Our Original Odoriferous Occasion: Minnesota Garlic Festival Returns This Saturday in Hutchinson

By Jason Walker • SFA Communications Coordinator

When out talking about SFA, nothing gets a more enthusiastic response than mentioning Minnesota Garlic Festival. People who've been rave about it, and people who haven't hope to attend.

This Saturday, thousands will head to the McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson for the seventh annual festival. With a multitude of chef demonstrations, garlic farmers, vendors, artistic performances and gourmet food options, our Garlic Festival can please the crankiest curmudgeon. Admission is $5 for adults and $3 for children; tots who are carried or in strollers are free.

Minnesota garlic growers will be selling over 100 varieties of their 2012 gourmet garlic crop at the festival, and it will keep in your kitchen for up to a year. The garlic is planted in October, harvested in July, and then cured in time for the festival.

There's kite flying, bocce ball, and old-fashioned picnic games as well as a beer and wine tasting, an "upcycle" fashion show, a garlic growing contest, and a host of sessions with expert farmers. And yes, the Peculiar Pragmatic Promenade.

The chef events are organized by SFA's Mary Jane Miller and include Christopher Sipiorski of Common Roots Cafe, Steven Brown of Tilia, Joe Hatch-Surisook of Sen Yai Sen Lek, Marshall Paulsen of Birchwood Cafe and Elizabeth Ries of "Twin Cities Live," as well as a session with Mary Jane and Thousand Hills Cattle Company.

Bobby Wenner will be manning the SFA booth to talk about our New Crops Project that he is managing, so stop by and say hello.

For more information and a complete schedule, visit our Garlic Festival homepage.

Executive Director's Note

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New Crops Project Blog Just Launched

By Bobby Wenner • New Crops Project Manager

The New Crops blog is going to be a great way to keep everyone updated on the progress of the project. As our work continues to develop, we will be posting project news and other interesting information. Given the nature of the New Crops Project, a blog will be the perfect way to keep everyone up-to-date as the project is constantly developing and expanding.

In the near future we will begin incorporating more photos and videos of the project as we continue to connect with Minnesota farmers who are interested in getting involved.

Here's a link to the blog sfa-new-crops.tumblr.com, and keep an eye out for updates through SFA's Facebook and Twitter pages.

New Contest: Send Photo for Chance to Win SFA T-shirt

Who doesn't want to win a free T-shirt, let alone a cool SFA one? Here's your chance. We're starting a new contest: Send communications coordinator Jason Walker your photos, and the best each month, chosen by Jason's eagle eye, gets an SFA T-shirt.

What kind of photos are we looking for? Simply anything related to sustainable agriculture. At an SFA event, on the farm, in the garden, at a meal, a funny-looking carrot, a beautiful sunset at your farm, your family loading hay, an antique tool ... anything other SFA folks might get a kick out of seeing.

Send your photos to jason@sfa-mn.org, and I'll include the winner in SFA Connect. Note: We don't have unlimited quantities of T-shirts, so certain sizes may not always be available. But we'll try our best.

We'll ask our Facebook and Twitter followers to do the same, too. Speaking of, we're up to 1,600 Facebook "likes" and after only a couple of months on Twitter we have 114 followers. There's a lot of love for SFA going around these days. If you haven't already, click the links to the right to check us out on social media.

Annual Conference Photo Feature

Thanks to Heavy Table photographer Crystal Liepa, we have a stockpile of awesome photos from our 2012 Annual Conference, held Feb 18 at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph. Look for a new photo in each SFA Connect, and read Heavy Table writer Tricia Cornell's story about the conference here.
Energized Fence Strategies for Grazers Seminar Set

Attend a fencing seminar Oct. 13 in Fergus Falls led by SFA's Kent Solberg, owner of Seven Pines Farm and Fence of Verndale and an instructor in the Sustainable Food Production program at M-State in Fergus Falls. Kent has 18 years of professional experience designing and installing energized fence systems for livestock. The seminar will run from noon to 3 p.m. Oct. 13 at the M-State campus in Fergus Falls. Cost is $15 per person and includes a local food lunch. Please register by Oct. 9 by contacting Marci King at 218.736.1625 or marci.king@minnesota.edu.

The workshop is sponsored by SFA, Sustainable Food Production and the Minnesota Dairy Initiative.

Volunteers Sought for Crazy Ruckus in State Fair Parade

Outreach Center, Morris, Minn. Contact Bradley Heins at 320.589.1711 or wcroc.cfans.umn.edu.

