Don't Forget: Register for Annual Conference by Jan. 31 to Receive Reduced SFA Member Rate

Our Annual Conference is nearing – hard to believe it's almost February! Have you registered yet? If not, with the Feb. 18 event looming, you should.

Why? Because beginning Feb. 1, the conference admission rate is the same for both members and nonmembers. To register now for the SFA member-only rate of $60, visit www.sfa-mn.org/conference. If you have not renewed your membership for 2012 you can reserve your conference registration AND renew your SFA membership through April 2013 for just $85.

After Feb. 1, both online and in-person the day of the conference, all registrants will pay the same $85 regardless of membership status. So register now and avoid paying a higher rate. And thanks to all SFA members for their support.

Speaking of the Annual Conference, the news was just released that Dr. Val Farmer, our keynote speaker, will be retiring his news column at the end of March. Dr. Farmer has decades of experience in the field of rural mental health, and it looks like we're catching him while we still can. Dr. Farmer's column won't disappear entirely, however; it eventually will be taken over by Mike Rosmann, an Iowa psychologist who just published a book, “Excellent Joy: Fishing, Farming, Hunting and Psychology.”

Also announced are two Annual Conference schedule additions: a one-hour session on raw milk research and a 75-minute session on legal issues workshop from Sarah Jewell. The legal session will cover the basic legal requirements for enclosing large animals on your farm, describe liabilities for farmers when their animals cause damage, and learn best practices for prevention. It will also cover basic legal issues regarding workers' compensation insurance coverage and liabilities including the "family farm" exception.

Executive Director's Note

As you well know, winter is no time to relax! SFA and other organizations are great at filling the calendar with fun opportunities. It helps pass the time for sure. I've got some key points I'd like to share with you this week:

1. If you haven't registered for the SFA Annual Conference, now is the time. The early registration deadline is January 31st. Click here to register.

2. Check out our new right-hand side bar in SFA Connect called SFA Work! We've added short updates on our existing projects. Here you'll get a quick update on what's going
on with SFA.

3. I've written a short blog post about why we have asked Dr. Val Farmer to the 2012 SFA conference. Just in case you are wondering about the relevance of Dr. Farmer's message, you can learn more here.

4. Finally, kudos to former SFA board member John Sluss! While interviewed recently in the online news site: MinnPost, he referenced SFA and his involvement. Thanks John!

Thanks and I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Conference next month.

SFA Award Nominations Needed; Deadline is Feb. 4

Nominations are still being accepted for the 2012 Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Awards. Based on qualifications of a high level of dedication, commitment, service, perseverance, achievement and contributions to the advancement of sustainable farming in Minnesota, the award honorees will be revealed at the Leaders Breakfast at the 2012 SFA Annual Conference on Feb. 18 in St. Joseph. The awards are:

- **Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award (farmer or retired farmer only)** – This award will be given to a farmer or farm family, currently farming or retired, that has dedicated many years to the advancement of sustainable farming in Minnesota.

- **SFA Distinguished Service Award (may be a non-farmer)** – This award is for a farmer or non-farmer who has shown a high level of dedication, commitment, service and perseverance to supporting sustainable agriculture in Minnesota.

Mail your nomination form by Fri., Feb. 4, to: SFA of MN, c/o Mary Hanks, 10500 295th Street W, Northfield, MN 55057, or email your nomination to Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us.

Farm Transitions Workshop Registration Now Open

Do you have a farm succession or estate plan? If not, your family could be saddled with unnecessary taxes and endless red tape upon your passing, if you retire, or if you become too ill to farm.

Gary Hachfeld and David Bau, of the University of Minnesota Extension, are partnering with Renewing the Countryside and the Sustainable Farming Association to present their acclaimed workshop, “Farm Transition and Estate Planning: Create Your Farm Legacy,” from 12-5 p.m. Feb. 17, the day before the SFA Annual Conference, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Warner Lake Park Nature Center in Clearwater. This vital workshop includes issues and information that must be dealt with by every farmer and farm family.

Registration is now open! Click here to register. The workshop costs $25 for the first member of the family and just $10 for each additional family member. Lunch is included.

