

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

April 2009

April—Tasahce-rakko (Big Spring Month)

www.mvskokefood.org

Volume 4, Issue 4

National Family Farm Coalition

MFSI (Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative) is a new member of the National Family Farm Coalition out of Washington, D.C. Vicky Karhu, Director of MFSI, and Ben Yahola, Co-Director now share a seat on their board representing local, minority and small farmers in our area.

The National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), which was founded in 1986, represents family farm and rural groups whose members face the challenge of the deepening

economic recession in rural communities. The combination of their member groups' grassroots strength and NFFC's experience working on the national level enables them to, "play a unique role in securing a sustainable, economically just, healthy, safe and secure food system," according to their website information page.

A subcommittee of NFFC called the Credit and Rural Economic Development Task Force is designed to seek to ensure that family farmers maintain access to affordable credit needed to

(Continued on page 5)

FOOD & SOCIETY 2009: Gathering for Good Food

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Wallace Center hosted the ninth annual Food and Society Gathering April 21st thru the 23rd. This three day conference was designed to help the participants identify ways to improve our economy, environment, and society through Good Food systems. Attending this gathering in beautiful San Jose, CA. were Vicky Karhu and Freda Wyatt from MFSI (Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative).

Considered were these guiding questions during our participation at Food

and Society:

WHO ARE WE? How far have we come, and what have we accomplished?

WHAT DO WE DO? How can we take charge of our own future? What are the leadership principles and practices we need to use now?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

What's next for Good Food systems? What commitments are we making on a regional level to continue networking?

(Continue on page 5)

Tips on Container Gardening



One of the simplest and most fun ways of gardening would be container gardening.

Some of the benefits we hear most often to this type of gardening is, a.) the containers are up off the ground so you don't have as much stooping over. b.) It is closer to the back door, for those of us who just don't like to venture too far from the shady back porch, and c.) it's much easier in regards to weed control.

Our friend, George Driever, Area Pest Management Specialist for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, gave a class a few days ago at the MFSI office on Container Gardening. His list of information was very helpful to the crowd that attended. We wanted to share it with our readers and George gave us the go-ahead to use

(Continued on page 5)

Container Gardening

(Continued)

some of his information and photos from his slideshow presentation.

We hope you enjoy and if you have container garden photos that you are proud of, please send us the photos. We will put them in the newsletter for others to see. Send photos to Liz Gore at lizgore@mvsokofood.org (please use a v instead of a u in the spelling)

Container gardens are:

- ◆ Limited only by the imagination.
- ◆ Free or inexpensive is good
- ◆ Containers may be of plastic, terracotta (clay), wood, metal, or glass
- ◆ Try not to use containers with narrow openings
- ◆ Avoid wood treated with creosote or other toxic compounds
- ◆ Size and number of plants depends on container

Choose the right container for the plant.

- ◆ Insure adequate drainage
- ◆ Use light colored pots for sunny areas
- ◆ Set containers on blocks or bricks
- ◆ Choose the right soil mixture for the plant
- ◆ Place each plant where it gets it's sun requirement.
- ◆ *"Soilless" mixtures will have the best results
- ◆ Commercial mixtures may be acidic



- ◆ Inexpensive planting mediums may have diseases , weed seeds or insects
- ◆ Determine if you need to add sand by rubbing between hands. If you feel grit, you are okay. If it forms a solid ball, add sand.
- ◆ Well composted material is great potting soil
- ◆ If making your own soil use equal parts of sand, loamy garden soil, and peat moss

Growing plants inside or outside?

- ◆ Inside and outside planting is limited only by sun and available space
- ◆ Two or three pots inside can provide color or delicious vegetables to eat.

((Continued on p 3))

Mvsoko Food Sovereignty Initiative Mission Statement

Mvsoko Food Sovereignty Initiative works to enable the Mvsoko 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

Johnnie Brasuell – MCN Diabetes Program Director

Sharon Iverson- MCN Diabetes Program Dietitian

Emman Spain – MCN Cultural Preservation

John West – Horticulturist

Yvette Wiley – MCN Environmental Services

Donna Williams – Personal Chef

Lou Fixico-MCN Elderly Nutrition Service

Ex Officio Members

Lester Ligons – USDA/NRCS Tribal Liaison

Bud McCombs-Hunter, Fisher, Gardener

Staff

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.

