainable agriculture groups from around the country, Karhu provided input from the prospective of a grass-roots, community-based organization working with low-income and under-served farmers and ranchers in a rural setting.

“Information and ideas generated in the meeting workshops will be used in formulation of the 2012 Farm

Bill recommendations which will be submitted by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, a national organization based in Washington, D.C.,” said Karhu.

While the 2012 Farm Bill is currently being formed, many programs, which were part of the 2008 Farm Bill and are slated to be discontinued.

“A lot of funding for grant and loan programs focused on small and minority farmers are slated to be discontinued,” said Karhu. “Our Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK) is the new Chair of the House Agriculture Committee making him a powerful voice in the farm bill discussion.”

Karhu learned much at the Farm Bill Summit and spoke up as a voice for small minority and Native American farmers and ranchers on behalf of MFSI.

“The main point I learned about the 2012 Farm Bill is that those of us working with small and beginning farmers under-served communities have to work hard and lobby extensively to fight to keep the budget items that were added for these purposes in the 2008 Farm Bill,” explained Karhu. “Many of the programs will expire with the 2008

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## MFSI CORNER

Darrell Fox, Executive Director  
My Garden Spot

Greetings from the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative! Although it is cold outside and Uncle Winter continues to express the severe side of his personality, it is time to start thinking about our garden spot. Before you know it, we’ll be busy tilling, planting, watering, and expecting a great harvest. My fondest memories as a child was joining my family and extended family out in our garden. There’s just something about working together for a common cause that brings the best out of people, especially when they consider the fresh food that will be shared a few months down the road.

One of the biggest mistakes first time gardeners make is planting too much in their initial garden, and losing interest when weeds and insects start to take over the spot where they have sweated and worked. If you can identify with this, then you know that a manageable garden with fewer veggies may produce greater results. If you decide to concentrate on fewer vegetables in your garden this year, might I suggest the Three Sisters, Corn, Beans, and Squash. Our ancestors discovered that inter-planting the Three Sisters was a sustainable system that provided long-term soil fertility and a healthy diet to generations. Corn, beans, and squash were among the first important crops domesticated by Native American societies. Historically, corn has always been our primary crop. Nutritionists today confirm what we’ve always knew, corn provides the calories needed for active people. The Three Sisters grow in harmony with each other as our Tribal community does, and needs the beneficial company of her companions. Corn provides carbohydrates, and beans are loaded with protein, which balances the lack of necessary amino acids found in corn, and squash produces both carbohydrates and proteins, not to mention the oil from the seeds. Corn stalks offer a pole for the bean vines to climb. Nitrogen rich bean roots improve the fertility of the soil and the vines strengthen the corn plants when strong winds blow over her

“CORNER” continued on page 4

# Preparing early crops for Spring Markets

Getting ready for spring is no easy feat, considering the large amounts of snow and ice Oklahoma and the surrounding states have received over the past few weeks. However, area growers and producers know that time waits for no man, so preparations must be underway, in many fields and greenhouses for the upcoming season.

## Start Seeds Now

If a warm, sunny place is available, to start tomato and pepper seeds, take the time to start those seeds now. Gardening centers carry a host of trays, seeds and mediums needed to get even the most inexperienced gardener started on the path to growing healthy foods. Popular pre-started items include tomatoes, peppers, herbs and lettuces. Cole crops such as kale, turnip, spinach, brussels spouts, cauliflower, collards, kohlrabi, mustard, cabbage, broccoli and watercress are also great to

start in a warm sunny area where no danger of frost exists. This could include a hoop house, green house or bright kitchen counter.

## Cole Crops vs. Cold Crops

These crops are sometimes mistakenly used interchangeably. Cole crops are plants which belong to the mustard or Cruciferae family, while cold crops are plants which are more tolerant to colder temperatures. Cold crops include some cole crops so the mistake is easily made.

Cold crops which are tolerant to cold include parsley, brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kale and beets. Those which are moderately tolerant include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, swiss chard, lettuce, mustard, onion, radish and turnip.

Remember to wait to transplant frost-susceptible plants, such as tomatoes or pepper after danger of frost has passed, which is usually on or around April 15.

A wealth of information remains on-line concerning starting seeds, different types to grow and what works best in your zone. So plop down in front of your computer and dig in to a search engine to find just the information you need.

Currently, the MFSI Wilson community project is preparing their greenhouse for seed-preparation.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your local county extension agent or call MFSI at (918) 756-5915.

## MFSI attends Southern SAWG

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group hosted their annual conference in Chattanooga, TN, Jan. 19-22, 2011 which was attended by MFSI Staff.

Both Youth Coordinator Cassandra Thompson and Communications, Marketing and Research Coordinator Melodie Reader attended the event.

Read more in our next newsletter about this sustainable agriculture conference and the ideas and practices learned from guest speakers and presenters.

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version and with Congress wanting to cut back the budget, it will be hard to get them included in the new bill.”

Karhu made those who attended the 2012 Farm Bill Summit aware of MFSI and gained insight into the political proceedings involved

with the makings of the 2012 Farm Bill.

“Whenever I am able to interact with powerful, intelligent, informed and passionate people who are all working toward a more sustainable and equitable food and farm system in our country; it is beneficial to MFSI,” said Karhu.

