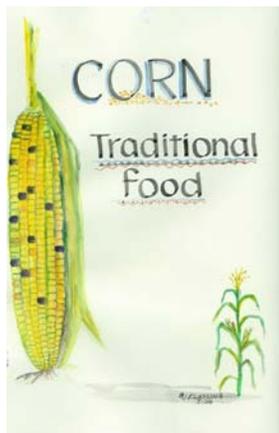


## Mission Statement

*Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative works to enable the Mvskoke people and their neighbors to provide for their food and health needs now and in the future, through sustainable agriculture, economic development, community involvement, cultural and educational programs*



## Let's Grow Some Food!

The MFSI Mission Statement is “to enable the Mvskoke people and their neighbors to provide for their food and health needs now and in the future...” we are actively encouraging communities to grow gardens this season. MFSI will assist with getting the garden tilled, seed donations and expert advice regarding sustainable and organic gardening practices. We will provide free information about marketing opportunities for all excess garden produce. We will help the communities to organize volunteers and plan the gardens.

We are happy to announce that two communities have already begun plans for their 2008 gardens:

### Highway 27 Garden

Dave Dunson, Assistant to Second Chief Alfred Berryhill, has graciously provided a beautiful garden spot next to his home on Hwy 27 south of Okemah. MFSI has had the ground plowed and will follow up with tilling and donation of seeds. Mr. Dunson reports that there are a lot of folks interested in maintaining the garden and working toward a bountiful harvest. If you live in the area around Thlopthlocco

## January Rvfo Cuse Winter's Younger Brother February Hotvlehvse Wind Month 2008

United Methodist Church (one mile from the garden site) and would like to be involved in this community garden, please call MFSI at 756-5915. We will hold a workday at the garden in late March or early April.

### Creek Nation Elderly Housing Garden

Carolyn Torix and residents of the elderly housing at 2710 N. Miami Avenue are excited about the gardens that they will grow this summer. A vegetable garden will be grown near the entrance to the housing

and an edible landscaping garden will be grown in front of the office.

Both projects will be maintained through the joint efforts of the residents and the MFSI Youth and Elder Sharing (YES) team led by our Youth Coordinator, Speedy Harley.

The young people will supply the strong backs and muscle power and the elders will supply the skills

and knowledge to make successful gardens. Canning, freezing and cooking classes will be offered in the community center once the vegetables start coming in. A meeting to plan the garden will be held in March. To help with these gardens please call Carolyn Torix at 756-2920 or MFSI at 756-5915.



## Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

January/February 2008

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### MFSI Board of Directors

Rebecca Lindsey  
June Thomas  
Ben Yahola

### MFSI Advisory Committee

Jackson Barnett – MCN Sr. Services & Languages

Johnnie Brasuell – MCN Diabetes Program Director

Sharon Iverson- MCN Dietitian

Emman Spain – MCN Cultural Preservation

John West – University of Tulsa Horticulturist

Yvette Wiley – MCN Environmental Services

Steve Wilson – National Society for American Indian Elders

Donna Williams –MCN Citizenship Office

### Ex Officio Members

Lester Ligons – USDA/NRCS Tribal Liaison

Bud McCombs – IHS Env. Spec.

### Staff

Executive Director - Vicky Karhu

Office Manager—Dicey Barnett

Youth Coordinator—Speedy Harley

A majority of the Board, Advisory Committee and staff are Muscogee (Creek) citizens.

MVTO to Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation, First Nations Development Institute, Honor the Earth Fund of the Tides Foundation, SSAWG T&TA and our friends who have donated time and money to MFSI

## Wake Up and Smell the Dirt By Dena Lindley

The success or failure of a gardening venture is dependent upon the preparation done by the gardener. Soils should be tested months prior to the planting season to provide adequate time for soil enrichment and weed control. Rich, productive garden soil doesn't just happen by itself but is developed gradually, day by day, with a little effort and access to soil amendments. Improving the soil with the addition of organic matter (manure or compost), garden recycling (leaving residue in place and turning under), fertilizer, lime and growing cover crops are all part of an Earth-Kind system of using natural methods whenever possible to maintain and enhance your food production system.