MVTO to Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation, USDA/CSREES, REACH Legacy Program, Seventh Generation Fund and our friends who have donated time and money to MFSI.

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 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday except Thursday we are open until 7:00. Phone: (918) 756-5915 Fax: (918) 756-5918 Email: mvsokofood@gmail.com. Address: 208 West 6th Street, Okmulgee, Ok 74447.

Tips for Harvesting Broccoli

Information provided by Sydney Post Harvest Laboratory

Issues covered:

- ◆ How to reduce yellowing of the broccoli after picked by half.
- ◆ How to prevent damage to the head when shipping
- ◆ How to reduce darkening of where the leaf stubs have been cut by half

The Sydney Post Harvest Laboratory did a study in Sydney, Australia which covered three important issues in regards to harvesting broccoli.

The first issue was how to extend the shelf life of the broccoli simply by harvesting it in the late afternoon rather than in the morning time. The study showed that broccoli heads have varying levels of starch during different parts of the day and night. Starch levels in

broccoli at 3:30 in the afternoon are three times higher than broccoli at 6:30 in the morning. This starch is an energy reserve for the fast growing broccoli which is utilized after the sun goes down.

The study results showed that if you pick broccoli in the afternoon, the shelf life was double than if you picked it in the early morning when its stored energy is depleted. In comparison, the early morning group was half yellow with aging when the afternoon group showed no yellowing.

The second issue is protect the broccoli from damage when shipped. The study showed that leaving a few leaves on the plant when harvesting created a natural protection around the head of the broccoli.

The third issue was to prevent browning of the leaf stubs. They did this by packing the broccoli on



ice and cooling it to 41 degrees before removing the leaves. The third issue is This prevented browning of the leaf stubs.

We hope you have a bountiful harvest of your "cole crops" this spring and early summer and hope these few tips can help.

Container Gardening

(Continued)

Vegetables for containers

- ◆ Tomatoes: Patio, Pixie, Tiny Tim, Saladette, Toy Boy, Spring Giant, Tumbling Tom, Small Fry, Yellow Pear, Early Girl, any of the Romas
- ◆ Peppers: Yolo Wonder, Key-stone Resistant Giant, Canape, Red Cherry (hot or mild), Jalapenos
- ◆ Eggplant: Florida market, Black Beauty, Long Tom
- ◆ Parsley: Evergreen, Moss Curled,
- ◆ Italian Squash: Dixie, Gold Neck, Early Prolific Straight-neck, (Green) Zucco, Diplomat, Senator
- ◆ Leaf Lettuce: Buttercrunch,
- ◆ Salad Bowl, Romaine, Dark Green Boston, Ruby, Bibb, Black seeded Simpson
- ◆ Green Onions: Beltsville Bunching, Crystal Wax, Evergreen Bunching
- ◆ Green Beans: Topcrop, Greencrop, Contender, (Pole) Blue Lake, Kentucky Wonder
- ◆ Radishes: Cherry Belle, Scarlet Globe, Icicle
- ◆ Cucumbers: Burpless, Liberty, Early Pik, Salty, Armenian
- ◆ Melons: small, personal melons do best, can be trellised
- ◆ Others: Carrots, Beets, Parsnips, Cilantro

Watering

- ◆ The size of the container, location, plant size and temperature determines the watering schedule.
- ◆ Once a day is usually adequate, except during hot temperatures.
- ◆ Poor drainage will kill plants.
- ◆ Avoid wetting leaves
- ◆ Watering should be done with a nutrient solution, except for weekly leaching.