In the workshop, participants get a greater understanding of crucial issues like transfer strategies, tax issues related to the transfer process, discuss methods for treatment of heirs in the transfer process, as well as learn how to go about developing a written transfer plan.

The workshop includes a box lunch and a planning workbook with:

- Presentation handouts
- Goal worksheets
- Farm transfer strategies worksheet
- Estimate retirement expenses worksheet
- Estate planning strategies worksheet
- Website resources

February 18, 2012: SFA 20th Annual Conference: College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN

Minnesota Dairy Initiative
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is working on creating opportunities for beef and dairy producers to graze Wildlife Management Areas, Information: 651-259-5014. Kent Solberg, MDI Coordinator

Meat Processing
Watch for our Meat Processor Survey coming soon!

Farm Transitions
Registration is now open for Clearwater workshop! Click here to register.

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.
Transferring the farm series
Estate planning series
Financial management series

The fee includes lunch. This workshop is made possible through a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency.

Show Your Support:
Volunteer at the Annual Conference

GET INVOLVED: Save $15 on registration and get a coupon for 50 percent off an SFA T-shirt! Volunteers are needed for the following jobs:

- **Setup Team:** One to two hours late Friday afternoon and early morning Saturday before the conference to assemble nametags, put up signage, assist exhibitors with their displays, etc.

- **Parking Team:** Work outside for a couple of hours the morning of the conference to direct traffic to correct parking lots and conference center.

- **Registration Team:** Needed throughout the day of the conference to work the registration and information table.

- **Culinary Team:** Assist at one of four culinary demos throughout the day.

- **Cleanup/Close Down Team:** Work at the end of conference to collect evaluations, collect and disassemble name tags, collect trash, take down and collect signs, etc.

- **Session Monitors Team:** Assist a session speaker with any setup, make sure they start and finish on time, or monitor a breakout session (volunteers can request a session they wish to attend).

One Volunteer Team Coordinator is still needed for the Parking Team – Get 50 percent off conference registration. Requires a hardy soul to work a couple of hours outside in the cold. Responsibilities include: set up parking signs day before conference in late afternoon/early evening – or assure that College of Saint Benedict staff has done this; work with three volunteers from 7 to 9 a.m. Feb. 18 to direct foot traffic from parking lots to registration; and set up overflow parking signs as needed.

If you are interested, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Karen Couné at: 612.202.7201 or karen.coune@gmail.com. And thanks for your support of SFA!

Minnesota High Tunnel Conference Set for Feb 8-9

Attend the Minnesota Statewide High Tunnel Conference Feb. 8-9 for two days of the latest research, demonstration reports and grower discussions on high tunnels and season extension in Minnesota. This statewide conference will include University of Minnesota faculty and staff presenters along with feature presentations from university...
guest speakers: Mary Gardiner of Ohio State University, "Identifying & Enhancing Beneficial Insects;" Russ Groves, University of Wisconsin, "Managing & Controlling Whiteflies, Aphids & Other Serious High Tunnel Insects;" and Cary Rivard, Kansas State University, "The Art of Grafting High Tunnel Plants."

Great speakers from public and private organizations and several growers will also share their expertise and new ideas for managing high tunnels. The evening "bull session" will be a great opportunity to meet other growers, discuss issues and develop suggestions for future research. For those just getting started, there will be a Beginning High Tunnel Grower Workshop from 8:30 a.m. to noon Wed., Feb. 8.

Events take place at The Lodge at Brainerd Lakes, 6967 Lake Forest Road, Baxter. Cost is $100 per person. For information, email Sue Schuler (schul925@umn.edu) or Terry Nennich (nenni001@umn.edu) or call 888-241-0885.

Advanced Orchard Health for Sustainable Fruit Seminar

Join orchard health expert Michael Phillips for a day of in-depth orchard care geared towards fruit producers looking for sustainable and nature-based production techniques. The seminar is from 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thurs., Feb. 23 at the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse, Wis. Cost: $150 per person, which includes lunch, snacks and an information packet. There is a $30 discount toward registration for OTFA members and a $20 late registration fee will apply after Feb. 3.

For more information and to register: contact OTFA at 507-643-6329 or email jackie@hochorchard.com. This event is sponsored by the Organic Tree Fruit Association (OTFA) with support from MOSES.

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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