



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Cass Clay Food Partners
Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG)
Date: October 30, 2020
RE: Cass Clay Food Commission Agenda and Correspondence

31st Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

November 4, 2020 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting –

<https://umn.zoom.us/j/98394622639?pwd=ekg1YmR2Y0hlSzE1R0VKUnN4cW8xQT09>

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| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agendab. Review & Action on Minutes from September 9, 2020 (Attachment 1) |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Check-In – Chair Mongeau |
| 10:40 am | 3. Pesticide Use on School Grounds Snapshot – Kim Lipetzky (Attachment 2) |
| 10:45 am | 4. Update on Discussion of Formation of Pesticide Working Group – Noelle Harden |
| 10:50 am | 5. Jurisdiction Spotlight: City of Moorhead – Sara Watson Curry & Gabrielle Lommel |
| 11:00 am | 6. Cass Clay Food Partners Strategic Planning Exercise: Breakout & Discussion – Noelle Harden (Attachment 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. <i>What are the most important issues the Cass Clay Food Partners should work on for the next two years?</i>b. <i>What would success look like for the network two years from now?</i> |
| 11:40 am | 7. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Mongeau |
| 11:50 am | 8. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable – Chair Mongeau |
| 11:55 am | 9. Commission Action Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Next First Fridays – November 6, 2020b. Next Commission Meeting – January 13, 2021 |
| 12:00 pm | 10. Adjournment |

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Savanna Leach at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at www.cassclayfoodpartners.org and Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Attachment 1

**30th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
September 9th, 2020
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission, Chair
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission
Beth McConnon, At-Large Member
Janice Tweet, At-Large Member
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council
Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commission
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Kayla Carlson, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Timothy Hiller, Concordia College – Community Engagement
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Don B., Public Citizen
Clara Bowman, Prairie Roots Community Fund
Greta Gramig, Weed Biology/Ecology Specialist, NDSU
Megan Myrdal, Food of the North/Northern Harvest Bean Growers Association
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Mongeau called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Mr. Utecht. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 11, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes for January was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Ms. Tweet. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1c. Welcome to New Food Commission Members: Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission and Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission

Chair Mongeau noted that Commissioner Arlette Preston had recently been appointed to represent the City of Fargo and Mandy George had been appointed to represent the City of West Fargo on the Food Commission.

Ms. Preston arrived at 10:36 AM.

2. Commission Check-In

Chair Mongeau stated that Commission members and the steering committee had an opportunity to provide updates on news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Haugen stated that, because of the freeze on September 8, she was unsure whether Growing Together would continue with their market garden on Tuesdays. She mentioned that they have been able to share a lot of food with non-profits as well as families that are part of the gardens this season.

Mr. Utecht mentioned that, in speaking with his producers, pepper plants had survived the freeze overnight.

3. Cass Clay Food Partners COVID Response

Ms. Harden provided the Commission an update on the Food Partners' community response to Covid-19. She stated that the Food Partners had created a number of documents since March, the most comprehensive being a community food resource list with up-to-date information on free meals and groceries, food assistance, employment and volunteer opportunities, and other food resources. She noted that other documents created during this time also include an FAQ on urban agriculture and gardening in the region, a policy statement and policy recommendations for Covid-19, and a food sovereignty guide that is currently being finalized.

Ms. Harden also noted that the Food Partners had taken advantage of its Facebook site to provide live video updates on various food and food-related issues. She stated that 45 Facebook Live video updates were made from March through August featuring members from the Commission and steering committee, with a number of videos reaching between 400 and 850 people.

Ms. Harden concluded with an update on policy changes in the City of Fargo implemented during Covid-19 including: clarifications on beekeeping in Fargo, a temporary increase in the number of urban chickens allowed per residence, and a temporary boulevard garden program.

Chair Mongeau thanked the steering committee for its efforts and especially thanked Ms. Harden for all of her content work and assistance in preparing the Facebook Live updates.

4. Food of the North Update

Megan Myrdal provided an update from Food of the North and its monthly First Fridays events. She explained that Food of the North had held four virtual meetings since the beginning of Covid-19, the most recent being on regenerative grazing practices. She noted that virtual meetings can be viewed using either Zoom or Facebook Live and that past presentations can be viewed on the organization's Facebook page.

Ms. Myrdal stated that the upcoming meeting in October will feature information on the U.S. food supply chain and issues facing distributors, growers, and consumers during Covid-19. She noted that November's presentation will center on Native American Heritage Month and that December's meeting will focus on locally-made dairy products.