Fertilizing

- ◆ Water daily with a balanced nutrient solution.
- ◆ Best if diluted ¼ to ½ of the labeled rate.
- ◆ Prepare a stock solution of 2 cups fertilizer to 1 gal of warm

(Continue)

LANGSTON UNIVERSITY
EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL FARMERS CONFERENCE
Theme: Meeting Challenges Facing Small Farmers and Ranchers
MAY 27-29, 2009
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2009

8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. REGISTRATION
 8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. GRANTWRITING WORK-
 SHOP

USDA Washington, DC Program Leaders

1:30 P.M. Farm FIELD TRIPS

6:00 PM Meet for Get Together at Campbell's
 Farm

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2009

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. REGISTRATION

8:00 – 8:30 A.M. BREAKFAST
 Room: AUDITORIUM

8:30 – 9:00 A.M. PLENARY SESSION 1
 Room: AUDITORIUM

9:00 a.m. Farm Bill Updates for Small and Limited
 Resource Producers

Concurrent sessions 1 10:15 to 11:45: Topics include:
 Alternative Enterprises, Risk Management, En-
 ergy Alternatives, Programs and Services

(Thursday Continued)

Lunch

Sessions 2 include: Alternative Enterprises,
 Value Added Agriculture, Farm Safety, Pro-
 gram and Services

3:45—5:00—Plenary Session 2: Listening Ses-
 sion, Opportunities with the Oklahoma Depart-
 ment of Transportation

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2009

8:00 – 8:30 A.M. BREAKFAST
 AUDITORIUM

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3, 8:30 A.M. – 9:30
 A.M.**

*Sessions include: Herd Health, Forage Man-
 agement, Food Sovereignty, Estate Planning,
 Animal Identification Systems, Business Man-
 agement Workshop, Livestock Management,
 Programs and Services.*

*Awards Luncheon 12:15—1:30
 2009 Farmers of the Year Award/ Partners of
 the Year Award*

To Register call: Langston University , Mathilda Hall 1-866-466-2231

Conference Sponsors

USDA/1890 Liaison Office

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.

Wal-Mart Superstore of Guthrie, OK

Beck Implementation and Trailer Sales

Livestock Nutrition Center

**Cooperative State Research,
 Education, and Extension Service**



*CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and
 well-being, and communities through national program leadership and federal assistance.*



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
 Risk Management Agency



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
 Farm Service Agency



National Family Farm Coalition

(Continued from page 1)

remain in business.

They also have formed a subcommittee to address the need for a national forum to coordinate effective responses to the current dairy crisis. This Dairy Subcommittee amplifies the members' collective ability to impact public policy by providing focus and resources. The NFFC's Washington D.C. farm policy staff increases the Subcommittee's access to federal legislators and regulators, as well as to other national organizations concerned with farm and food policy issues.

The NFFC's Trade Task Force is comprised of NFFC member groups that work on the grassroots level whose leaders educate farmers and community members on trade issue. The Task Force also facilitates information, provides updates on trade negotiations, and coordinates meetings with local officials and congressional members. This ensures the strong presence and family farmers' voice in local and national media, especially during trade agreement negotiations like the World Trade Organization's Cancun Ministerial and the FTAA negotiations in Miami, Florida.

The Farmer to Farmer Campaign, which is under NFFC, focuses on Genetic Engineering, and is a network of 34 farm organizations from throughout the United States that endorsed the Farm Declaration on Genetic Engineering released in December 1999. Farmer to Farmer seeks to build a farmer driven campaign focused on the risks of genetic engineering in agriculture.

MFSI is becoming involved with NFFC and hopes to represent local farmers and their issues. If you are a local farmer who has concerns you would like MFSI to take to the next Summer Board Meeting of NFFC, please feel free to come by our office and speak with either Ben Yahola or Vicky Karhu. They can be reached at 918-470-3819.

FOOD & SOCIETY 2009: Gathering for Good Food

(Continued from page 1)

This gathering was designed to serve us by providing inspiration and space for reflection and conversation. We discovered networking opportunities that we need to strengthen, renew, and grow personally, and with Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative.

We would like to thank the planning partners of this event: The 2009 Food and Society Planning Team, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Team, and The Wallace Center at Winrock International Team and the Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation that sponsored our participation.

