

MFSI News

November Ehole Frost Month

December Rvfo Rakko

Big Winter Month

2007

**Mvskoke Food
Sovereignty Initiative**

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Inside this issue:

Garden Tips	2
Indigenous Food	3
Tribal News	4
Okmulgee Producers	4
OSU Ag News	5
Calendar	6

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

MVTO to Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation, First Nations Development Institute, USDA-CSREES CFP Program

Happy New Year!

MFSI has had a busy and productive year in 2007 and we hope all of you have had the same. Our two major accomplishments were conducting the Community Food Assessment in seventeen communities within the Muscogee Nation and establishing the Okmulgee Farmers' Market.

We have tabulated the results of the assessment and will be contacting your community leaders to look at where to go next in addressing the concerns and ideas that were expressed by the citizens. Here are a few highlights of the surveys:

The top three suggested future activities are 1) Native Foods Cookbook 2) Traditional Foods Cooking classes and 3) Farmers' Markets.

The top three community assets are 1) tribal community centers 2) churches and 3) elders with knowledge, closely followed by water and sunny locations.

78% would like to have a community garden and 76% are willing to work in a

garden in their community.

81% are concerned about the loss of food traditions, 74% say there are still people with traditional food knowledge 85% are interested in preserving food traditions and 77% would devote time to learning them.

90% say that better food would impact better health in their families.

We will publish more of the survey results in future newsletters. These

results give us a clear idea of what the people would like to see done and what we have to work with. We see that we have the basics of traditional knowledge, willingness of the people to work and learn, meeting places, water and land to work with in all communities. Please contact



MFSI if you have any specific projects that you would like to see initiated in your community. We will meet with you to help with planning and we will seek resources to help realize your dreams.

Winter Gardening Tips by Vicky Karhu

By now everyone's garden should be in a good rest period with the shredded leaves from the fall spread out for cover. Hopefully, you have been able to till the leaves in and expose some of the Bermuda grass roots to the freezing cold air that we've had lately. This is one good way to slow down this number one enemy of vegetable gardens.

Now is the time to decide what you are going to plant for the 2008 growing season, plan your garden and order your new seeds. Here are some things to consider:

Plan to grow a good variety of foods and include all your family favorites. This is a great opportunity to include all ages in the planning process. Draw out your garden plan. Refer to last year's drawing (draw one now of last year's garden if you don't have one) to be sure to rotate your crops. You should never plant the same thing in the same place as last year. Try to follow leafy crops with legumes (beans and peas) to replace nitrogen. Follow above the ground large crops with root crops to pull nutrients up into the top soil. After an area has had three successive crops, leave it empty to rest and plant a cover crop. Clover is a good choice as the seeds are not expensive and it is nitrogen fixing.

Seeds can be ordered from many sources (see the MFSI Jan. 2007 newsletter). Here's my personal favorite, in case you don't have that newsletter:

Johnny's Selected Seeds

955 Benton Ave.
Winslow, ME 04901
(800) 854-2580
www.johnnyseeds.com

A quick search on the internet will reveal many more sources. Remember that MFSI has free seeds we will donate to any individual or community. Call 756-5915 to learn more.

If you are interested in growing enough to have produce to sell each week at a local farmers' market, you will want to talk to people in your community and find out what they are interested in purchasing. We found out last summer that the favorites in Okmulgee were okra, large tomatoes, sweet corn, peaches, watermelons and any fruit. Contact MFSI if you are interested in getting organically grown vegetable sets

peppers,
cucumbers,
local grower
ing these sets



(tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, etc). A will be offering this spring, so

Native American Internships

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 22, 2008

DOE's Tribal Energy Program is offering summer internships to Native American students who are interested in renewable energy and who are currently college upper-classmen or graduate students. To be considered for the 2008 summer program applications must be received by February 22, 2008. For more on the program, see <http://www.eere.energy.gov/tribalenergy/internships.cfm>. For questions contact Sandra K. Begay-Campbell, Sandia National Laboratories at (505) 844-5418 or skbegay@sandia.gov.



A growing world: Between 1980 and 2000, the world population increased from 4.4 billion people to 6.1 billion, while food production increased by 50%.

Future challenges: To keep pace with increasing human population, more food will have to be produced worldwide in the next 50 years than the total production of all of the past 10,000 years combined.

