



# THE BUCKWHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

NEWSLETTER NO. 6

WINTER – JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

*A Farmer Owned and Operated Cooperative—  
Looking forward to another year in business!!*

## 2006

### Board of Directors

Tom Bilek-Chairman, Al Holmquist-Vice Chairman, Jeff Nardello-Secretary/Treasurer, Floyd Hardy, Rod Mursu and Marv Freiborg. Marv is new to the Board as of March 2005. He is a certified organic producer of grain and hay. Marv came to the Board with a great deal of experience, having served on the SFA of Central MN Board and the SWCD Todd County Board.

Tom fills the role of manager for the business. He takes time to play raquetball occasionally. Tom can be reached by phone at the Mill -- 218-631-9212 or on his Cell - 218-639-2312.

DeEtta Bilek assists the Board with tasks from training employees to cleaning the office.

### Employees – Old and New

- Alfred Mead has been here for almost four years now. He is in charge of mixing the feed, keeping up inventory levels, anything mechanical, etc.
- Dick Mead, Alfred's brother, joined us last fall. He helps Alfred with making and bagging feed, fetching, carrying, maintenance, cleaning the mill and the warehouse, and other stuff.
- Lenny Blume helps out on busy days at the mill, drives the feed truck on deliveries, and operates the grain cleaner out at the Bilek farm.
- Michelle Curtis joined us in March as an Office Assistant. She greets customers, answers the phones along with Tom, takes care of the daily paperwork, and coordinates shipping of orders. She's is very excited about the selling of garden seeds this year!
- Trudy Kawlewski started in May as second Office Assistant. DeEtta is training her to enter financial data into the computer and to make sure the organic audit trail is in place. She also greets customers, answers phones, and helps to keep the office presentable for customers.

*We are pleased that all of our employees have a genuine interest in this business and that they get along well with each other. This makes a difference in how well we are able to serve our customers!*

### Thank you to our Customers

We would like to take a moment at the beginning of this newsletter to express our sincere appreciation to all our customers and vendors who make our business possible. 2005 was a very good year! Although we didn't quite make Alfred's goal of 1000 tons of feed and grain processed this year, we came very close at 987.74 ton (this is up from 681 ton in 2004). Furthermore, of those 987.74 tons, 71% of them were certified organic feed & grains and 29% were transitional. Alfred says he is not going to set a ton goal for 2006 because it was so close and no cigar last year. Maybe we could talk him into aiming for 1200 ton or so!



*"The best fertilizer on the land is the footsteps of the owner." --Aristotle*

### IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT PLANTING SEASON 2006 – ORDER SEED!

We will have several varieties of seeds available this year in organic and transitional (non-gmo and non-treated). See page 3 for a summary of some of the seed that we will have available this year. Also ask Tom for any type or variety that you might want for spring planting. He will try to find it.

### New Products

- Blue Corn – using in some dairy and swine feed. Has good protein & lower cost than yellow corn.
- 19% Chicken Layer in organic and transitional – rolled instead of ground. Several of our customers are now using the rolled layer in combination with our 17% layer or along with some of their own whole grain.
- 16% Dairy Calf feed – organic, has been a popular item this year!
- Redmond Salt - Granular - 50 lb bags, Blocks – 50 lb compressed block, and Rock Chunks in various sizes from 6 lb up to 45 lb or more
- Hydrogen Peroxide Pumps – meter peroxide into your water line
- Buckwheat Honey – 1 lb & 1.5 lb sizes

**Diatomaceous Earth**- Uses and Benefits

- De-wormer
- Increase in milk production by improving the animals' digestion.
- Decrease fly hatch and reduce manure odors.
- Eliminates scours in calves.
- Food grade DE may reduce Blood Cholesterol in humans.
- As an insecticide in grain bins, gardens, houseplants, house basements, bedding – any time a bug comes into contact with or ingests DE, it will die of dehydration.  
*A full flyer is available at the BGA office.*

**FEED FOR LIVESTOCK – Beef, Dairy, Chickens, Turkeys, and Swine**

Besides the typical corn and soybean, we use several alternative grains in our feed recipes.