Remember that living creatures require living food to nourish them and living food requires living soil to nourish it. If we remember to "give back" to our soil as we are harvesting benefits from it, the cycle of life can be maintained, balanced and even improved and will provide abundance to us.

If your growing space is limited or you have difficulty in locating a good permanent spot for a small garden, you may want to try growing vegetables in containers. Containers can be moved if needed and can help reduce pests and conserve water. You may have to water more often but you'll use less water overall. Some of your favorite veggies will grow quite well in pots, buckets, barrels and such and it's easy to find hybrids that will grow in a more compact habit and are suitable for our Oklahoma climate.

There are other things to keep in mind, while you're thumbing through that colorful seed catalog and dreaming big. You'll want to consider raised bed gardening, mulching, irrigation systems, planting methods, composting and more. Lucky for you we have extension offices all over Oklahoma that can answer your gardening questions and give you guidance.

OSU Extension has some great fact sheets on gardening topics. You may find them on their website at <http://www.osuextra.com>

The Earth-Kind Gardening series includes the following titles:

- "Healthy Garden Soils" HLA-6436
- "Mulching Garden Soils" HLA- 6005
- "Improving Garden Soil Fertility" HLA-6007
- "Making a Compost Pile" HLA-6014
- "Raised Bed Gardening" HLA-6033
- "Cultural Control Practices" HLA-6431
- "Mechanical Pest Controls" HLA-6432
- "Botanical Pest Controls" HLA-6433
- "Biological Pest Controls" HLA-6434
- "Recycling Yard Waste" L-251
- "Lead Composting" L-252

Other fact sheets in their original publication series include:

- "Oklahoma Garden Planning Guide" F-6004
- "Vegetable Varieties for the Home Garden in Oklahoma" F-6032 ...and many more.

*Dena is a Nutrition Education Assistant at the Okmulgee County OSU Agriculture Extension Office and a volunteer educator with MFSI.*



### New Garden Festival In Okmulgee

Okmulgee Main Street and a committee of community leaders are busy planning for a new festival that will debut May 3rd in downtown Okmulgee. Food, crafts and garden produce vendors will be on hand. The Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance will be there to kick off the 2008 Okmulgee Farmers' Market. MFSI will offer Indian dinners and other treats. There will be entertainment and educational programs all day. We hope to see all our friends enjoying this community event.

## MFSI Welcomes New Staff

As we begin our new year at MFSI we are pleased to welcome two new staff members, Dicey Barnett and Speedy Harley. In keeping with our policy of bringing together the wisdom and cultural knowledge of the Mvskoke elders (Dicey) and the enthusiasm and energy of the youth (Speedy), the new staff members work together with Executive Director, Vicky Karhu, to plan all MFSI activities. Our programs are greatly enriched by having these people on board and we look forward to an exciting and busy year.

### By Dicey Barnett

My name is Dicey Barnett. I am full-blood Mvskoke este cate. My clan is Kuno from the Wind Clan and I live on my parent's original allotment. My parents were Rev. John and Amy Randall Berryhill. I work part-time for MFSI and I truly enjoy the advantageous interests that it offers. It coincides with my daily living.

MFSI is about traditional Mvskoke este cate enhompety (food) that we can grow ourselves and know where it comes from. We have the choice of eating food that is organic compared to food that travels so many miles to get to our grocery stores and more that likely are sprayed with pesticides and injected with more chemicals to make it last longer. To raise a garden entails some manpower, but the exercise you derive from it is very beneficial to your health.

*Mvto to the National Indian Council on Aging for the job-htraining for Dicey.*



### By Speedy Harley

Hensi! My name is Speedy Elaine Harley. I am 20 years old, three-fourths Creek, and recently became new staff to MFSI. I am the proud daughter of Speedy (David) Eugene Harley and the late Betty Ann Jackson-Hogshooter. I am a member of the Fundamental Indian Baptist Church; I also belong to the Hillibee and Weogufkee Ceremonial Grounds and also a daughter of the Wind Clan.