For information about MDI and its ongoing projects, contact Kent Solberg at mdi@sfa-mn.org.

Meat Processing
The Northeast Regional Correctional Facility has a meat processing plan that is inspected for part of the year. See a slideshow of the facility here.

Planning For Your Farm's Future
Our Northfield, Browerville, and Clearwater workshops are behind us. Next stop: Fergus Falls. Check future editions of SFA Connect for registration details.

The Farm Transitions project is in conjunction with Renewing the Countryside.

Public Policy
Are you interested in state and federal ag policy? Offer your feedback by taking our Public Policy Survey. It will take about 10 minutes, and will really help us determine the interest of our members and your thoughts about the future of SFA.

Advertisement

Grazing Dairy Herd For Sale: Prairie Wind Dairy in Western North Dakota is dispersing due to farmers' health issues and lack of feed. There are approx. 40 head of Reg. Brown Swiss, grade Swiss, Holstein, and Holstein/Brown Swiss cows. There are also four
If you have ever wanted to get in the State Fair for free, Renewing the Countryside has a fun opportunity for you. RTC is representing local healthy foods in the State Fair Parade on Aug. 23-24 and Sept. 2-3. Ten to 15 volunteers are needed each day to walk in the State Fair parade in exchange for a free entry ticket.

Volunteers will wear fruit and vegetable costumes and accessories, while smiling and waving at the masses and generally making a scene (see RTC’s Sarah Wolbert at right dressed as a purple kohlrabi), all to promote healthy, local foods. One ticket per volunteer is provided; children ages 6 and up are eligible if accompanied by an adult volunteer. Time commitment is 1:15-3 p.m.; the parade runs from 2-2:30 p.m.

Contact sarah@rtcinfo.org to sign up. Include the quantity of people in your group, your name, email, a phone number, and mailing address. We will respond with more information on details for the day.

Tickets Still Available for North Coast Nosh Sampling Event

The Heavy Table and Open Arms of Minnesota announce the fifth edition of the North Coast Nosh locavore sip-and-sample series for Aug. 17, 2012.

The Nosh moves with the seasons, so for this event, an emphasis is on artisanal frozen treats and local street food. Purveyors on hand include Summit Brewing, Corner Table, Caves of Faribault, Alemar Cheese, Gai Gai Thai, Lift Bridge Brewing, Harriet Brewing, Patisserie 46, Peace Coffee, and more. Also at Nosh V is the Food Truck Court: MidNord Empanada Truck, Sassy Spoon, Saucy Burt's, Smack Shack, and Vellee Deli.

The Nosh takes place from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Aug. 17 at Open Arms of Minnesota (2500 Bloomington Ave S, Minneapolis). Tickets are $23 and are sent by mail; proceeds go to Open Arms of Minnesota, with The Heavy Table taking a share for planning and publicity. Ticket price includes samples from all of our purveyors, plus a collectible piece of glassware. Guests must be 21 years of age or older. The first four Noshes sold out, so it’s a good idea to get tickets sooner rather than later. Tickets are just $23 plus tax; click here to purchase and see more details about the event.

SFA is partnering with Heavy Table on a future North Coast Nosh, scheduled for Dec. 9 at Crow River Winery in Hutchinson. Keep watching SFA Connect for information on this and future North Coast Nosh events.

MISA Seeks Nominations for Board of Directors

The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Nominations Committee seeks help in identifying individuals willing to serve on the Board of Directors. 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. Nominate yourself or
someone else to serve on the Board.

Beginning in October 2012, the following vacancies on the Board will be filled: One (1) sustainable agriculture practitioner (e.g. farmers and ranchers); and, Two (2) representatives of the university community with a demonstrated interest in sustainable agriculture (e.g. faculty, staff, students, Extension, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships).

Visit www.misa.umn.edu for detailed information about MISA, an application/nomination form, roles and responsibilities of Board members, and desired characteristics of Board members.

Fall Harvest Event for Women in Sustainable Agriculture

Come share ideas, conversation and laughter while enjoying the beauty and relaxation of the Root River and surrounding bluff country of the Cedar Valley Resort during the annual Fall Harvest Gathering for Women in Sustainable Agriculture Nov. 9-11 in Whalan.

The weekend will include a presentation and demonstration on proper chainsaw use and safety, virtual farm tours, engaging women farmer speakers, small and large group discussions, songs, and plenty of time to relax and unwind.

For more information, contact staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com.