For more info: www.foodandsociety2009.org

MFSI Helps Locals Start Gardens

At the beginning of this year, two Muscogee Creek Nation Communities made small monetary donations to MFSI to help their community members begin small garden projects. Holdenville and Checotah Creek Indian Community members devoted time to discuss the food crises locally and decided that MFSI could help them provide for their own food sources. Holdenville Indian Community wanted to start their own food pantry, instead of writing food vouchers for members to purchase food from Wal-Mart Corporation they could provide food by purchasing from tribal member's produce. Many of our citizens have knowledge of canning practices and methods of preserving other foods for the winter.

MFSI has purchased a good tiller to fulfill the food needs of the communities. We have tilled 20 small plots throughout the MCN boundaries. There are first time growers and many have planted, but have since become unable to do the hard work. These once thriving garden sites were easy for us to till. The new sites contained rocks and big roots that have over worked our tiller and now it has been broken. We will continue tilling for the communities after we get our tiller out of the shop. The cost of repair has not been made known to us; however we will do our best to raise the money to get it out as soon as possible. We have over 40 families from throughout the MCN boundaries that have called needing help with gardens. You can help us help the people by going to mvskokefood.org for a generous contribution to MFSI's Community Gardens Project, an after work volunteer effort.

Container Gardening

(Continued from page 3)

water. Use this base solution to dilute to 2 tablespoons per gal for daily watering.

- ◆ Once a week thoroughly water with plain tap water to flush excess salts from the soil.

Pest control

- ◆ Monitor plants frequently for the presence of insects or plant diseases.
- ◆ Learn to identify beneficials such as lady bird beetles, praying mantis, assassin bugs or others
- ◆ If growing vegetables use only products labeled for them. Follow label rates carefully.
- ◆ Contact Extension Office if you have pests that you don't recognize.

Summary

Grow what you like, but choose varieties carefully.

If using transplants, make sure they are insect and disease free.

Have fun and enjoy the beauty and accomplishments of growing plants that can be near you.



Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

208 West 6th Street
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Community Calendar of Events

May 2nd—Okmulgee In Bloom. From 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 Saturday. The first **Okmulgee's Farmer's Market** of the season will be held at the Okmulgee In Bloom Festival. All food producers are invited to set up their booth at the Okmulgee In Bloom festival which will have children activities, along with an herb and plant show. After this event, the Farmer's Market will be held every Friday. For more info call Nowlan Crowley: 918-758-1015.

May 9th (Saturday) - Summer Organic Gardening. Learn how to plan and plant your summer garden. Learn to use time honored organic (chemical-free) methods. Presented by George Driever, PhD. Class sponsored by MFSI (Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative). Time: 10:30—Noon. Location: 208 W. 6th Street (Across from Kirby's) Okmulgee, OK. Info: 918-756-5915.

May 22-23 Conference: Seeds for Success: Cattle Grazing. (Register by May 8) Wilburton, Eastern Oklahoma State College. Baker Hall, Room 115A. Grazing management experts will speak at this two-day conference about marketing and stockmanship and high stock density grazing and “no-risk ranching.” For more information or to register, contact Troy Walker at 918.448.7300, or visit [EOSC's conference page](#).

May 27-29—18th Annual Small Farmers Conference. Langston University Oklahoma City Campus. Topics

include: Grant writing, forage management, livestock production, Preserving Native Seeds, etc. Registration info: 1-866-466-2231.

May 27—Workshop: Mob Grazing

Ardmore The Oklahoma Land Stewardship Alliance will bring rancher Greg Judy to the pavilion across from the Noble Foundation headquarters to talk about how he uses mob grazing to improve both land and profits. Registration costs \$50 per person. To register, contact Kim Barker at oklsa@pldi.net or phone (580.732.0244), or mail checks (payable to OLSA) to OLSA, 35878 Cimarron Road, Waynoka, OK 73860.

Summer Organic Gardening

A Free Class—Open to the Public

Saturday, May 9th

10:30—Noon

MFSI Office; 208 W 6th Street

Okmulgee, OK

Info: 918-756-5915