I have recently claimed title as the Youth Coordinator for MFSI, short for Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative. My goal is to educate the young people about our native heritage and what we have to do to keep and preserve our culture so that we will be able to pass on to the future generations. I tend to get teens involved and participating in activities and programs going on throughout the year here at MFSI. I am currently working on our youth film project with the OHS Alt. Ed, which by the way, will be ready for viewing in the spring. Parents if you have a teen(s) that need something to do in their spare time after school or even on the weekends please give me a call here at our office number to volunteer your child for our programs and activities.

Note: all work is voluntary only! Parents get your children involved. Please sign up your child before our next big thing. Mvto!



### Volunteers Needed!

- ◆ Booth at Okmulgee In Bloom - May 3rd
- ◆ Booth at Muscogee Nation Festival - June 19th-21st

**Come join us...It will be fun!!!!**

## MFSI Makes Presentations at Regional Conference

MFSI representatives made several presentations at the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Louisville Kentucky. The conference hosts 1200 farmers and agriculture organizational leaders from 13 states covering the southeast, Oklahoma and Texas and is one of the most respected conferences in the nation.

Ben Yahola and Vicky Karhu, along with Dr. Owusu Bandele Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (LA). made a presentation on "The Deep Roots of Southern Agriculture." Vicky showed slides and spoke about the long history of Mvskoke farming and Ben spoke of the cultural importance of food and



farming to the Mvskoke people. Dr. Bandele described the many contributions of African Americans to agriculture. The comments and questions from the audience

showed enthusiastic support and interest in the food heritage of the southeast. Many expressed the importance of understanding the history of agriculture and including it in future conferences.



Dena Lindley made a presentation on grass-fed

beef production. She shared her experience about breeding pastured beef for herd health and meat quality. Her farm in Okmulgee County operates by a more nature-dictated breeding plan based on their animals' own cycles. She explained their practices and their recommendations for specific breed crosses that perform best on pasture while producing an excellent beef. Dena volunteers with MFSI and is President of the Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance.

Ben and Vicky were also asked to be on a panel entitled "Community Leaders Advocate in the Food System" to describe our community food panel with Lydia Villanueva, C.A.S.A. (Communities Assuring Sustainable Agriculture) del Llano, Community Food Security Coalition and Southern SAWG and Ben Burkett, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives/Federation of Southern Cooperatives. This panel was hosted by the Rural Leadership Development Institute to share ideas for successful advocacy work. Ms. Margaret Krome of the Michael Fields Agriculture Institute provided feedback to the ideas presented and stimulated dialogue among the leaders in the room. We wish to thank Ms. Starry Krueger for giving us this opportunity to share our work with such an accomplished group of regional leaders.



Half the room of audience for Ben and Vicky's presentation on the Deep Roots of Southern Agriculture in Louisville, KY. This large crowd was very interested in Mvskoke history and food.

## MFSI Getting Around

Winter is the season for Agriculture conferences and meetings and MFSI has been busy attending them.

January 4th and 5th we traveled to Tulsa for the Horticulture Industries Show. Vicky Karhu, Dicey Barnett, Speedy Harley, Cynthia Tiger and Dena Lindley made up the MFSI delegation. We were able to split up and hear several speakers simultaneously. The meals both days were all Oklahoma grown foods and were delicious. The highlight of the event came when we were able to meet Eliot Coleman, the featured speaker, and share a little information about life in Oklahoma. Everyone met after the day of sessions to compare notes.



Vicky and Cynthia  
With  
Eliot Coleman  
In Tulsa

MFSI was able to take four people to the SSAWG conference thanks to scholarship assistance from the SSAWG Outreach Technical Assistance program and the Jesse Smith Noyes foundation Diversifying Leadership for Sustainable Food Policy Change program. Ben Yahola represented our Board of Directors, Vicky Karhu our staff, and Dena Lindley and Cynthia Tiger our volunteers and community partners. Although Cynthia did not make a formal presentation, she was active in the Oklahoma Session and supported us by taking photos and being available to talk about her Yuchi/Mvskoke/Shawnee cultures. Few will forget her warm smile and friendly personality. Thanks Cynthia for making such a good impression for us. Every time that we go out to these largely non-Indian events, we are aware of our responsibility in representing the culture(s) that we work with every day. If you are interested in getting involved with these trips, contact Vicky.