**Flax** – “Flaxseed is unique in its high alpha-linolenic (ALA) acid content. ALA, an omega-3 fatty acid, has been shown to have beneficial effects on heart health and the autoimmune system. Flaxseed...incorporated into the rations of laying hens...results in the production of omega-3 enriched eggs.”  
([www.flaxcouncil.ca](http://www.flaxcouncil.ca) 6/6/2000) “No crop is perfect...Flax seed, wondrously high in protein and in oil, affects egg flavor when used as more than 10% of the feed.”  
([www.misa.umn.edu](http://www.misa.umn.edu) 5/23/2005)

- We use flax millings in our poultry feeds, but not more than 10% of the feed formula.
- We will have Flax seed available – organic & transitional.

**Field Peas** can be used as a plow-down for nitrogen, as forage, or as a grain for protein source in livestock feed. Protein can vary from 20 – 26%.

- We use field peas in our poultry and swine feeds to replace some of the soybean meal.
- We will have Field Pea seed available for both grain and forage.

**Fish Meal** is increased the protein and amino acids in complete feeds. We are gradually revising our poultry and swine feed formulas – both organic and transitional – to include fish meal. It will increase the price.

**Mineral/Vitamin Supplement**

Twenty six mineral elements are known to be required by at least some animal species. We use Super Gro of Iowa (SGI) supplements that contain these minerals plus vitamins. Keith Cuvelier from Super Gro has helped us with feed rations- house and custom blends, since the first year of business. Thank you Keith!

**FEED FOR LIVESTOCK (continued)**

**Organic Molasses** is used in our organic Calf, Goat, and Half & Half rolled feeds. This increases the price, but it is required by organic standards.

**Hulless Oats** – Hulless oats are high in energy, protein, and palatability, and low in fiber. Hulless Oats is an energy-dense product, meaning it's a high-energy feed source that can eliminate a lot of handling and storage bulk, lowering costs. You can feed hulless oats to many kinds of livestock including hogs, dairy cattle, beef calf creep feed, and turkeys. In a comparison with whole oats, barley and corn, hulless oats had higher dry matter content, more TDN, energy, protein, lysine, fat, calcium, and phosphorous. (Successful Farming, March 1999)

“Oats that have no hulls work well as an ingredient in a grain starter ration for both pre-weaned and weaned dairy calves...Hulless oats have only half the fiber content of conventional oats...which is an advantage for young calves that are still mono-gastric and not able to digest fiber very well.”  
([www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu) 3/25/1999)

- We use Hulless Oats in dairy, poultry, and swine feed formulas.
- If you're considering growing this crop in 2006, we will have Hulless Oat seed available – organic & transitional.



**Buckwheat** is an annual, not a grain, related to the rhubarb family. It's a fast-growing warm-season crop with broad, heart-shaped leaves. It requires a short growing season of 10 – 12 weeks or 4 – 7 weeks when used as a green manure. It does well in a variety of soils and has a shallow, dense taproot system that is capable of using nutrients not readily available to other crops. It is used as a cover crop for erosion control, as a smother crop for weed control, as a green manure crop in fields and home gardens to recycle trapped nutrients and stimulate soil life. Buckwheat is used as a feed for livestock and human use, and as a bee plant for honey production.

- We use buckwheat in our calf, goat, poultry, and swine feeds as a source of protein and amino acids like lysine and methionine.
- If you're considering growing this crop in 2006, we will have Buckwheat seed available – organic & transitional.

## SOIL ANALYSIS

**\*Test and balance your soils.** Although soil testing is not an exact science, it is still the best way of finding out about soils. Think of soil test results as a road map. They indicate where the nutrient levels and balances are (a starting point) so one can decide where to go from there (the destination).

- We have a soil probe at the Mill if you want to borrow it to take your samples and we have envelopes to send to Midwest Labs for the test.

**\*Rotate Crops** – Grow part or all of your own nitrogen from legumes. Rotations can help reduce weed and insect problems as well as erosion and water pollution potential.

- We sell legume seed – alfalfa, clovers and hairy vetch.

**\*Use Alternative weed control methods** – Plowdowns, flaming, rotaryhoe, cultivation, alternate planting dates, etc.

**\*Use conservation tillage practices** – Use practices and implements that help control erosion by keeping the organic matter in the top 4-6 inches of the soil.

**\*Use corrective fertilizer materials** – Not all fertilizer materials are the same. Some work better under certain conditions. Some may contain impurities that can be harmful to the soil life and plants. Use fertilizers that are non-toxic and life promoting. Use fertilizers that can help correct imbalances and improve soil quality. Use manures when and where available.

