SFA News

Minnesota Garlic Festival!

Were you there?

If so, you joined about 3500 other folks from all over Minnesota and from several states for what is becoming the Midwest's premier garlic festival.

Weather was perfect, garlic was everywhere and the event was a huge success. Thanks to Jerry Ford, Festival Coordinator, and SFA's Crow River Chapter for putting on the coolest summer event in MN.

Check out this an more events on our online calendar

Executive Director's Note

This summer has been an exceptional one all throughout SFA - Land. Our farmer members are experiencing one of the more challenging growing seasons in recent memory, with a cold, late spring, which led to late planting of crops into cool wet soils in many areas. Next came unusually high temps and more rain. In parts of Central Minnesota, old timers I've spoken with tell me they've never seen ground this wet, rivers this high in August ever in their lives. Still most agree that 2011 is better than the droughts of 2006, and 2007.

Seems like farmers are never completely satisfied with the weather, and while we may never have "normal" weather, this summer is at the extreme.

What does this mean for sustainable agriculture? It's hard to say for the whole movement, but I can say that for beginning farmers with large volumes of capital at risk, a year like this is frightening. Throw in the turmoil in the rest of the economy and the stock market, and I'm guessing most beginning farmers who are still developing their markets are feeling a little shaky.

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota can do nothing about the weather or productivity of its members. We don't make "bridge loans" to help you through tough times. We do provide the best network of other sustainable and organic farmers in Minnesota. Some have seen difficult times before and their mere presence can bolster a
Our various chapters all have some events designed to bring producers and consumers together in ways that are encouraging and even profitable for both. The power of community may have never been more important than it is now. If you have been receiving this newsletter, but you have never joined SFA, now would be a great time to consider joining. For $30, you’ll become a part of a network of farmers, consumers and support folks, all of whom are desperately needed to encourage, support and train the next generation (and the current), of sustainable farmers.

Additionally, please know that at $30 per member, our membership fees barely scratch the surface of our annual budget. If you have interest in supporting the mission of SFA, an extra donation today would greatly help the cause. Thank you.

**Chapter Update**

South Central Chapter, submitted by Jim Tjepkema

The Festival of Farms tour organized by our chapter was well attended and well received. More than 70 people took the tour which visited: the Dennis Lutteke family farm; the farm of Gary Yokiel and his mother Leona; and Archie and Denise Kluender’s farm. A lunch was served at the Luttekes that included sloppy Joes made by Leona Yokiel from the Yokiel’s organic beef. At all three farms organic farming production practices were featured including organic milk production at Luttekes, organic crop and beef production at Yokiel’s, and the production of organic crops including rye, vetch, and buckwheat at Kluender’s. The farmers on the three farms toured all have many years of experience as organic farmers and had much information to share. Treats served on the tour included organic cookies and lemon aid at Yokiel’s and organic ice cream at Kluender’s.

Our next activity will be a fall social gathering for our chapter. This event is still in the planning stage. Notices on this event will be sent out as soon we are able to set a date and location to hold this meeting.

Pavo Buda has been working on our membership and mailing lists which is now in much better order. Thus, we are able to divide our lists into people who can be reached by email and those who should be contacted by mail. Anyone who has given us their email address should get an email message about the fall gathering. Others will receive a card in the mail.

Brain and Sherry Jansen have joined our chapter recently and are involved in educational and development work on alternative energy sources for farms. You can learn more about their activities at their web site, [www.mybackachers.com](http://www.mybackachers.com). They are currently developing a small scale electric generator called a Water Bug which can float in a stream and generate power. Their activities include running a small crop and livestock farm as well as doing work on energy conservation and production.

Many of our members are involved in various business and educational activities as well as farming. One group that I would like to mention here is Rural Advantage. This is a Non-profit organization headed by Linda Meschke. They have initiated and carried out many agricultural education projects and other work that ties in with sustainable farming. Their office is located in Fairmont, MN. You can learn more about Rural Advantage at their website, [www.ruraladvantage.org](http://www.ruraladvantage.org) and you can get on their email list by contacting them at linda@ruraladvantage.org. They participate in sponsoring many meetings on alternative crop production, cover crops and other interesting topics and will send emails announcing these meetings to you if you give them your email address.

We are making plans to have a display at the RE-Fest in Austin, MN from 11 am to 5 pm on Sep. 10th at Riverland Community College. This event centers on green living and includes vendors selling locally produced food. Information on RE-Fest can be found at [www.re-fest.org](http://www.re-fest.org).

**Out and About**

The [University of Minnesota's MISA](http://www.misa.mn) (Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture) is
seeking to fill some soon to be vacant board slots. This program is a supportive partner with SFA. Please consider giving input into the development of this board.

The purpose of MISA is to bring together the diverse interests of the agricultural community with interests from across the University community in a cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture in Minnesota and beyond. A term on the MISA Board is three years. You may nominate yourself or someone else to serve on the Board.

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**SFA Connect is your bi-weekly link to the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota**

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota 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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