

MFSI's **Return to Your Roots** Newsletter

June 2009

Volume 4, Issue 5

June— **Kv'co-hvse (Blackberry Month)**

www.mvskokefood.org

MFSI Radio is on the “Net”

MFSI Webcast : Free radio from Creek Country on the internet.

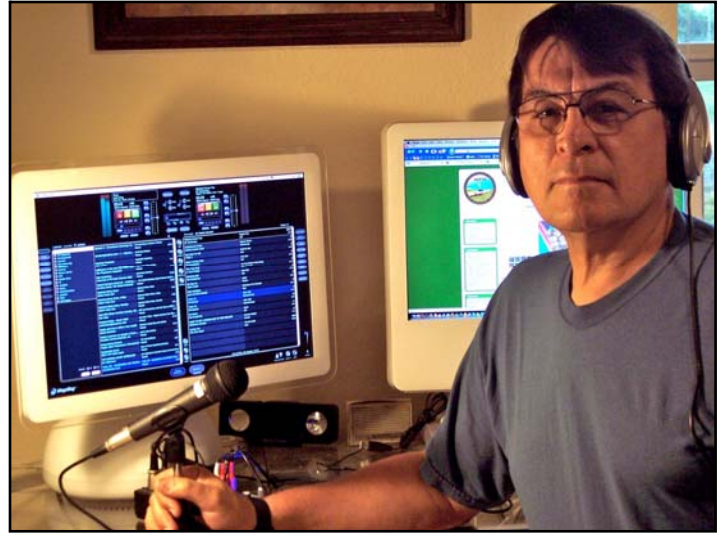
It's free. It's easy to access by clicking on “Listen to our new streaming radio” on the MFSI website at

www.mvskokefood.org.

For the first time in our region, MFSI offers a free alternative to regular AM/FM radio choices - MFSI Radio. Our live stream radio is a free-

wheeling mix of all kinds of music, some of it in the Mvskoke language, gardening tips, Mvskoke language lessons and stories, progressive news, Native news, and much more. We are extremely fortunate that Mark Madrid (Mvskoke) has taken this project on as his volunteer contribution to our work. His background,

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Mark Madrid (Mvskoke) manages MFSI online radio program.

Mob Grazing proves to Benefit Grass and Cattle



By **Liz Gore**

“Forget what you’ve been taught and try something you’ve been told doesn’t work,” is the advice from a few “mob grazing” consult-

ants springing up around the world.

The old style of letting the cattle have plenty of space on a large piece of land and keeping the grass short proves to be a much less productive

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Wilson Community Receives Grant to Start Food Project

By **Rita Williams**

Wilson Indian Community Center (WICC) has started a Community Food Project. With the help from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, Wilson Indian Community was able to receive a USDA/CSREES grant through MFSI to fund the Community Food Project.

The garden is located on Barton Williams property in the Wilson area and has about four volunteers who work diligently every day planting, replanting, watering, hoeing, disking, and tilling the garden. Planted are tomatoes, onions, all kinds of beans, purple hulls, green beans, pinto beans, squash, pumpkins, (we especially hope the Indian pump-

kins do well) cantaloupe, corn (merit, peaches & cream, dent and sofke corn), okra (plenty of it) cucumbers, cabbage, cauliflower, hot peppers, and sweet potatoes.

The garden is finally coming along since we had 20 days of rain. Plenty of work to do as we have two garden spots, each are about 80 feet long and about 150 ft. wide. They expect to have their green house in the fall and will be experimenting with growing their plants for next year.

The produce will be available for sale and they will be opening their community center for fresh produce on Saturdays. They will keep everyone posted when they start producing.