Ms. Myrdal concluded with information on Food of the North's website updates and different resources available for the community on the site.

5a. Food Justice Event and Follow-Up Survey Results

Ms. Carlson provided the Commission an update on the virtual Food Justice in the North event held on July 28. She explained that the event was developed in collaboration with Food the North, NDSU Extension, U of M Extension, and the Cass Clay Food Partners. She explained that the event centered on ways to create a more just and equitable food system to meet local needs in the area and that over 75 people attended the live conversation, with an additional 500 views since its initial broadcast.

Ms. Carlson stated that in feedback from a follow-up survey from the event, individuals stated that they would like to see the community look at food justice on a more systemic level, open up opportunities for more culturally-appropriate foods to be grown and distributed in the area, and work on food sovereignty policies. She noted that she would share the full survey results with the Commission after the meeting via email.

5b. Great Plains Food Bank Update

Ms. Tweet provided an update on the Great Plains Food Bank and its activities since March. She explained that the Great Plains Food Bank runs mobile distributions throughout North Dakota and that, from March to July, they had seen a 61 percent increase in households served compared to the same time in 2019. She stated that many of their partner agencies saw a spike in attendance numbers in March, with gradually decreasing numbers in May and June but numbers again increasing in the latter half of the summer as people become more comfortable with Covid-19 safety measures. She also noted that the Great Plains Food Bank had been able to bring the USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box Program to Cass and Clay counties, with over 280,000 additional pounds of produce serving almost 9,000 families.

Ms. Tweet also noted a sharp increase SNAP referrals at the beginning of the pandemic, with referral numbers dropping as people began receiving stimulus checks and additional unemployment benefits as part of the CARES Act. She explained that referrals had been increasing again with the expiration of the enhanced unemployment benefits at the end of July.

Ms. Tweet concluded by noting that the third annual Hunger and Health Summit will be held virtually Thursday, October 29 from 8:00 to 12:30.

5c. Moorhead Resiliency Task Force Update

Mr. Hiller provided an update on the Moorhead Resiliency Task Force.

Mr. Hiller started off by noting that Concordia College is hosting its annual symposium on September 22 and 23. He stated that the topic this year is "Food for Good" and that a number of national speakers will be doing online events.

Mr. Hiller noted that the Resiliency Task Force was founded in 2019 with the goal of defining what it means to be a resilient community in light of climate change and social disruptions, and more recently with the current pandemic. He stated that the task force has five working groups focusing on different areas including: the economy, ecology, energy and resources, health and wellness, and social equity and governance.

Mr. Hiller explained that several of the initiatives undertaken by the task force included a public health initiative with New Americans, a community garden initiative, several different seminars including discussions on entrepreneurship and mental health, and an intercultural development inventory to assess and increase awareness of intercultural competencies.

6. Pesticide Use on School Grounds Snapshot

Ms. Lipetzky presented a draft community snapshot regarding pesticide use on school grounds. She stated that the issue brief explains why children are more vulnerable to the effects of pesticide use including: their rapid development, children being more likely to be exposed to pesticides by playing at ground-level, and by children putting their hands on their face and mouth regularly. She explained that an important thing local school districts can do is have a pesticide application notification system for parents and the community.

Ms. Lipetzky explained that the draft snapshot provides information on what school districts in Cass and Clay counties do for pest control options and weed control, as well as any notification systems that they use. She also noted that there is contact information for who to get in touch with at the school districts should parents or community members have any questions.

Ms. Lipetzky concluded by noting a community actions section included in the draft snapshot with actions including: continuing to implement integrated pest management strategies, improving pesticide application notification systems, considering no-spray buffer zones around playgrounds and school gardens, and collaborating with parent groups or local gardening and wildlife groups to hand-weed problem areas. She noted that the West Fargo Public Schools has a hand-weeding program for mulch beds and that Moorhead Area Public Schools is testing a no-spray test site and Ellen Hopkins Elementary. She also noted a table at the end of the snapshot that shows the pesticide and herbicide products used by each school district.

7. Discussion on Formation of Pesticide Working Group

Ms. Harden informed the Commission that the steering committee had been considering the formation of an herbicide and pesticide working group since early 2020. She explained that this issue first arose in 2017 when Growing Together and FARRMS were planning a community garden and incubator farm on City of Fargo land in south Fargo. She explained that Cass County Weed Control reached out to the two organizations and the city to inform them that they had sprayed an herbicide on the site that can remain in the soil for several years, thus rendering the site unusable for farming and gardening activities.

