Pig Roast, Fresh Garlic, Gourmet Food, Games & More: Minnesota Garlic Festival is This Saturday

This Saturday, Aug. 15, is the Sustainable Farming Association’s 2015 Minnesota Garlic Festival, set for 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson, Minn.

Quickly, here are some reasons why you should attend this family friendly, fun-filled and fragrant event, produced by SFA’s Crow River Chapter:

- The winner of America’s most prestigious pork-cooking competition, chef Thomas Boemer of Corner Table and Revival in Minneapolis, will be roasting a pig
- A cadre of renowned Minnesota chefs from restaurants like The Bachelor Farmer, Restaurant Alma, Tilia, Red Table Meats, Red Wagon Pizza, Common Roots, Victor’s on Water and the Birchwood Cafe will be cooking food in the Great Scape Cafe
- Minnesota garlic growers will have the first of their fresh 2015 gourmet garlic crop – over 100 varieties – at the festival, and it can keep in your kitchen for up to a year
- Chef demos and food talk with Mary Jane Miller throughout the day
- Garlic is one of the healthiest foods you can eat
- Minnesota wine, cider and craft beer
- Educational crafts and games for kids from Budding Farmers
- Kite flying, the Peculiar Pragmatic Promenade, and old-style country picnic games
- Music, dancing, artists, and a medallion hunt
- And, yes, we even have garlic ice cream

Minnesota Garlic Festival is an all-weather, zero-waste event that unites people from all over the upper Midwest to celebrate the bounty of farm country. The proceeds benefit SFA Crow River Chapter as well as the many family farmers who will be at the festival.

Admission: Adults $5, under 12 $3, stroller/carried babies free. $1 parking per vehicle. Click here to download a 2-for-1 admission ticket.

For more information and a complete schedule, visit www.sfa-mn.org/garlicfest.
Executive Director's Note

Ever wonder how much time you are spending on the various projects on your farm or in your work life? Like most of you, I have many different projects I work on throughout the day, switching from program planning to fundraising to financial work, etc, all to keep SFA up and running smoothly. The same is true on our farm. I'd like to be able to know specifically how long I'm spending with hog production, beef production, marketing, etc.

I'm not in the habit of reviewing smart phone apps, but I've started using one called "Hourly," and I really like it. I can create different "jobs" that I want to track my time in. Then as I switch from task to task throughout the day, I just pull out my phone, click the little clock icon for that project, and I'm tracking my time.

Just like financial budgeting, where most people are at first shocked and then benefitted by knowing what they've spent each penny on throughout the week, time budgeting can have the same effect. This is especially helpful with farmers who are just getting started with a new venture or operation. Check it out!

Field Day: Fencing Innovations, Livestock & Cover Crops

Fencing innovations have made the integration of livestock into cover cropping systems easier than ever, and the Sustainable Farming Association is hosting a free field day to show how these strategies can result in improved soil health and enhanced profitability.

Join Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist (right), from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sept. 17 as he installs a semi-permanent fence on the Allen Deutz farm, 2866 Co. Rd. 35, Marshall. Solberg, who has 20 years personal and professional fence design and installation experience, will also lead a discussion of the cover crops planted and how Deutz intends to use them to build soil health and improve his farm profitability. Lunch is included; leather gloves, work boots and safety glasses are highly recommended.

The event is free, but an RSVP is appreciated for planning purposes at www.sfa-mn.org/grazefest or by contacting Solberg at kent@sfa-mn.org or 1.844.922.5573, Ext. 701.

Ready to Learn 'Reality Farming?' Enroll This Fall in SFA's Deep Roots Farm Skills 101

Are you ready to learn what it's really like to be a forage-based livestock farmer? Do you need boots-on-the-ground farm experience in a relaxed environment led by farmer educators?

SFA's Deep Roots Farm Skills 101 fall semester provides the hands-on skills new farmers need to succeed once they’re on the land. Registration for our fall semester is now open, and a
few spots remain for anyone looking to build competence while learning from experienced teachers in a student-focused environment.