Indigenous Food of the Month, Turkey by Vicky Karhu

The centerpiece of most holiday meals is one of the staple foods of the Indigenous peoples of North America - turkey. The wild turkey lives in hardwood and mixed conifer-hardwood forests with openings like fields, pastures, orchards and marshes. With plentiful habitat in the Southeast, the turkey thrived and was a favorite game of Mvskoke and other Indigenous hunters. The wild turkey is omnivorous eating acorns, nuts, seeds, fruits, insects, buds fern fronds, salamanders and generally anything that will fit into its mouth. The diet consists of 10% animal and 90% plant materials. It usually forages on the ground in flocks, scratching in the earth to uncover food. The wild turkey feeds during the day and roosts in trees at night. The variety of foods that it eats gives the meat a rich mix of vitamins and minerals. The meat was eaten fresh or smoked or dried for later use.

Today wild turkey is one of only two North American birds that has been domesticated (Muscovy duck is the other). Most of the turkeys found in the grocery store are specially bred to withstand the unnatural conditions of being raised on turkey farms and don't even look like wild ones. The wild turkey was almost hunted to extinction, but has made a strong comeback thanks to wildlife management and habitat protection programs.

Turkey meat is high in iron and zinc as well as the B vitamins niacin, B6 and B12. Turkey is generally considered healthier and less fattening than red meat due to the dense protein and low fat content of the meat. Turkey is high in the essential amino acid tryptophan and is commonly credited with causing sleepiness after a meal; however, this is largely a misconception. Turkey dinners are commonly large meals served with carbohydrates, fats, and alcohol in a relaxed

atmosphere, all of which are bigger contributors to post-meal sleepiness than the tryptophan in turkey.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 feathers cover the body of an adult turkey. These large, iridescent and colorful feathers have been used for ornamentation and to create clothing articles for centuries. The Cherokee made full-length cloaks out of turkey feathers for their leaders and a few artisans still create these cloaks.

Turkey feathers remain a popular element of modern day regalia and craft items, especially dream catchers. When gathering feathers from the wild or from a farm, it is a good idea to place them in the microwave for a few minutes to kill any feather mites. Commercial feathers have generally been treated in same manner for these mites.

Turkey farming is a popular and lucrative business and the USA is the third largest consumer of turkey meat worldwide. While most turkeys raised for food are the white ones bred for factory farm conditions where they are caged and fed grain, the "heritage" and free-range turkeys are in great demand and bring high prices. MFSI is interested in identifying people who would like to raise pastured (uncaged) turkeys and will assist with training and resources to help get started in producing this nutritious traditional food. Contact our office if you are interested.



Oklahoma's First Tribal Conservation District

At 10:00 Am November 20, 2007 history was made in Anadarko, Oklahoma when the Kiowa Tribal Conservation District and Water Resources Board accepted a Mutual Agreement with the United State Department of Agriculture establishing their partnership , along with the Kiowa Economic Development Board, "to develop a Natural Resources Long Range Plan for the Kiowa Tribe which will establish priorities under which the USDA agencies will operate on the Kiowa lands..." Ronald Hilliard, Oklahoma USDA Conservationist, presented the Mutual Agreement, signed by the Acting Secretary of the USDA, Chuck Conner, to the new district's president, Ricky Horse. This is the first tribal conservation district in Oklahoma and the 29th in the nation.

The ceremony was attended by State, USDA, tribal leaders and invited guests, including MFSI's Executive Director, Vicky Karhu. Randal Ware (second from the right in photo), Secretary of the new district, said that this is just the beginning. He sees the establishment of the tribal district as a unique opportunity to implement broad-based community development and conservation programs that will benefit both the land and the farmers/ranchers. His goal is to "insure healthy and productive lands for now and for future generations". A celebration meal was enjoyed by all after the dedication ceremony.

MFSI had been communicating with the Kiowa leaders as they work toward developing sustainable agricultural practices and we will be partnering with them on various projects in the future. We congratulate our friends on this precedent setting move toward assuring the tribal perspective in resource management. Watch future newsletters for program announcements with our Kiowa partners.

Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance

The Okmulgee Farmers' Market, sponsored by MFSI, Okmulgee Main Street and the Creek Council House Museum, was so successful that the vegetable and fruit producers who sold there have organized into the Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance to prepare for an even better 2008 season. The Alliance is working to access resources to advertise the market and to assist growers to produce more food. There is a strong demand for fresh produce and a shortage of growers. We would like to encourage any family or community that has the time, expertise and space to grow a garden to do so and to plant extra to sell at the farmers' market. The most popular items in 2007 were okra, tomatoes, corn, watermelons, peaches, cantaloupes and berries. Squash, peppers, green beans, purple hull peas, onions, garlic, pears, herbs and cut flowers sold well, too. This year we will open earlier in the spring with cool weather crops such as lettuces, greens, snow peas, radishes, carrots, etc.