Ms. Harden expressed that there seems to be some level of interest in looking at alternative practices for weed and pesticide control at a regional level. She asked the Commission their thoughts on forming a smaller working committee that would include Cass County Weed Control and the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, members from the steering committee, and other interested individuals to both examine current practices and potential alternatives.

Chair Mongeau expressed that this may set a negative precedent for individuals who each decide on what treatments they apply on their own property. She stated that this working group could facilitate good conversations but did not want to alienate certain growers.

Ms. Lipetzky stated that Fargo Cass Public Health had received a letter from a concerned resident about chemical spray drift damage to their garden from an adjacent property and that it's difficult to respond to those types of situations. She also noted articles in regional newspapers addressing the same issue.

Ms. Watson Curry expressed that this group could help provide more centralized information for residents throughout the area who want to know which parks or open areas have recently been treated for herbicides or pesticides.

Chair Mongeau suggested that Commission and steering committee members look at some of the prior research on pesticides and herbicides, including the issue brief and snapshot on pesticide use on public land, and revisit the issue in November.

8. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Mongeau informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments.

Greta Gramig, Weed Biology/Ecology Specialist at NDSU, noted that there are a number of issues closely related but not the same when it comes to discussing weed and pest management strategies. She stated that she would like to see at least one person at the city or county level work on raising awareness of the issue and perhaps work on pesticide use reduction efforts.

9. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

Chair Mongeau asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates.

Ms. Lipetzky informed the Commission that GleanND is potentially holding a glean on September 20 at Heart and Soil Farm near Grandin, ND.

Ms. McConnon noted that there is currently a lot of attention on the issue of vector control after thousands of monarchs died after aerial mosquito spraying in late-August. She stated that community members have a lot of questions on what was sprayed and how much was sprayed. Ms. Harden responded that Cass County Vector Control would be addressing the Moorhead City Council on September 14. Ms. Watson Curry noted that the issue was addressed at the Fargo City Commission on September 8.

10. Commission Action Steps

Chair Mongeau stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on November 4. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held online on October 1 at 8:00 AM.

Chair Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 11:44 AM.

Pesticides on School Grounds

Cass-Clay Community Snapshot
May 2020

Introduction

School gardens have made a regular appearance in Fargo-Moorhead and around the country as a way to provide kids the opportunity to learn about gardening, to gain access to healthier foods, and to increase exposure to vegetables. Parents, teachers, and community members have the health of the community's children in mind and, for some, this has extended to the low-level pesticide exposure children receive at school.

Kids are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of pesticides due to playing at ground-level, putting their hands on their face and mouth regularly, and their rapid development and cell division. A child's neurological and behavioral development may be particularly affected even at low-level exposures to pesticides. Two ways school districts can reduce exposure to students are by implementing Integrated Pest Management strategies and having a pesticide application notification procedure for parents and students.

With schools and pesticides, balance is needed. School districts have voiced concerns about neighbor complaints if they do not spray for dandelions, while some parents want zero spraying on school grounds. There is room for education and negotiation, like with Moorhead Area Public Schools which is trying a test site at Ellen Hopkins Elementary School where they will not be spraying near the school garden and nature playground. They will compare this site with sprayed sites to see if they can continue a no-spray area. The local school districts need community backing and support to make test sites like this successful.

This balancing act cannot begin without a conversation, a starting point. This document aims to be that starting point so parents and community members know the process for pesticide application and who to contact with questions. This community snapshot is a companion document to the *Pesticides on Public Land Snapshot* and the related *Pesticides on Public Land Issue Brief*, both found on the Cass Clay Food Partners' website.

Below is a pest control narrative from local school districts and a section of possible community action steps. The resource section provides some helpful websites, and an appendix contains a list of the school districts' pesticide products. Appendix B consists of a letter from a Moorhead resident to the Moorhead Area Public Schools, which led to a meeting of the letter-writer and school officials to discuss weed control at the school near his house. The resident, Steve Lindaas, later won a seat on the Moorhead City Council.

Cass-Clay Pesticide Use on School Grounds

Cass County

For rural school property, residents should contact the school district's Building and Grounds staff to find out what pest control options they use.