The hands-on Farm Skills 101 course teaches pasture management and grazing basics; fence construction, both permanent and temporary; compassionate animal husbandry and handling; and farm equipment maintenance and operation.

Farm Skills 101 students gain experience and build confidence as part of a supportive learning community, which continues as students join SFA's Farmer-to-Farmer Network™ organization. Farm Skills 101 classes take place on two farms in central Minnesota – these are days in the field, not field days. Farmer-educators Sue Wika, Ph.D., Tom Prieve, DVM, and Kent Solberg, MS, lead a class limited to 6-8 students, creating an outstanding learning environment.

New this fall: In addition to the on-farm instruction, students will also have opportunity to discuss some of the classic literature relative to sustainable farming via an online learning community. One exciting component of the online curriculum is the Adjust 2015 New Farm Reality Check, a comprehensive project led by Executive Director John Mesko.

The on-farm classes meet Oct 2-3, 9-10, and 17-18. The online learning community commences the last week of September.

Tuition is just $1,250 and includes lodging and local foods suppers. Scholarships are available. To learn more about the curriculum, the teachers or to register, visit deeprootsfarmer.com or contact Dr. Sue Wika at sue@sfa-mn.org.

Check This Out

Longtime SFA member Bruce Bacon's Garden Farme was recently profiled in ABC Newspapers. Read it here.

Register Now For Deep Winter Production Class

SFA's Deep Roots Farmer Development program is offering a short course, “Deep Winter Production of Greens and Livestock Fodder Utilizing Passive Solar Energy,” set for Nov. 7, 2015, at Paradox Farm north of Ashby, Minn. During the class, Paradox Farm owners Sue Wika and Tom Prieve will provide a detailed overview of the construction and operation of their deep-winter greenhouse, which utilizes passive solar energy with underground heat storage. Cost is $100. Farm Skills 101 graduates may register for $30.

Click here to register for "Deep Winter Production."

For more information, contact sue@sfa-mn.org.

Registration Open for 2016 Annual Conference, MSHS

Registration is now open for SFA's 2016 winter conferences – get the following dates on your calendar and register NOW for the best prices.
Click here to register for the SFA Annual Conference, set for Feb. 13, 2016, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. Until Nov. 1, early bird registration is just $35 for SFA members and $45 for nonmembers. You may also register children 3-12 for the Budding Farmers program and for the SFA Leaders Breakfast.

Click here to register for the SFA Midwest Soil Health Summit, set for Feb. 17-18, 2016, at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, Minn. The MSHS features soil health experts and farm leaders for two days of education and farmer networking – all geared at improving the health of your soil. Speakers include Dr. Allen Williams, Jay Fuhrer, Dr. Wendy Taheri, Todd McPeak, John Mesko, Kent Solberg, Dr. Shannon Osbourne, Grant Breitkreutz, and more. Early Bird pricing is $125 for SFA members and $175 for nonmembers until Nov. 1.

Sponsor & Exhibitor registration is open for both conferences on their respective homepage linked above. And remember that SFA Business/Organization members earn significant discounts on sponsorships and exhibitor space at our conferences. To learn more about SFA Business/Organization memberships, click here.

Vote Now for 2016 Annual Conference Session Topics

A founding concept of SFA is that there is wisdom in the community, so YOU will help to determine and lead the sessions, which will include casual but focused networking conversations on topics that you choose. Using an online voting system, SFA members choose session topics; we will analyze the data and create the schedule around your wishes.

To enter your topic ideas and vote using our system, visit our Annual Conference homepage.