They also plan to have their food baskets priced at a rea-

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Online Radio with MFSI

(Continued)

experience and expertise are invaluable to us and we extend to him a huge MVTO. Mark, our DJ/station manager extraordinaire, had his beginnings in radio back in Tennessee on The Farm where he managed one of the earliest low-power radio stations in the country. In 1973 he and others put together a small radio station, WUTZ in Summertown, TN that was loaded down barb-wired fence and telephone wire for transmission. They later established an independent station in Lake Atilan in Solola, Guatemala providing communication for villages around the large, beautiful lake. The villages surrounding the lake had no electricity and had to walk out for news. This station was their first communication tool. Later, in the mid 70's, he worked to create the first Native community radio station, Lakota KILI, the first all Indian radio outside the Navajo Radio station area and he helped Oneida Nation with their radio station. Then through the 80's and 90's Mark worked in television with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, trained with Florida Motion Picture and Television Advisory Council and worked on various movie sets and television programs for twenty years. In Florida, his team created a television cable channel for all five reservations in Florida and produced shows for the cable channel including a kids show called Nagen Mackv (How do you say it?) with language lessons in Miccosukee and Mvskoke. He had input on the development of the Seminole tribes radio station for the remote Big Cypress community which later turned over

the licensing to the Immakalee Field Workers. Before moving back home to Oklahoma and Creek Country, he spent some more time at the Tennessee Farm station revitalizing its equipment, format, shows and programming.

MFSI is very lucky that Mark has taken an interest in our work and is now volunteering his time to make our webcast a reality. He is broadcasting 24 hours a day 7 days a week as MFSI Radio. It is live streaming on the internet from our "studio" in his home "studio city, high on the hill in Hectorville, Oklahoma." You can hear an eclectic mix of independent Indian music, including Mvskoke songs and flute, rock, country, blues and folk. In between songs you will get Mvskoke language lessons, stories in Mvskoke language, gardening tips, Oklahoma farm news, progressive news, Democracy Now and much more.

It is easy to connect to this online radio. Go online on any server (Firefox, Yahoo, Safari, etc) Google Mvskoke Food which will lead you to the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative website, www.mvskokefood.org. Open that site and click on "Click here to listen to our new streaming radio" and it will open in Windows Media Player or iTunes or what ever media application you use. If you need an application to listen, follow the instructions that pop up to install a media player application on your computer. All applications have a free version. If your application opens and doesn't start playing, just double click and the broadcast should open and automatically play. If you can't get it with these instructions, find a young person to help!

So tune in soon and enjoy!!!

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative 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

MFSI Board of Directors

Rebecca Lindsey June Thomas Jackson Barnett

MFSI Advisory Committee

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Sharon Iverson- MCN Diabetes Program Dietitian

Emman Spain – MCN Cultural Preservation

John West – Horticulturist

Yvette Wiley – MCN Environmental Services

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Executive Director - Vicky Karhu

Co-Director-Ben Yahola

Office Manager-Dicey Barnett

Office Staff: Rebecca Autaubo

Chumona Deere-Projects Manager

Elizabeth Gore, Community Coordinator

Freda Wyatt, Research Assistant

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

If you have any questions about our upcoming events or programs that we have to offer, please call our offices and we would be glad to talk with you or set up an appointment to visit with you. Want to subscribe to this newsletter? It's free! Send us your info. Office hours 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Tuesday through Friday. Call for appointments. Phone: (918) 756-5915 Fax: (918) 756-5918 Email: mvskokefood@gmail.com. Address: 208 West 6th Street, Okmulgee, Ok 74447.

Wilson Community Receives Grant to Start Food Project

sonable rate that everyone can afford.

(Continued)

Rita Williams has tried her hand at a patio herb garden and has already put up her basil and cilantro. She experimented with freezing herbs and believes you can do it, too!

They are planning to have training on how to grow your own produce, information about green houses, agriculture, recipes for your produce, how to can, etc. They will also be sending out information on dates and times.

The community is also networking with Wilson High School to plan an activity every Thursday night at the center with the Jr. High and High

School students. Since summer months find a lot of our youth with nothing to do and boredom setting in, they wanted to give them a place to come and have some activities. Some of the community have volunteered to assist along with the High School principal and teachers

by donating refreshments, drinks and eats. The first activity was held Thursday, June 4th. They watched movies, ate snow cones and had refreshments.