Fargo Public Schools (FPS)

FPS has over 11,500 students enrolled, 25 sites, 324 acres of green space, and a Grounds Department with 4 full-time staff and 2 seasonal positions. They have two staff members who are licensed pesticide applicators, and the bulk of the weed control focuses on dandelions and clover (broadleaf weeds).

The weed control is mostly done externally on an annual contract, and their current contractor is Team Lab out of Detroit Lakes, MN. The contractor is on a broadleaf weed control schedule where the district is split into two zones: Fall and Spring. These zones are based on site acreage. FPS Grounds crew occasionally applies broadleaf control products to manage smaller trouble areas. They spot spray in pavement cracks and around new trees to control plants growing too close to the trunk so they do not damage the trunk of the trees with the string trimmer.

To reduce the risk of exposure to children, Grounds plans the broadleaf control schedule around school-out days and weekend days. They notify the community of their upcoming weed control applications by running a notice in the newspaper, and emails are sent to the schools with their application schedule. Both Grounds and their contractor flags treated sites to notify those who may come on site after application.

Insect control is handled externally. FPS operates Trollwood/Bluestem Center for the Arts in south Moorhead, and the events at this site usually occur in the evening when mosquitoes are most active. They use The Mosquito Man for larvicide in standing water as well as a barrier spray to the site. If there is a surge in mosquitoes, FPS will hire Airborne Custom Spraying to apply a mosquito adulticide prior to a scheduled performance.

As part of their Integrated Pest Management strategy, they use crop selection, cultivation in high traffic areas, and irrigation. For crop selection, they plant grass varieties appropriate for the local climate and the site it will be grown. For example, for a fresh site or repairing a damaged area that has high sun exposure and no available irrigation, they select a drought tolerant seed variety. Regarding cultivation practices, if they have a high traffic site they will aerate regularly to counteract soil compaction. Lastly, they use adequate irrigation, when available, to sustain healthy turf growth. Last season there were cooler temperatures and regular rainfall which allowed unirrigated sites to thrive and avoid dormancy. Avoiding dormancy allowed these sites to better fend off weed growth.

*Contact: Blake Mikesell, Maintenance & Operations Director, mikeseb@fargo.k12.nd.us
<https://www.fargo.k12.nd.us/domain/101>*

West Fargo Public Schools (WFPS)

WFPS has over 11,500 students enrolled, 26 buildings, 326 developed acres, and a Grounds Department of 7 full time staff and 5 seasonal positions. Two staff members have been licensed pesticide applicators for a total of over 40 years, and the main weeds they aim to control are dandelions, clover, and Canadian thistle.

In the spring, Grounds staff puts down granular herbicide on the mulch beds to control grasses and broadleaf weeds. The district hires a contractor annually for broadleaf control applications, and the current contractor is Team Lab out of Detroit Lakes, MN. The contractor sprays for broadleaf weeds the week

after the school year ends to minimize the risk of exposure to students. Spot spraying of weeds in mulch beds and sidewalk cracks and parking lots is monitored and spot-sprayed when weeds have accumulated.

To notify the community and students, applicators flag the areas that have been treated, notice of pesticide applications are posted to the district website, and the administration at each school is sent an email notification of upcoming applications.

Minimal insect control is performed outside of the buildings. Last season Midwest Pest Control was called in to take care of one hornet's nest and one wasp's nest.

The Grounds Department employs Integrated Pest Management strategies to reduce pest levels. They promote healthy turf to out-compete the weeds, and they choose varieties of grasses that thrive in this climate and need minimal maintenance. On their athletic fields, they irrigate, fertilize, overseed, aerate, and topdress the turf to keep it healthy. They also hire summer help through their Vocational Training Services for Individuals with Disabilities to pull weeds in their mulch beds. Beyond these, the Grounds Department explores other methods before turning to pesticides.

*Contact: Jeff Goebel, Director of Buildings & Grounds, jgoebel@west-fargo.k12.nd.us
www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/domain/99*

Clay County

For rural schools, residents should contact the school district's maintenance personnel to find out what pest control options they use.

Moorhead Area Public Schools (MAPS)

MAPS has over 7,000 students enrolled, 9 sites, 129.2 grass acres, and 48.5 FTE Building and Grounds staff to serve these sites. Most of these staff are for Buildings because they hire out for Grounds on a two-year contract. They are currently putting out a request for bids and will start a new contract this spring. Their last contract was with JT Lawns. The contractor sprays the entirety of the grounds the second week in June, then monitors and spot-sprays after that. Their weed control focuses on cosmetic weeds like dandelions, not noxious weeds.