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leaves. The spines from the squash warns predators to stay away from the beans and corn and her leaves provide an excellent shade for her sisters. The organic mulch from the sisters improves, strengthens, and sustains the soil for us, our children and our children’s children. Had our ancestors not shared the secret of the Three Sister’s, European settlers would have not survived in their new environment. As you consider planting options for your garden this year...don’t forget our Three Sisters.

MVTO,

Darrell Fox  
Executive Director, MFSI



MFSI hosted a farmer and rancher resource guide outreach in Bristow, Okla., Jan. 28-29, 2011. The outreach was a big success and will be repeated during the summer months. Pictured from left, MFSI Staff :Communications Coordinator Melodie Reader, Community Coordinator June Marshall and Youth Coordinator Cassandra Thompson.

# MFSI Food Sovereignty “Food & Fitness” Symposium Schedule of Events

## Day One - Fri., Feb. 18, 2011

- 9 a.m. - Welcome & Invocation - Darrell Fox - Executive Director, MFSI - Vicky Karhu - Projects Manager, MFSI - Muskogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief A.D. Ellis & MCN National Council First Speaker Roger Barnett  
9:20 a.m. - Food Policy - Rita Williams - Education & Policy Coordinator, MFSI  
9:30 a.m. - Selling the Dream - Chickasaw Nation Ethno-botanist Steven Bond  
10:15 a.m. - Break/Exercise  
10:30 a.m. - Farm 2 School Program - Chris Kirby - Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry  
11:15 a.m. - Using Policy for Positive Change in Food Systems - Lydia Villanueva - Policy Coordinator for SSAWG  
Noon - Break - Lunch on your own  
1 p.m. - Protecting our traditional seeds and seed sovereignty policies with New Mexico Pueblos - Louie Hena - New Mexico Food and Seed Sovereignty  
1:30 p.m. - Planting Seeds of Caution: Farming and Climate Change - Jackleen de La Harpe - Journalist and Non-Profit Consultant  
2 p.m. - Navajo Nation Food Policy Council - Jamescita Peshlakai - DINE, Inc., Navajo Nation Traditional Agriculture Outreach  
2:30 p.m. - Break  
2:45 p.m. - Beginning Small Farmers & Ranchers resources and mentorship, grass-fed beef - Alan Kaulaity - Kiowa Nation  
3:15 p.m. - Organic Vegetables - Luke Fisher - Organic Farmer  
3:45 p.m. - Day One Speakers Q & A Panel  
4:30 p.m. - Dismissal - David Dunson - Muskogee (Creek) Nation, Office of the Second Chief

## Day Two - Sat., Feb. 19, 2011

- 9 a.m. - Welcome & Invocation - Dacey Barnett - Office Manager, MFSI  
9:15 a.m. - Sustainable Agriculture: What does it mean? - Sue Gray - OSU Extension Horticulturist  
10 a.m. - Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers Association - Chris Jackson  
10:15 a.m. - Fitness in Daily Life - Duane Meadows - MCN Diabetes Exercise Program Manager  
11 a.m. - Pawnee Nation Corn Seeds Restoration Project - Deb Echo Hawk - Pawnee Seed Project Director  
11:45 a.m. - Traditional Meal  
1:30 p.m. - Sustainable Inter-Tribal Farming and Ranching Projects - Randall Ware - President, Kiowa Native Farms, LLC & Langston University Outreach to Small and Beginning Farmers  
2:15 p.m. - Wilson Project - Barton Williams - Mvskoke Farmer  
2:30 p.m. - The Pros and Cons of grass-fed beef - Joletta Tyler-Hyde - Hyde Livestock  
3:15 p.m. - Break  
3:30 p.m. - Permaculture & Youth message - Cassandra Thompson - Youth Coordinator, MFSI  
4 p.m. - Day Two Speakers Q & A  
4:30 p.m. - Summary - Chris Kirby - Oklahoma Department of Food, Forestry & Agriculture  
4:45 p.m. - Dismissal - Dacey Barnett - Office Manager, MFSI

**All sessions take place in the Mound Building at the tribal complex,  
Muskogee (Creek) Nation  
Hwy 75 and 56 Loop  
Okmulgee, OK 74447**

**Info: MFSI 918-756-5915, Vicky Karhu 918-470-3819 or Melodie Reader 918-752-6113**



### MFSI Recipe Contest

Winners will be selected and notified via e-mail or phone.

Seasonal gifts will be presented to the monthly winner.

For more information or to submit your favorite recipe via e-mail  
[mreader@mvsokofood.org](mailto:mreader@mvsokofood.org)

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## A TASTE OF HOME

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### Whole Wheat Cornbread

- 1 c. whole wheat flour
- 3/4 cup corn meal
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1Tbsp. Splenda (or sugar or maple syrup to add a little sweetness) optional
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 2 farm fresh eggs
- 1/4 c. canola oil or butter
- 1 c. milk

Preheat Oven to 400 degrees and spray square pan with cooking oil spray.

Mix dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl. In another bowl mix wet ingredients. Pour wet mixture into dry ingredients, mix just enough to moisten ingredients, do not over-mix. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 20 minutes until golden brown. Immediately spread 1 tsp. butter over top for added flavor. Serve and enjoy!

H. June Marshall

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