



THE BUCKWHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

NEWSLETTER NO. 1

FALL 2001

****BGAM****

**Buckwheat Growers Association of
Minnesota**

***** MEMBERSHIP MEETING***
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH**

**1:30 PM --TOUR OF THE FEED MILL
206 Aldrich Ave SE – Wadena**

**3:00 PM -- MEETING
VERNDALE COMMUNITY CENTER.**

Members will meet to discuss current activities of the coop and plans for 2002 planting. Also on the agenda are Joe Folsom, from USDA Rural Development, who will discuss the cooperative form of business, and Chris Barnier from Farm Service Agency. He will discuss the Loan Deficiency Program.

**5:00 PM -- POT LUCK SUPPER
VERNDALE COMMUNITY CENTER**

Please bring a dish to share.

Contact Tom Bilek for more information at 218-445-5475. All BGAM members and other interested people are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Directions: From Hwy 10 at Verndale go South across railroad tracks; turn left (East) at first block; Go about two blocks to the end of the road; Verndale Community Center's on right (South) side of road.

*******WORKSHOP*******

FLOUR CORN AS AN ALTERNATIVE AND VALUE ADDED CROP

Some of BGAM members have been growing flour corn, which can be used by gluten intolerant people as a substitute for wheat flour. This workshop will be held on

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH at the
VERNDALE COMMUNITY CENTER,
from 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM.**

Registration begins at 9:00 AM. Flour corn snacks, chili, and cornbread will be provided, and there is a requested donation of \$5.00.

*Please see the enclosed flyer for more
information.*

Buckwheat Growers Purchase Grain Storage Bins and Corn Dryer in Wadena and Expand Hours

This past week the Buckwheat Growers Association of Minnesota purchased five large grain storage bins and corn dryer from Northern Cooperative in Wadena. The bins are located adjacent to the feed mill currently owned by the Buckwheat Growers. Storage and drying of corn will continue to be available to local farmers.

The BGAM purchased the feed mill in August of 2000. The mill offers feed grinding services for individual feed formulas plus organic certified feed for dairy, poultry, swine, goats, and sheep. Additional products that are available include cleaned hullless oats, rolled corn, a half corn/half oats mix, kelp meal, and mineral-vitamin supplements for horses, beef, dairy, swine, sheep, and poultry.

In 1997, when the BGAM first became a farmer-owned and operated cooperative, the main sale was "buckwheat". Gradually members have become interested in additional alternative grains, like hullless oats, flax, winter rye, and livestock feed. Buckwheat, hullless oats, and flax offer nutritional benefits in livestock feed. Buckwheat, rye and hairy vetch offer weed control and nutrient benefits to the soil when used for inter-seeding, cover crop or plow-down. Buckwheat Grower members continue to grow and market buckwheat.

Feed Mill – Expanded Hours:

NEW hours for the BGAM Feed Mill in Wadena:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9AM- 5 PM

Saturday: 8:00 - noon

Stop by and visit the mill, or offer a helping hand.

MDA Grant Assists BGAM

206 Aldrich Ave SE, PO Box 492, Wadena MN 56482
Phone: (218) 631-9212 Alternate Phone : (218) 445-5475

Website: www.buckwheatgrowers.com E-Mail: contact@buckwheatgrowers.com
Tom Bilek, Chair Warren Roberts, Vice Chair Gordon Gulseth, Secretary Floyd Hardy, Treasurer

The Buckwheat Growers Association received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to complete marketing research, the business plan, and to develop a website, labels, and an accounting system. These items are now complete, thanks to many hours of volunteer work by BGAM members, funding from MDA, and technical assistance from USDA Rural Development. The marketing research was completed by Cooperative Development Services (CDS) and also highlights the nutritional benefits of buckwheat. Check out the new BGAM website at www.buckwheatgrowers.com. The e-mail address for the coop is info@buckwheatgrowers.com.

BUCKWHEAT RESEARCH

The following information is from the Southern Illinois University website.

<http://www.siu.edu/~readi/grains/buckreport.htm>

Buckwheat is a relatively low input crop to produce that offers several beneficial qualities to producers when incorporated into the rotational system as a double crop. Research indicates the crop is very hardy, having the ability produce relatively high yields even on marginal soils. The ability of the crop to leave the soils in a loose friable condition while improving the availability of phosphorous for the following crop is also an important consideration when comparing buckwheat to other crops that are traditionally used in double crop situations such as soybeans.

Estimated Variable Costs Per Acre for Buckwheat Production in Illinois.

Seed (60# @ \$.20 to \$.30 per pound)	\$12 - 18
Fertilizer	\$0 - 20
Machinery	\$10 - 25
Labor	\$5 - 10
Transportation	\$2 - 5
Drying/Cleaning	\$3 - 8
Total variable costs per acre	\$32 - 86

Using an average price of \$.10 per pound break-even yields would range from 320 to 860 pounds per acre. According to experienced producers in Illinois, average yields usually range from 750 to 1000 pounds per acre. If markets can be developed for Illinois buckwheat, producers will have another option for their double crop systems.

Markets and Economics

There is a great deal of opportunity for expanding the utilization of buckwheat in many situations, particularly where nutrition

is a concern. Buckwheat is the best source of protein in the entire plant kingdom (Birkett Mills 1998). One pound of buckwheat has as much protein as an eight-ounce serving of beef and contains all eight essential amino acids making it a good choice for human consumption, especially where shortages of lysine and sulfur containing amino acids appear (Edwardson 1996). Buckwheat is also classified as a nutraceutical crop. A nutraceutical is defined as any substance that is a food or part of a food and provides medical or health benefits, including the prevention and treatment of disease (DeFelice 1994). There is considerable research examining the use of buckwheat as a food ingredient. Both Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSAT) and the MEDLINE medical database contain a relatively large amount of research based information on the food ingredient applications and medicinal benefits of buckwheat. The following are two examples of nutritional and health benefits that buckwheat enjoys. (Udesky 1992).

1. The human body can utilize 74% of the available protein in buckwheat. Although other food products are also high in available protein, many contain high levels of fat. Buckwheat is virtually fat free. It is also gluten free.
2. Buckwheat has an excellent amino acid composition that is very complementary to cereal grains. It is very high in lysine, nearly twice the amount found in wheat and white rice.

Buckwheat Growers Association of MN A Farmer Owned and Operated Cooperative!

Remember that the Buckwheat Growers Association of Minnesota is a cooperative, owned by you, the members. It is also operated by you, through the Board of Directors. The Directors are elected as representatives of the membership at the annual meeting. Current Board members are Tom Bilek, Warren Roberts, Gordon Gulseth, Floyd Hardy, and Al Holmquist.

The more involved and informed you are about the activities of the cooperative, the better you can support the Board. The success of the coop depends on your commitment and support of the coop. The purpose of the coop is not only to give you a premium price for you grain, but also to add value to your crop by providing marketing, processing, cleaning, and storage services.