To reduce the risk of exposure to children, they spray early in the morning before the YMCA kids are on the grounds. They also send a notice out to kids at the beginning of each year through the school district in case anyone has an allergy or sensitivity.

Prior to his election to Moorhead City Council, Steve Lindaas started advocating with MAPS. He met with Jim Smith (Director of Property Services) and Kristin Dehmer (Executive Director of Human Resources and Operations), which led to the district agreeing to post on its website what is being sprayed and when, along with links to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) of the products used. Also due to this meeting, they will do a no-spray test site at Ellen Hopkins Elementary School around the nature playground, near the fruit trees and garden. They have expressed concern about receiving complaints from neighbors about dandelions blowing into adjoining yards.

Contact: Jim Smith, Director of Property Services, jsmith@moorheadschoools.org
www.moorheadschoools.org/About/District-Office/Departments/Property-Services

Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Public Schools (DGF)

DGF has over 1,600 students enrolled, two school sites - one in Glyndon and one in Dilworth, and three Building and Grounds staff who oversee these locations. For weed control, these staff members do some of the herbicide spraying where about once per month they will spray the sidewalk cracks and along the fence perimeters.

Most weed control is fulfilled by Dave's Spray Service out of Glyndon, MN who holds an annual contract with the district. Beyond spraying, he is in charge of the health of the turf, fertilizing it in the spring and overseeding it for it to remain healthy to reduce weed growth. He sprays twice per year - once in the spring when school is out and once in the fall after school when there are no scheduled activities. He flags the treated areas so people walking past are aware he has sprayed. Further, he will come spot spray if the Grounds staff alerts him of weeds after they mow. He sprays for many types of weeds, such as dandelions, thistle, clover, lawn violet, and leafy spurge.

Contact: James Nettleton, Building Maintenance Supervisor, jnettleton@dgf.k12.mn.us
<https://www.dgf.k12.mn.us/dgf-departments/facilities-maintenance>

City of Horace

The City of Horace is a part of the West Fargo Public School system. See "West Fargo Public Schools" above for more details on weed control.

Community Actions

Local school districts can:

- Continue implementing Integrated Pest Management strategies, and reviewing what school districts across the country have implemented.
- Continue improving the pesticide application notification systems for parents and community members.
- Consider creating a no-spray, buffer zone around playground areas and near school gardens.
- Collaborate with parent groups or local gardening and wildlife groups to hand-weed problem areas.

What can I do?

- Volunteer at your child's school to hand-weed or create a parent group to do so.
- Work to make your school a Honey Bee Haven (honeybeehaven.org).
- Connect with your school district's Grounds Department if you have questions regarding weed or insect control strategies at your child's school.

Resources

Beyond Pesticides - Safer Schools

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/schools/publications/IPMSuccessStories.pdf>

IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Institute of North America

ipminstitute.org

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

<https://www.panna.org/resources/schools-playgrounds>

Pesticide Exposure and Child Neurodevelopment

Liu J and Schelar E. Workplace Health Saf. 2012 May; 60(5): 235-243.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4247335/>

For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or

klipetzky@fargond.gov

Appendix A: List of Pesticides Used on School Grounds

Table 1: Pest control products used by Cass-Clay Schools in 2019

| Jurisdiction | Product |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Fargo Public Schools (FPS) | Team 33 Tri-kill - Applied by Team Lab Razor Pro – Limited application by FPS Millennium Ultra 2 – Limited application by FPS Escalade 2 – Limited application by FPS MARC 60 – Applied by FPS |
| West Fargo Public Schools (WFPS) | T33 Tri Kill Plus: Application for broadleaf control by Team Lab T36 Prometon: Spot treatments on hard surfaces by WFPS SureGuard SC: Spot treatments on hard surfaces by WFPS GlyphoMate 41: Spot treatments on hard surfaces and mulch beds by WFPS Quali-Pro T/I 2.5 G: Pre-emergent granular on mulch beds by WFPS |
| Horace | Part of West Fargo Public Schools System |
| Moorhead Public Schools | Roundup (Buccaneer) 2, 4-D (Amine) |
| Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton | Roundup - Applied by DGF Escalade 2 - Applied by Dave's Spray Service Mec Amine-D - Applied by Dave's Spray Service Trimec - Applied by Dave's Spray Service Strike 3 - Applied by Dave's Spray Service |

Appendix B: Letter from Resident to Moorhead Area Public Schools

August 29th, 2019

Hello,

We are writing this letter to have you consider helping create healthier lawns for kids and critters by implementing a no-spray policy.