Activities will include, outdoor and indoor sports, watching movies, games, sharing experiences, wiener roast, music, and a lot of fun stuff.

Agriculture for the Mvskoke Man

Agriculture for the Mvskoke man was, according to historians, an important part to a complete marriage to a woman whom was selected by him or his family. If the man could prove himself worthy by planting and harvesting an abundance of food for her from his garden, then their marriage could be finalized during the first harvest of the corn. Such historic values of our people gave the men an opportunity to show that they could be responsible for the families and provide for their welfare. In this techno-industrialized society there are several ways to provide for families, but there is only one source for quality foods to make healthy families and that is from good fertile soil using traditional seeds from our ancestors.

The historical Mvskoke man provided and protected his family from enemies that threatened them through military force, but today there is a battle being waged that is not as visible as theirs was. A

peaceful action to conserve the traditional food seeds is being done by many tribal and non-tribal women and men. There are many poor working class families against genetically modified organism (GMO) in our food system. This conscientious effort is reminiscent of this Biblical line "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" because this intellectual battle calls us to use our minds, bodies and spirits to preserve traditional seeds from GMO contamination.

MFSI received a packet of the Arkansas Red & White Dent Corn from the Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co. with a notice that this was the last pack of the uncontaminated corn. What can the Mvskoke men do to promote the general welfare of their future generations? Here at MFSI, we welcome anyone wanting to contribute to our traditional seed bank and learning alternative ways to promote and support local growers.

Special Thanks to our Funders

MFSI would like to acknowledge our Funders. None of our programs could be made possible without their support.

MVTO to:

Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation

Honor the Earth Fund of the Tides Foundation

First Nations Development Institute

USDA/CSRESS

REACH Legacy Program

Seventh Generation Fund

MVTO also to our friends who have donated time and money to MFSI.

MFSI Launches Youth and Elder Sharing YES! Program

Starting July 1, 2009, MFSI will have a new, active program aimed at helping young and elder folks share knowledge and work together to reinvigorate the local food system.

Ben Yahola will be taking the lead with this program with the help of Tony Ciocco, better known as Chacko. The first organizational meeting will be held in July at the MFSI Food Resource Center 208 West 6th Street in Okmulgee. Refreshments will be served.

The first activity of the YES! Program will be to sponsor a poster contest with cash prizes. Following that will be contests for designs to decorate the MFSI

Mobile Resource Unit and to create educational exhibits for public events. So if you are an artist, watch for contest rules and get ready to be creative.

YES! Is also getting involved in sports. We will be training participants in the ancient games of Chunky, atlatl throwing, marbles, relay races as messenger carriers and other physical challenges.

The Mvskoke people were healthy and physically fit when they followed a traditional diet and lifestyle that included regular exercise. We intend to help everyone recapture the beneficial ways of the ancestors as we travel on the path toward improved physical and spiritual health for

today's people. Participants in the YES! ancient games program will begin training to participate in the 2011 North American Indigenous Games to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We will also work with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to establish a tribal Indigenous Games Day in the spring of 2010.

We are excited about YES! and the art and sports youth activities that we will be offering.

We wish to thank the First Nations Development Institute of Longmont, Colorado for their generous support for our YES! Program.

Schools can purchase from local farmers under the "Oklahoma Farm to School Program"

In 2006, the state legislation passed an act titled the "[Oklahoma Farm to School Program Act](#)". Under the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, this program pro-

vides program development, leadership, technical assistance and workshops for farmers, food service directors, processors and distributors, emphasizing the purchase of locally and regionally produced foods in Oklahoma.