MFSI has vegetable seeds to donate to any interested growers. If you join the Alliance you may qualify for additional resources. So if you have a green thumb, grow some food and come enjoy making some income and being a part of the 2008 Okmulgee Farmers' Market. Call MFSI at 756-1519 for info on the market and the Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance..



Kiowa and USDA officials in Anadarko for tribal conservation district dedication.

OSU Ag. Extension News by Dena Lindley

OSU Cooperative Extension, Okmulgee would like extend an invitation to the public to attend the following events being held at the **Okmulgee County Fairgrounds** located at **1901 N. Oklahoma Ave., Okmulgee:**

*** The Okmulgee County Spring Livestock Show, February 14-19, 2008 - admission free**

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

Facts about the Beef Carcass Sale:

Beef cattle are bred & raised in Okmulgee County. Participants are local 4-H and/or FFA members and are solely responsible for the care and recordkeeping of their performance steer projects and must be initially shown at the Okmulgee County Fair as a performance animal. These animals are later weighed, tagged/ID'd, and nominated to stay qualified.

After the stock they are weighed are finished and sent to



Spring Live-Show where exhibited and again, they finished and processing.

This program supports the production of local beef and offers a superior, "clean" source of meat to winning bidders and is a wonderful opportunity to purchase sides of quality beef that are USDA inspected, vacuum wrapped and frozen for pick-up.

Halves of beef are auctioned at the sale and purchasers are responsible for contacting the processor (cattle are already transported and processed for them) to determine the type of cuts and thicknesses they desire.

Bidders will have an opportunity to view slides of representative cuts from each carcass being sold immediately prior to bidding on that beef.

Okmulgee County 4-Hers will soon be selling Ronald McDonald House coupons to benefit families needing residence during an out of town hospital

stay. Tickets will be sold for \$1.00 ea. and will also help you save money when you eat out. This fundraiser also benefits our local 4-H clubs.

If you would like any additional information on Extension, 4-H or any events being held at the fairgrounds you may call 918-756-1958 between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm weekdays.

OSU Cooperative Extension's CNEP (Community Nutrition Education Programs) offers this holiday recipe developed for individuals with diabetes. It comes from a book titled "Magic Menus For People With Diabetes" and is distributed through The American Diabetes Association. Enjoy...

Peachy Whole-Grain Cookie

Yield: 30 cookies/ Serving size: 1 cookie

Ingredients

1 egg white
1/2 tsp. almond extract
1/3 cup margarine or butter
3/8 cup sugar
3/8 cup packed brown sugar
3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
1 1/4 cups of quick-cooking or regular rolled oats
3/4 cup diced peaches
1/4 cup chopped dates

Method

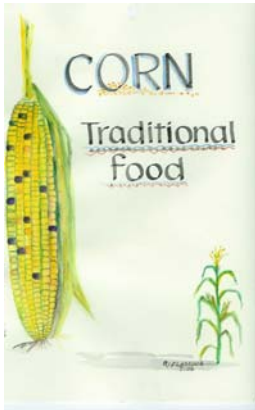
Beat egg white with extract, margarine or butter and sugars in mixing bowl.
Combine flour, salt and baking powder. Add to egg mixture and mix well with electric mixer.
Stir in oats, peaches and dates.
Drop by rounded (not heaping) tablespoonful onto nonstick cookie sheet.
Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

For more information on OSU Cooperative Extension's Nutrition Education Program and the free classes it offers please call 918-758-4140.

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

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Calendar of Events

January 4 & 5, 2008 Horticulture Industries Show at TCC Northeast Campus, 3727 E. Apache Tulsa, OK. This is open to the public and a great opportunity to hear experts in all types of market growing. \$60 registration at the door.

January 7, 2008 Okmulgee Grassroots Producers' Alliance meeting 5:30 PM at OSU Ext. Exhibit Hall. All farmers/growers invited.

January 17-19, 2008 Seventeenth Annual Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference " Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms" in Louisville, KY. Very informative and open to the public. \$155 registration fee at the door.

January 26, 2008 Seed Saving Class sponsored by MFSI at the Creek Council House Museum classroom from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Presented by Sue Gray of the Tulsa OSU Agriculture Extension Service and by members of the Okmulgee Grassroots Producers Alliance. Free and open to the public.

Feb. 1-3, 2008 Nourishing Agriculture: Texas Conference on Organic Production Systems College Station, Texas, Hilton Conference Center

Feb. 11-12, 2008 No-till Oklahoma Conference Oklahoma City, Clarion Hotel & Conference Center (

February 14-19, 2008 The Okmulgee County Spring Livestock Show. Free and open to the public.

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

**MCN Sr. Services offers assistance with ice storm debris removal for those who need it.
Call Jackson Barnett at 723-7723 for more information.**