We live across the road from Ellen Hopkins Elementary School, and have lived there for 20 years. We enjoy seeing children and their parents and caregivers playing in the playground anytime there is daylight - our community loves gathering in this space all four seasons. There is a track to walk or jog around, a small basketball court, and a baseball diamond in addition to the soccer, football, and old-fashioned chasing games we see children of all sizes participating in. We see our neighbors walk with friends or their dogs around the schoolyard. It is an active place!

We also have a front row seat to see the type and frequency of care the Moorhead School district takes of the grounds. Snow removal, de-icing the parking lot, mowing, trimming, and spraying the schoolyard are activities we are acutely aware of from our dining room window. We walk or bike to MSUM every day all year round, and travel through the south school parking lot and across to the north side.

We have a question about the spraying. In most recent times, there has been no markers indicating that spraying has occurred, even though we have watched the spray vehicles zipping across the grounds and have felt the chemical spray droplets hit our faces as we bike to work. Children are sometimes actively playing on the playground. And they frequently play on the grass right after a spraying event. We are wondering what the school district's goal is for spraying the lawn? How will it serve our children and their outdoor activities? Who is aware of, and approves the chemicals that are used? Who is aware of, and approves the frequency of chemical application? How do these chemicals impact the pollinator diversity and the bird life in the area, and potentially the health of the children and dogs who play there?

In these times of increasing loss of habitat (i.e. adding more parking lots, reducing the diversity of vegetation in lawns, killing off species at the bottom of the food chain, etc.) our wildlife species are taking a huge hit on a global scale as well as a local scale. The science is clear - we are in the beginnings of the sixth mass extinction of species on our planet, with impacts for our food and agricultural systems. The fruit trees and gardens that were lovingly planted and are being cared for at Ellen Hopkins need pollinators. The plants need microorganisms in the soil to maximize their uptake of soil nutrients. They need decomposers to do their job and work through the dead plant materials above and below ground.

Minnesota is becoming a leader in the education and engagement of homeowners to consider rethinking their lawn care to encourage healthier lawns for plants, animals, people, and pets. Our state was even featured in the Smithsonian magazine for a new grant program, and the response to the program has been overwhelming! The rusty patched bumblebee is identified by Minnesota as an endangered species, yet making lawn habitats for it to thrive is easy to do. Dandelion flowers are one of the first spring flowers and are an important source of food for bumblebees and other pollinators. Clover are legumes and fix nitrogen in the soil which improves the health of the ecosystem (lawn) that they are in, plus they also serve as food for bumblebees. Monocultures are not as resistant to temperature and humidity swings. Our lawn, which has not been sprayed for 20 years, does not look much different than the school lawn. In fact, when we have had moderate droughts our lawn stayed greener since it had a variety of species.

We did call JT Lawn Services and Landscaping last night and asked for a bit of information about the types of chemicals they are spraying. We also looked up some information on their website. The pesticides they spray have some concerning warnings associated with their application. We have noticed that the workers don't routinely wear protective clothing and eye cover. In addition, as we stated earlier, children are often playing on

the freshly sprayed areas immediately following application. As scientists we don't think that the chemicals we have researched pose an alarming concern for people if they are applied safely and people are kept off, but it is a different story for wildlife.

Applying the precautionary principle would suggest that it would be best to avoid or minimize the application of chemicals if at all possible. Please consider implementing a district wide no-spray policy. Alternatively, consider implementing a no-spray policy at selected properties and/or locations (i.e. high traffic and sensitive to wildlife and plantlife). Ultimately the public needs to be better informed about what is being applied. This information could be posted online using the MHD School District announcements or calendar (and/or on individual school websites). Spraying information should be able to be posted at least the day prior to any planned application, including what is being applied.

Above all, we hope that the school district knows what is being sprayed for, the goal of the spraying, and how applying pesticides will serve the kids and community.

We understand that some neighbors of the school properties might have concerns but we would gladly walk around and talk to neighbors about why the school district is not spraying. This policy could also be incorporated into school literature and even some science lessons.