Local Foods Farm Tour Planned in Northern Minnesota

The University of Minnesota Extension, along with the Minnesota North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, has developed a tour of farming operations in Norman and Mahnomen counties in Northern Minnesota. The tour, scheduled for Aug. 16, is an opportunity for friends and families to connect with the thriving local foods community.

Participants will have opportunity to learn about natural and sustainable production methods that can be used in their own backyard gardens. The first stop is Red Goose Gardens, a CSA in Shelly, followed by Dan Brandt's grape operation near Ada and Bob and Diane Spaeth's bison ranch near Waubun, MN.

RSVP by Aug. 13 by emailing Ben Arlt at arltx013@umn.edu.

Farms, Volunteers Needed for RTC State Fair Showcase

Renewing the Countryside needs your help spreading the word about Community Supported Agriculture at the Minnesota State Fair. RTC is working to showcase a different CSA farm each day of the fair, giving fairgoers the opportunity to meet their farmers.

If you are looking for a great opportunity to attract new members, get the word out about your farm, and give thousands of Minnesotans the opportunity to learn about our rich local foods landscape, this free opportunity is for you.

We will provide one free ticket to the fair, parking during your time slot, a 3-foot-by-3-foot cocktail table in the Healthy Local Foods Exhibit of the EcoExperience, and a full day (8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.) to engage fairgoers. Show them what an early fall CSA box from your farm looks like and/or provide samples of your produce.

Also, RTC is seeking volunteers to help greet visitors as they enter the exhibit, prepare food, pass out food samples, staff interactive games/exhibits and more. Volunteers receive one admittance ticket to the State Fair for the day you volunteer, a T-shirt and the opportunity to spread the word about a strong, local food system.

This year, the fair runs from Aug. 23-Sept. 3, and we have plenty of days still open. To sign up or for more information, contact Marjorie Hegstrom at 612-239-5290 or marjorie@rtcinfo.org.

Sustainable Food Program Plans Special Enrollment Event
Anyone with a desire to grow food, learn more about sustainable food systems or start a farm is invited to attend a special enrollment event for the Sustainable Food Production program from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 7, at Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Fergus Falls.

At the 1Stop2Farmin’ event, students will be able to apply to M State, learn specific program information, get financial aid information and register for fall semester classes.

In addition, the 31-credit diploma program provides students with an opportunity to form the solid social network that’s critical for success in today’s re-emerging local food systems. A network of regional farmers provides students with meaningful farm experiences, and during the coming year students in the program will be involved in the construction of a low-energy, deep winter greenhouse.

To sign up, contact Kyle Johnston at 218.736-1544 or Spartan@minnesota.edu. For questions about the SFP program, email sue.wika@minnesota.edu.

Three-Day Permaculture Event Sept. 14-16 in Geneva

The Center For Deep Ecology is hosting three days of permaculture skill-shares, workshops and networking Sept. 14-16 at Harmony Park, Geneva. Gates open at noon Friday – come early to set up camp and help create the event.

Organizers will provide the infrastructure and logistical planning, but attendees provide the knowledge. All skill levels are encouraged at this gathering, which will offer local permaculturists, farmers, gardeners, activists, and others a chance to spend a weekend sharing skills, making connections, and learning.

Volunteers are needed to facilitate a workshop or share a skill. Some ideas include Sheet Mulching, Animals in Permaculture, Hugelkultur, Composting, Urban Permaculture, Bees and Pollinators, Mushroom Cultivation, Vermiculture (Worms eat my garbage), Seed Saving, Freezing, Canning and Drying, Fruit Tree Grafting, Humanure, Wild Edibles Walk, Grey Water Systems, Rainwater Catchment, Storage and Use, & Seed and Plant Swap.

This is a family-friendly drug- and alcohol-free event. There is onsite tent and RV camping, a Community Kitchen to provide six meals (bring your garden surplus to contribute), and a kids' space with ongoing activities. We request a $20 donation to cover toilets, kitchen staples, and site rental. Information: http://centerfordeepecology.org

Organic Dairy Day Planned Aug. 7 in Morris

The University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center's Organic Dairy Day will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 7, in Morris. Educational programs will feature Francis Thicke, Iowa Organic Dairy producer; Fly Management for Organic Dairies by Roger Moon, UMN; and Nutrition for Grazing and Organic Cattle by Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, Organic Valley.