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These Farm-to-School initiatives are demonstrating that students will eat more nutritiously when offered a variety of fresh high quality foods. In many of these projects, salad bars are commonly used for featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Oklahoma currently has 540 school districts, with 1,844 schools serving students more than 167,000 breakfasts and over 375,000 lunches every day of the school year. Most schools offer one serving of fruit at breakfast and two or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables at

lunch. If half the schools in our state featured one serving of Oklahoma grown cantaloupes at one meal, on one day of the year, this would require nearly 5,000 melons. Or, one serving of Oklahoma grown tomatoes for one meal in half our schools would likewise require over 18,000 pounds of fresh whole tomatoes. The potential size of the market could be substantial. Oklahoma Food Policy Council surveyed all 540 school food service directors in the state. Over two-thirds of the respondents expressed interest in purchasing locally produced foods.

While it is true that much of the school year doesn't coincide with normal harvest periods for many crops, schools represent a market which should encourage growers to look at non-traditional planting dates and other cultural practices for modifying the season, such as green houses or hoop houses. For field crops, season extension is a practice worth noting.

You are not required to have a license from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, although there are certain, practical guidelines that are required.

There are certain instances where a license is required. That would be if the farmer sells other produce that is not their own or sells manufactured or processed food products other than whole, unprocessed fruits and veggies.

Standards have been changed under the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill which allows schools to purchase unprocessed agricultural products such as butchered livestock and poultry, pasteurized milk, and eggs.

Schools participating in the Farm to School Program within the Okmulgee County area include: Beggs, Liberty, Glenpool, Okmulgee and Jenks.

If you are interested in growing produce to sell to schools, please contact Liz or Vicky at MFSI at 918-756-5915 and we will help guide you through it. You can also contact Chris Kirby, Farm to School Coordinator at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry 405-522-2106.

Or email: chris.kirby@oda.state.ok.us

Mob Grazing proves to Benefit Grass and Cattle

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method of raising cattle than this new high-stock density method, according to Greg Judy, manager of ten farms near Columbia, Missouri.

Judy, a well known speaker on the subject, gave a presentation recently at a Seeds for Success Cattle Grazing Conference at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton. His story of financial success in times when others are struggling financially is enough to make the most skeptical cattle rancher sit up and take notice. This grazing method proves to increase wildlife, better soils, eliminates costly inputs and increases stocking rates. Increase stocking rates—which means you can have more grass without buying more land and at the same time decrease overhead by reducing hay-production costs.

This method of grazing includes fencing off sections of a pasture with electric fencing to keep the herd close together and grazing the grass down to the ground, trampling the unwanted weeds then moving the herd to the next section of land the next day. This causes better distribution of dung, urine and trampling. It also increases the plants regrowth because the amount of green leaf removal increases. Moving the cattle from new section to new section really isn't as hard as one would expect. The cattle become used to it and are very cooperative to go to the next paddock of fresh, green grass. This rotation also lets each section rest for 60 to 90 days, letting the good grasses grow back and letting new grass seeds take root that were dropped in the manure. The results in the grass increase and the weight gain of the cattle are incredible.

Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in Virginia described it this way.

"Think about corn as a glorified grass. It is, you know. Would it be cut before tassel? Before an ear formed? Of course not. Why? Because corn silage, as a fermentation product, needs starch for the process. Fermentation is all about sugars. And it takes time for a grass to move from protein to sugar," said Salatin in his

article "Tall Grass Mob Stocking" which was published in ACRES USA.

Now imagine what orchard grass, switchgrass, fescue or bluegrass, would look at the same stage of maturity. "Would there be seed heads?" he asks. "Would it be browning down at the base of the tallest stems? Yes. Would it be too mature to graze? No. In fact, it would be just right."

What changed his mind to try this new method was the way the animals acted when they were put into a mob grazing situation. They ate faster, were less picky and their digestive system proved to be healthier. We supplement cattle with grains anyway, why not let the grasses grow their own natural grains to supplement the cattle?

Specialists will tell you that bovines need starch more than protein. They are walking fermentation vats and fermentation thrives on sugar. Young, vegetative, succulent, tender grass blades are high in protein and low in carbohydrates. As it matures it concentrates energy. That concept is followed in selecting corn maturity for good silage fermentation. Why not follow that method for the cattle?

According to Neil Dennis of Canada, another benefit of moving the animals more frequently onto fresh ground means they reduce dangers of parasite infection and

buildup.