Here are the current leading vote-getters:

- Know Before You Buy: What to Look/Out for When Considering a Property for a New Farm Project
- Farm Power Primer: Machinery Options, Operation and Maintenance
- Growing Fruits Organically in a Northern Climate
- Beyond the Farmer's Market: Marketing Alternatives for the Small and Mid-Sized Producer
- The Art of Stacking: Add Revenue Without More Acres
- Design and Equipment for Better Animal Handling Systems
- Maintaining a Forage Chain - Full Season
- Fruit Farming in Minnesota
- Basics of Farm-Scale Permaculture
- Low cost wintering of livestock

SFA's Solberg at CLC Field Day on Aug. 21

SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist Kent Solberg will take part in a cover crop field day as part of Central Lakes College’s annual Demonstration and Field Day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Aug. 21 at the college, 26505 County Rd 2, Staples.

Overall, the event’s schedule includes lunch, a corn and soybean research tour, an edible bean plot demonstration, and sessions on varied topics like sunflowers, nitrate testing and living legacy gardens. For more information on the CLC events and a schedule, call 218.894.5141 or visit www.clcmn.edu/ag-energy-center/.

Also as part of the event, Orcharding in the North will be hosting a Northern Fruits Workshop.
that includes a vineyard tour, wine tasting, educational sessions and more just west of the campus at 1830 Airport Rd, Staples. There are nominal fees involved for this portion of the day’s events. For questions and to RSVP for the Orcharding events, contact Kent Scheer at kentscheer@outlook.com.

Annual Conference Photo Feature

Photographer extraordinaire Crystal Liepa once again documented our 2015 Annual Conference, held Feb. 14, 2015, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. To learn more about Crystal, visit her website.

Workshop: Learn How to Serve Food on Your Farm

Two innovative Renewing the Countryside field days, held Aug. 15 and 22, will help farmers interested in hosting pizza farms, farm dinners and other culinary events on their farm. Each day will include a Q&A session, farm and pizza operation tour, as well as informational sessions on business start-ups and legal issues. At the field days, Farm Commons director Rachel Armstrong and “ecopreneur” Lisa Kivirst will thoroughly explain the steps required to add food service to a farm business.

The Minnesota field day (Aug. 15) will be held a DreamAcres Farm, an off-the-grid farmstead in Wykoff, MN that offers a variety of educational and cultural programs in addition to growing organic produce and making pizza. The Wisconsin specific day (Aug. 22) will be held at Stoney Acres Farm, a third-generation farm in Athens, Wis., that produces a wide array products including organic produce, meat and even the grain for their pizza crusts. For both days, farmers are invited to attend the previous night to see each pizza farm in action during their regular public hours.

Information/registration: renewingthecountryside.org/on_farm_food_service or by contacting Eli Goodwell at eli@rtcinfo.org or 612.208.8354.

Learn Elderberry Harvesting, Processing at Apprenticeship

The Minnesota Elderberry Cooperative is hosting a Harvest Apprenticeship from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both Aug. 28-29 at Natura Farms, 19060 Manning Trail N., Marine on St. Croix, Minn. The event is free and open to the public.
The event begins with orientation and a review of the GAP/FDA rules followed by a mostly hands-on elderberry in-the-field harvesting and processing workshop. Qualify to volunteer in harvesting or learn how to harvest and process your own elderberries, and learn about the required documentation and get registered to sell to River Hills Harvest Elderberry Producers and the MEC.

RSVP to naturalkickfarms@gmail.com. Please bring your own food. Coffee and a few snacks will be provided.

Grassfed Exchange Conference is Sept. 16-18


This premier Grassfed conference and its rancher-led Board of Directors has crafted a three-day event packed with stimulating tours and seminars, including speakers Dr. Daphne Miller, author of “Farmacology;” Nicolette Niman, author of “In Defense of Beef;” and Mark Schatzker, author of “Steak” and “The Dorito Effect.”


Information/registration: www.grassfedexchange.com or contact Kathy Richburg at kathyr.gfe@gmail.com.
SFA Connect is your bi-weekly link to the Sustainable Farming Association

The Sustainable Farming Association is a chapter-based, statewide non-profit organization that supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking. If you, your farm or organization has any upcoming events that you would like posted on the SFA Community Calendar, email info@sfa-mn.org.

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