

Celebrate local farms!

Please join with us on Saturday July 10 for the Festival of Farms, a tour of sustainable farming operations and a mid-summer hoe-down! A bus is scheduled to leave from Just Food Co-op, Northfield at 1 pm (returning at 5) and will stop at three area farms dedicated to practicing planet-friendly food production. If you would like to join the farm tour with your own vehicle, specific tour times are noted. Across the state farmers are participating in this free event organized by the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

The first stop is Simple Harvest Farms Organics. Kathy and Nick Zeman run an omnivore food farm with fruit and vegetables, poultry, pigs, goats, sheep, and bees. The animals' special role on the farm will be highlighted: some are raised for food, some for eggs, some for milk, some for wool. The tour will include their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) veggie fields, which host a growing crop of perennial foods alongside the usual Minnesota suspects of annuals. (1:15-2:15 pm.)

Next the tour will gather at Big Woods Farm, around the corner and down the road from Nerstrand. One of Minnesota's longest running CSA operations, Big Woods Farm is a shining example of what sustainable farming looks like. Laurie and David Hougen-Eitzman maintain thirteen acres of vegetable production, with the help of able fieldhands using a long-crop rotation, and bordered by areas of prairie and Big Woods habitat restoration. During a tour of the fields Laurie and David will briefly address the history and growth of the CSA food movement. (2:30-3:30 pm)

The tour's final destination is Shepherd's Way, home of award-winning cheeses and the Ohlsen-Read family. Steve, Jodi and the Read boys have work tirelessly to provide us and many others across the nation with noteworthy sheep cheese and information on cheese production through classes and seminars. Their farm features fields of sheep, a dairy production center, an interesting barn story, and cheese samples to die for. We know you've heard of Shepherd's Way, now is an opportunity to see it. (3:45-4:45)

This day of celebrating our local farmers will culminate with a mid-summer dinner and hoe-down at Callister Farm in West Concord. Lori and Alan Callister will begin with a farm tour of their own operations which includes an E-2 processing plant (Minnesota equivalent of USDA inspected.) Next a dinner of Callister chicken drumsticks, Open Hands Farm fresh salad greens, Cedar Summit milk and ice cream. The cost of the meal is \$30/family, \$12/adults, \$8/ages 5-12, free for those of us under 5. Family friendly food raised and served on a local farm at family friendly prices!

Then into the barn for a hoe-down dance with music provided by Depot Creek, a band imported from Le Seuer County specializing in traditional folk and jug-bands music. This barn dance will be the perfect ending to a day of local food celebrating.

For more information, or to purchase dinner tickets, please contact www.sfa-mn.org, or Angel Dobrow at 612-216-1206.