Greg Judy teaches methods of "stockpiling" certain sections of land in preparation for a draught or for winter. He times his rotation methods to give these sections time to rest just before the winter hits.

Judy teaches these methods and also speaks of it on his website [www. Green-pasturesfarm.net](http://www.Green-pasturesfarm.net).

"What we didn't realize was how thick and massive our stockpiled sward was as a result from our high density grazing system. We immediately realized that we had underestimated the number of animal days that we had stockpiled for our herd as the winter grazing started," said Judy. "The huge eye opener right from the start of winter grazing was that the mob was not consuming all the grass, but trampling about 50% of it because it was so thick."

Judy will be teaching a Grazing School Sept 24—26, 2009. There are 25 spots left. Cost is \$800 with a \$200 deposit due July 1st. For possible scholarships available through MFSI, please contact Vicky at 918-756-5915. **To sign up for the classes send deposits to:** Greg Judy 21975 N. Devil's Washboard Rd. Clark, MO 65243

Grant Deadline: ODAFF Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Grant and Loan

The deadline for grant and loan applications for the next round of the Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification (OAED) program is July 1. (Next Deadline is October 1st.) State ag officials are urging all producers with innovative ideas to apply. The grants are up to \$5,000, as well as, interest-free loans are available in three categories: Cooperative Marketing Loans, Marketing and Utilization Loans, and Basic and Applied Research Loans. Producers interested in either diversifying their current operations or entering some form of value-added or marketing venture are eligible. Producer groups are also urged to apply. Some loans and grants have been used in the development of a variety of agritourism ventures, biofuel projects, and food processing businesses.

For more information, contact Vicky or Liz at Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative at 918-756-5915.



Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

208 West 6th Street
Okmulgee, OK 74447

June 22—Integrated Pest Management and Sustainable Pest Control Workshop. University of Arkansas Extension Service workshop for farmers market growers or other commercial farmers that are growing on small acreage. . Registration is free but limited to 30 participants per workshop. To register contact Carolyn N. Lewis by phone (479) 264-0905 or e-mail calewis@uark.edu.

June 25— Capacity Building through Human Rights Training: Indigenous Peoples in the International Arena. Riverwind Hotel, Norman, OK, from 9 a.m.—5 p.m. The United Nations approved the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples but what does that mean to Native Nations in Oklahoma? For more information/ pre-registration, contact: Jackie Warledo, (405) 382-1223 Jackie@treatycouncil.org or Rodney Factor, (405) 398-4044 okonemekko@gmail.com

June 27—Wilson Indian Community Center “What’s Growing in My Garden?”. Located at the Wilson Community Center from 10:30 a.m. till noon. Speaker is Dr. George Griever with the OSU Extension Service and Eastern Oklahoma Pest management Services. Directions: Ten miles north of Henryetta and 1 blk. North of Wilson High School. For more info: Barton Williams 918-650-9758 or Dicey Barnett 918-652-9831.

July 14—Field Day: Organic Agriculture. Located at the Lane Ag Center. The 2009 Organic Agriculture Field Day

will feature presentations by specialists from Wes Watkins Research Center, the Kerr Center, and ARS, on topics including getting and keeping organic certification, organic production practices, drip irrigation, and challenges in organic production.

July Workshops: Integrated Pest Management and Sustainable Pest Control

July 16—Stillwater—Payne County Fairgrounds. 4 to 8 p.m.

July 20—Tulsa—OSU Extension Center Auditorium. 4 to 8 p.m.

July 27—Oklahoma City—OSU-OKC 900 N. Portland Ave. 4 to 8 p.m. Experts from OSU Extension and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture will teach these workshops on money-saving pest management strategies for small-scale vegetable producers. Registration costs \$15 and includes an evening meal. For more info: 918-647-9123.

FARMER' MARKET

Summer vegetables are coming in now at the Okmulgee Farmer's Market. Come by and purchase yours!

Friday's from 8:00-2:00

Downtown Okmulgee on the Square