## Valuable Free Information

Sustainable Green Country, a Tulsa-based organization, is hosting this very informative workshop that will help all growers learn more about marketing your produce. MFSI is familiar with all of the presenters and encourages all present and future growers to attend this Saturday workshop.

### Market Gardening - March 1, 2008

**Be a part of one of the fastest growing sectors of OK Agriculture as we meet the rising demand for fresh, locally grown products!**

**Northeast Technology Center - Pryor - Call to enroll: 918-825-5555 NO Charge!**

**9:00 Welcome and Introductions**, Sharon Key, Horticulture NTC.

**9:15 Sustainable Agriculture. Getting Started a Farmers' Markets and resources available**, **Doug Walton, Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture** will be sharing and answering questions.

**10:15 Break refreshments provided.**

**10:30 Rita Scott of Sustainable Green Country, Buy Fresh/Buy Local, and Pearl Farmers' Market** will be sharing a wealth of information and answering questions at end of presentation about farmers' markets and sustainable agriculture.

**11:30 Karen Cline of OK Food Co-op** will discuss the need for more produce and how growers can get involved.

**12:00 Lunch provided, no charge!**

**12:30 Mike Appel and Emily Oakley from Three Springs Farm, Oaks, Ok.** will share their knowledge about growing and selling produce at farmers' markets. They sell at Tulsa markets.

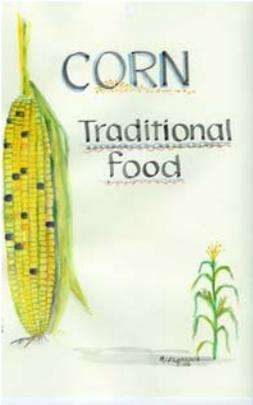
**1:15 OK. Farm to School program administrator - Chris Kirby, Ok. Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry**, you can grow for Ok. schools.

**1:45 Plasticulture - OK Dept. of Agriculture Programs- Micah Anderson**, will share how they help your garden/farm with adding plasticulture.

**2:15 NTC's Business Development Coordinator - Del McClung** - will give information on the help that is available for small businesses.

## Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

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Website: mvskokefood.org



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## Calendar of Events

**Feb 10** 2:00PM at the Circle Cinema in Tulsa Sustainable Green Country will be at the 2pm screening of the documentary film *King Corn*. A Discussion will follow to tell you how you can Buy Fresh Buy Local in Green Country.

**Feb. 11-12** No-till Oklahoma Conference Oklahoma City, Clarion Hotel & Conference Center

**February 14-19** -The Okmulgee County Spring Livestock Show. Free and open to the public.

**February 19** @ 7:00PM at Circle Cinema , 2 Angry Moms film. SGC introduces Jessica Cunningham. Her first goal is to get mothers who will be active in their kids' schools to work with school boards to change food programs . Come join in the discussion.

**March 1** 9:00-3:00PM Market Gardening NE Technology Center, Pryor. Contact Sharon Key to enroll:918-825-5555 . No cost to attend.

**March 8** 1:00-3:00PM at the Creek Council House Museum in downtown Okmulgee - **Community and Organic Gardening Class** sponsored by MFSI and taught by Bruce Edwards of the OKC Urban Harvest program. Bruce has established numerous community gardens and knows the "ins and outs." Come benefit from his experience and make your garden a success.

**March 20** The 2008 Beef Carcass Sale, 7:00 pm - admission free, bidders invited.

**March 25-27** Sustainable Agriculture research and Education New American farm Conference. Kansas City, MO Registration required.

**May 3** 10:00-4:00 Okmulgee in Bloom in downtown Okmulgee. Fun, food, entertainment, workshops.

**Plan Your Gardens!  
Order your Seeds!**