Beginning at 2 p.m., there will be field tour stops that will focus on supplementation of grazing cows; fly management; group feeding of organic dairy calves; and raising organic dairy steers. Field tours will be presented by Jeff Duchene, NRCS, James Paulson, UMN Extension, Roger Moon, UMN and Brad Heins and Elizabeth Bjorklund, WCROC. The field day will include lunch with plenty of time to network with others.

The Organic Dairy Day is free and open to the public. If you plan to attend, or would like more information, contact WCROC at 320-589-1711 or hein0106@umn.edu.

U. of M. Study Seeks Organic Dairy Farmers

Dr. Lisa Wolff, a veterinarian conducting a Master of Science project at the College of Veterinary Medicine at University of Minnesota, needs help for a study about management practices and disease on organic dairy farms in Minnesota.

The project involves one visit to your herd, where Wolff's team will complete a survey about management practices, herd health concerns and commonly used treatment options. There are
Researchers are simply trying to find out which management practices or treatments work on organic farms and which might not. In addition to the survey, we will score the adult cow herd for lameness, hygiene and hock lesions and we will collect samples for free laboratory testing.

Information: Lisa Wolff, wolf0370@umn.edu or 612.625.6906.

Big River Farms Hosting Local Food Harvest Dinner

Attend an afternoon of fun, learning and great food with a harvest dinner event starting at 2 p.m. Sept. 23 at Big River Farms in Marine on St. Croix. The event, to benefit immigrant organic farmers, includes farm tours, a silent auction, and interviews with immigrant farmers.

Dinner will be cooked by Lucia Watson of Lucia's Restaurant, Nick Rancone and Thomas Boemer of Corner Table, Joe Hatch-Surisook of Sen Yai Sen Lek and John Kraus of Patisserie 46. Your purchase benefits Big River Farms and Slow Food MN and is partially tax deductible.

Information/reservations: www.slowfoodmn.org/events.html.

Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop Slated

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is encouraging natural resources professionals and livestock producers to attend the 2012 Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop set for Aug. 21-22 in Hankinson, N.D. The workshop will link natural resource professionals and livestock producers from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota to learn more about the application of livestock grazing as a grassland management and conservation tool. Early registration for the two day event is $40 per day until July 15. After July 15, registration is $50 per day.

Register here or by phone at 800.627.0326 ext. 456.

Cover Crop Cost-Share Dollars Available

Rural Advantage is seeking farmers willing to establish cover crops. Funding is available for up to $20 per acre for up to 20 acres ($400 maximum per farm). Participating farmers may plant the cover crop(s) of their desire. A demonstration aspect and simple reporting will be required. Funding for the project runs from Fall 2009 to Fall 2012, and farmers from all areas of Minnesota are welcome to participate. Cost-share dollars are available. This project is funded by NCR-SARE.

Information: Jill Sackett at 507.238.5449 or sacke032@umn.edu.

Participate in Survey to Help Farmers Protect Hearing

Hearing loss and ringing in the ears is a big problem among farmers, now here’s your chance to do something about it. HEAR on the Farm is a study to test several programs designed to help farmers to make good decisions in protecting their hearing. For a limited time, adult farmers who have e-mail are eligible to participate. Simply go to www.hearonthefarm.org and enter the access code saveears. Farmers can earn up to $40 for participating, and they will be contributing to the future development of better safety programs for farmers.

For more information, contact study administrators at hearonthefarm@umich.edu or 734.763.3211.

Farmers: Obtain Free Animal Welfare Approved Status

Animal Welfare Approved is a free third-party certification and food label that audits and certifies family farms that utilize high-welfare methods of farming, outdoors on pasture or range. Certified farms use the AWA label as a way to add value and to assure customers of high-welfare farming practices, and have access to free expert technical and marketing support.
Here is a quick summary of the free resources Animal Welfare Approved offers farmers:

- **Free AWA marketing materials** including brochures, signs, pens, magnets, note pads, post-it notes, banners and metal gate signs.
- **Technical Advice Fact Sheets** and access to direct guidance from our expert technical staff.
- **Good Husbandry Grants**, available exclusively to AWA certified farmers (and applied farms) to help improve farm animal welfare (look out for new application details in summer of 2012).
- **Farm-to-Farm sales** between AWA farmers.
- Listings for farms, retailers, restaurants, and more offering AWA products in our online directory.

AWA also has resources for consumers, including comprehensive and regularly updated guides to food label claims, including *Food Labeling Guide for Dummies* and *The Grassfed Primer*; and an online searchable database of farms, restaurants and retail locations offering AWA products. For more information, visit www.animalwelfareapproved.org.

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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.

**Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA)**
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