**\*\*\*Once you have your soil test results, they can be sent to Keith Cuvelier at Super Gro of Iowa (SGI) for a recommendation. Tom can order fertilizer according to your needs and he has spreaders for your use with SGI fertilizer.**



## GARDEN SEEDS

We will have several different varieties of vegetable seeds and some flower seeds available for 2006. Including Beets, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cucumbers, Egg Plants, Kohlrabi, Leaf Lettuce, Onion Sets, Peas, Sweet Peppers, Pumpkins, Radishes, Squash, Rutabagas, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips, Four O'Clocks, Daisies, Coneflowers, an Annual Flower Mixture, and a Cut Flower Mixture. There's also some older seed from '03 and '04 available for sale at or below cost to clear out the inventory! These seeds should still grow just fine if planted a little thicker. Please call Michelle for a complete list to be sent to you to order from or stop in at the Mill.

## EXPANDING OUR GRAIN CLEANING PROCESS

Tom and Board members have been working diligently on improvements to the grain cleaning process in order to have better quality seed to offer our members and customers. More news of this project will be in our next newsletter.



## SPRING PLANTING – ORDER FIELD SEED

This is a partial list of seeds we will have available - organic and transitional (non-treated, non-gmo) seed available this spring.

Call the Mill for type, quantity, quality, variety needed and price info.

**Barley, Buckwheat** – Manor and Mancan,  
**Corn** – Brunner & MN 13 OP – 82-88 day,  
**Flax** – Golden, **Grasses** for Hay Mix- Brome/ Timothy/Orchard Grass, **Hulless Oats** –Buff,  
**Legumes** -Alfalfa, Clovers, & Hairy Vetch,  
**Field Peas**- Mozart/yellow & Eclipse/green,  
**Oats** – Ebeltoft & Milton, **Soybeans** - Atwood  
**Wheat** – Hard Red Spring-Gunnar & Parshall  
**Other** (will try to find as requested) – Triticale, Chick-Pea, Lupine, Millet-Pearl/Proso.....

## BUCKWHEAT AS A FOOD CHOICE!

- Buckwheat has many excellent characteristics for human consumption including nutraceutical, nutritional, and fiber qualities.
- Buckwheat flour has a high concentration of the minerals iron, magnesium, phosphorous, and potassium, all of which play a role in preventing anemia and hypertension.
- The rutin in Buckwheat reduces cholesterol levels and acts as a preventative measure against high blood pressure.
- Scientists at the University of Illinois have found that dark-colored honey, specifically dark honey produced with nectar from buckwheat flowers contains 20 times the amount of antioxidants found in paler honey varieties. “Antioxidants are the body’s first defense against free radicals that produce inflammation and tissue damage. Although increasing antioxidants won’t reverse damage already done by free radicals, it can prevent further cell deterioration.
- Buckwheat honey packs the antioxidant power of the vitamin C in a tomato.”
- Finally, buckwheat flour contains high levels of vitamins B1 and B2 that when combined with vitamin E is effective in preventing arteriosclerosis.

*(Barbara Gollman, registered dietician for the American Dietetic Association.)*



## BUCKWHEAT HONEY

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## FLAX

Golden flax provides a high level of omega-3 oils, lignans and fiber that are believed to have a broad range of health benefits.

Eggs from chickens being fed flax as part of their ration have shown to be significantly lower in saturated fat by 22—30% compared with normal USDA analytical values. Polyunsaturated fatty acids are 60—70% higher than typical values largely due to increased levels of alpha linolenic acid, which is an omega-3 fatty acid. *From research conducted at AURI—Marshall - January 2002 for Dennis Jeske.*



## BUCKWHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF MN

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To provide an opportunity for farmers to learn more about growing and harvesting buckwheat and other alternative crops and to add value to these crops by processing and marketing as a group of growers.

- The Buckwheat Growers Assn of MN incorporated in 1997, organized by a group of farmers to market buckwheat.
- The business expanded in the fall of 2000, with the purchase of the feed mill in Wadena.



*Buckwheat Growers Association is proud to be OCIA certified.  
Organic Certified with OCIA Intl. to Process/Manufacture Feed for Livestock & Clean/Bag Grain*

**Hours Open: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. until noon.**

*Please call ahead if you want a larger order of our products so that we may serve you more efficiently.*

**Phone: 218-631-9212 ---- Our Fax number has been changed to 218-631-1711**

E-mail us at [info@buckwheatgrowers.com](mailto:info@buckwheatgrowers.com) Visit us on the web at [www.buckwheatgrowers.com](http://www.buckwheatgrowers.com)