

Livestock Re-establishment Research Project at White Violet Farm

Final Report for FNC96-160

Project Type: Farmer/Rancher

Funds awarded in 1996: \$5,000.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/1998

Region: North Central

State: Indiana

Project Coordinator:

[Ann Sullivan](#)

White Violet Center

Project Information

Summary:

PROJECT BACKGROUND

White Violet Farm is a component of White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, a new ministry of the Sisters of Providence. The office is located in our newly refurbished greenhouse. Our land holdings include 350 acres of tillable land, 300 forest lands, three spring fed lakes, and residing on this land is the campus of St. Mary of the Woods College, the administration, retirement and health care complex for the Sisters of Providence. We have owned and cared for this land for one hundred and fifty six years. Until approximately 1965 our farm was an organic "whole farm". We had a champion dairy herd, chicken farm, raised hogs, and grew crops organically. Much of our food was raised organically here. Organic orchards and vegetable gardens were abundant. We had a large bakery and cannery operation. As restrictions came into being, and help was difficult to obtain, our farm slowly reverted to fence row to fence row mono cropping. Now, with declining number of Sisters, and fewer financial resources, we are attempting to restore our natural resources and use them wisely both to meet our own needs, and as part of the education efforts of White Violet Center.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

Our 350 acres of crop land have been farmed chemically for nearly 30 years. All livestock has been off our land for approximately the same length of time. Beginning September 1, 1995 we have initiated a project to renew our land and develop organic agriculture projects to both heal our land and to provide an important educational opportunity for the local community, as well. The introduction of livestock is key to rebuilding our "whole farm" to the organic master piece it was thirty years ago.

The money received from SARE allowed us to evaluate our land and search for appropriate crops and livestock as we began our transition from chemical farming to organic production. We joined the Indiana Crop Improvement Association and organized an advisory council weighted with persons involved in sustainable

agriculture.

The grant allowed us to:

- Do soil testing on our land
- Bring consultants to our Center on green cropping, waste management, soil fertility and livestock reintroduction
- Visit sites utilizing livestock as part of organic farming in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Washington and Ohio.
- Research pastured chicken, buffalo, fallow deer, pastured hogs, and alpacas
- Attend conferences such as Great Lakes Grazing Conference, Wisconsin Fiber Fest, Indiana Crop Improvement Association. Holistic Resource Management Seminar, Upper Midwest Organic Meeting, Indiana Crop Improvement Association, etc.
- Decide on criteria for animal reintroduction
- Present results of grant study to General Officers of Sisters of Providence
- Begin a trial period with three gelding alpacas
- Purchase three bred females with funds donated for livestock re introduction
- Talk about organic projects, including SARE grant, with over 150 groups and 1200 individuals during course of educational programming at White Violet Center.
- Interest local media in our projects
- Create "home movie" for use in educational settings situating livestock as part of organic farming. Film now revised for use outside of SP community

OUTREACH

We presently do educational programs both with St. Mary of the Woods College and the local area schools. This portion of our organic agriculture would be an excellent topic for inclusion in such educational programs. We would make our lands available for field days, site visits, etc. information about this project will be included in our newsletters, as well.

Research

Participation Summary

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or SARE.



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