The school district is currently considering a RFP to provide lawn care and snow removal for the next three year cycle. Hence it would be a good time to consider making a change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Lindaas and Alison Wallace
1123 22nd Ave South
Moorhead, MN 56560

PS: Our children, Jakob (age 28) and Maija Lindaas (age 25), had a wonderful education provided by the Moorhead School District and we cannot speak highly enough of the care and guidance from the community that they received.

UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/><https://www.beelab.umn.edu/sites/beelab.umn.edu/files/floweringlawninfoenrtflogo.pdf>

Minnesota Will Pay Residents to Grow Bee Friendly Lawns - Smithsonian, July 2019
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/minnesota-will-pay-residents-grow-bee-friendly-lawns-180972430/>

To help bees, skip herbicides and pesticides, keep lawns naturally diverse
<https://phys.org/news/2016-10-bees-herbicides-pesticides-lawns-naturally.html>

Scientists show cities can serve as a refuge for insect pollinators
<https://phys.org/news/2016-09-scientists-cities-refuge-insect-pollinators.html>

Bee Lawns video - University of Minnesota Extension
<https://extension.umn.edu/lawns-and-landscapes/flowers-pollinators#planting-bee-lawns-1130611>



Cass Clay Food Partners: 2020 Impact Report

EXTENSION PROVIDES LEADERSHIP TO THE CASS CLAY FOOD PARTNERS IN ORDER TO CREATE A MORE HEALTHFUL AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM IN CLAY COUNTY, MN AND CASS COUNTY, ND

THE SITUATION

The Cass Clay Food Partners was initially formed in 2010 through a partnership between University of Minnesota Extension, North Dakota State University Extension, Clay County Public Health, and Fargo Cass Public Health. Over the last 10 years, CCFP has taken on a range of approaches and strategies to improve all levels of our community food system to assure that residents have access to safe, nutritious, affordable and culturally-based foods. During 2020, CCFP embraced a new level of work in order to address the changing needs of the community during COVID, particularly to help residents access food resources and have greater ability to grow, purchase, or otherwise procure local food.

HISTORY OF CASS CLAY FOOD PARTNERS

- **2010:** Network first formed as the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative
- **2013:** Metropolitan Food Systems Plan completed by FM Metro COG
- **2015:** Cass Clay Food Commission formed to address policy related to local food system
- **2017:** New name and new three-pronged structure
- **2018:** Launch of Cass Clay Food Action Network
- **2019:** Network analysis conducted with NDSU
- **2020:** Implementation of robust COVID-19 food response



POLICY WORK

The Cass Clay Food Commission has created 20 policy documents in three categories:

- 1) **Urban Agriculture** – chicken keeping, composting, beekeeping, season extenders, community gardens, cottage food laws
- 2) **Food Access** – farmers markets, federal nutrition programs, food waste, gleaning, healthy corner stores, hunger and food insecurity
- 3) **Sustainability** – municipal composting, pesticides, pollinators, single-use materials

RESPONDING TO A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

During the COVID-19 pandemic, residents reported decreased food security and an increased desire for local food. We responded to these needs by **sharing information** such as a community food resource list, engaging the community regularly through Facebook (including a total of 45 Facebook live videos), and answering questions about gardening, urban agriculture, and food sovereignty. We also **activated our network** through weekly meetings between the steering committee and the Cass Clay Food Commission, and helped residents navigate the regulatory landscape of city codes and staff interpretations of those codes. Lastly, we helped the City of Fargo **change two policies** to temporarily allow boulevard gardening and keep up to six chickens (up from the previous limit of four).

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS IN 2020

We strengthened our network's presence in the community:

- 72% increase in “likes” on our Facebook page
- Five stories in the Fargo Forum about our work during COVID
- Submitted an academic journal article about our COVID work

We integrated our work more with the Cass Clay Food Action Network (aka Food of the North):

- Provided an update at every public event
- Co-organized a Food Justice of the North event
- Partnered on a series of Letters to the Editor (nine total) published in the Fargo Forum informing and advocating for a stronger local food system

We advanced our policy work through deeper partnership with local government leaders:

- Two policy changes adopted in Fargo
- Collaboration on Frequently Asked Questions guides
- Presentation and partnership commitment from the City of Moorhead



Source:

<https://www.inforum.com/lifestyle/home-and-garden/6538088-Few-apply-for-boulevard-gardens-in-Fargo-but-those-who-do-hope-to-see-program-grow>

Visit the Cass Clay Food Partners website to learn more: www.letseatlocal.org

