Plan for the Future: Workshop Offers Insight Into Farm Succession and Estate Planning Success

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 highly 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. (Note: Exact site is yet to be determined; check back at www.sfa-mn.org for details. Workshop will be in the St. Joseph area near the SFA conference at the College of Saint Benedict, and registration will begin soon.) This vital workshop includes issues and information that must be dealt with by every farmer and farm family.

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.

Estate planning is also crucial to the transition process. The workshop will discuss wills and trusts, life insurance, power of attorney, long-term health care, and more – all issues that help complete a transfer plan.

The workshop costs $25 for the first member of the family and just $10 for each additional family member. The fee includes lunch. This workshop is made possible through a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency.

Executive Director’s Note

Do you think SFA should be more active politically?

I attended the Central Chapter annual meeting over the weekend and we discussed the 2012 Farm Bill that will no doubt be a hot topic this year politically. We also discussed at length the feelings and views of the members present about the need (or not) for SFA to further engage in public policy discussions.

We’ve received a grant from the McKnight Foundation to explore the interest and willingness of our members to engage in more public policy activity. You can offer your feedback as well 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!

Thanks!

**Slow-food Potluck, Farm Film Showing**

You are invited for a slow-food dinner and showing of the documentary film "Dirty Work" on Wed., Jan. 25, at Minnesota State Community and Technical College – Fergus Falls.

"Dirty Work" follows a year in the life of Elsie’s Farm, an organic farm in Ridgeland, Wis. The film, by artist and filmmaker Deb Wallwork, is described as the story of "an impossible dream to take an old farm, invest it with new ideas and grow a community … about getting your hands dirty, doing work you believe in and planting the seeds of the future in continuity with the past."

The potluck begins at 5:30 p.m. (bring a dish to share and your own dishes and utensils). The film will be shown at 6:30 and will be followed by a discussion with Wallwork and Ryan Pesch, owner of Lida Farm and an instructor in M State’s Sustainable Food Production program.

Major sponsors for the event are the SFP program and Slow Food Lakes and Prairie, the local chapter of a national movement that supports sustainability and community agriculture. Other sponsors include Body Mind Center and Meadow Farm Foods in Fergus Falls and Paradox Farm in Ashby.

Wallwork, who is best known for a series of videos on Native American culture made in association with Prairie Public TV, has received national awards and had her work featured in numerous film festivals and broadcast nationally on PBS.

A freewill donation will be taken to help defray speaker costs. For more information, contact SFP instructor Sue Wika at 218-736-1636 or sue.wika@minnesota.edu.

**Minnesota Organic Conference is This Weekend**

Don’t miss the 2012 Minnesota Organic Conference January 13-14, 2012 at the River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. Organic growers, those considering organic, and those just interested in learning more about organic production techniques will all find value in this jam-packed educational event.

The conference will feature two keynote speakers and 36 practical breakout sessions, along with more than 75 trade show vendors. Some of the headliners include The Organic Center’s Chuck Benbrook, renowned soils expert Elaine Ingham, author/farmer Jim VanDerPol, and cattleman Steve Campbell. SFA will be there, too, so stop by our booth and say hello.

Attendees will enjoy snacks and meals prepared with organic and locally grown foods specially sourced from Minnesota and neighboring states.

Whether interested in soil biology, weed management, season extension, livestock production, marketing, licensing rules, or insect and disease control, this conference has a lot to offer crop, livestock, and vegetable farmers alike.

The two-day conference costs $150, a single day is $100 and discounts for additional people from the same operation are available. See the brochure and registration materials at [www.mda.state.mn.us/organic](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/organic) or call 651-201-6012.

Pre-conference workshops on bees/beekeeping, direct meat marketing and GAP certification/food safety will be offered Jan. 12. Information about those events is at [www.mda.state.mn.us/amd](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/amd).

**Lake Superior SFA Annual Meeting Set Jan. 21**

February 18, 2012

SFA 21st Annual Conference: College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph

Wonder where your farm business is heading? Want to improve your business skills? Then attend "Putting It All Together," a workshop for small and specialty-crop farms.

Presented by Ridgewater College’s Farm Business Management Education Program, the event is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 4, 2012 at Ridgewater College’s Hutchinson campus. Fee is $50 for your first registrant and $25 for additional registrants. Cost of the program includes all materials, breaks and lunch.

For workshop information, contact Steve Zenk at steve.zenk@ridgewater.edu or 320-523-5468.

For registration, contact Kim Tensen at kim.tensen@ridgewater.edu or 320-222-7606.
Join the Lake Superior SFA for its annual meeting from noon-4:45 p.m. Jan. 21 at Peace United Church of Christ, 1111 N. 11th Ave, Duluth. Keynote speaker will be Gary Zimmer with his presentation, "Feed the World." All are welcome to participate in educational workshops and enjoy a local foods dinner of hearty winter soups and homemade bread.

Cost is $10 for nonmembers and $5 for SFA members. Kids under 10 are free; meal ticket is an additional $5. For information, contact Kelly Smith at 218-879-3829 or kellythegreenman@yahoo.com, or visit lakesuperiorfarming.org.

Cannon River Chapter to Hold Annual Meeting

The Cannon River chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association invites you to its annual chapter meeting. Please join your farming neighbors and friends for an afternoon of food, information, and business from 1 to 4 p.m. Sat., Jan. 21 at the Just Food Community Room, 516 Water Street, Northfield.

Featured this year will be SFA Executive Director John Mesko, who will share reports on ongoing projects from the state-level SFA, a perspective on the Farm Bill, and an update on the activities of other chapters around Minnesota. We also hope to generate our own list of action items for 2012, including strengthening the food shed.

We will also be electing 2012 board members and officers. Please consider running for the board and shouldering a leadership role as an officer.

Cider, tea and coffee will be provided, but please bring a snack to pass! We hope to see you there.

Annual Conference Volunteers Still Needed

Volunteer Team Coordinator positions remain available for the 2012 SFA Annual Conference. These positions offer half-price conference registration plus a coupon for a half-price SFA T-shirt. Areas needed:

**PARKING TEAM:** Requires a hardy soul to work outside in the cold! Set up parking signs the day before the conference in the 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.

**CLEAN-UP AND CLOSE-DOWN TEAM:** Work with four volunteers from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 18 to disassemble nametags, collect evaluations, take down and collect signage, pick up rubbish, etc.

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!

Lake Superior Chapter Seeks Coordinator

The Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association is seeking someone dedicated to our mission to help coordinate the activities of our member organization.

Coordinator of LSSFA is a paid contract position with two components: organizational work for LSSFA and organizing the Lake Superior Harvest Festival. The main responsibilities include maintaining and recruitment of membership, fundraising, promotion of LSSFA events, maintain LSSFA website, and edit the quarterly newsletter. This position requires the coordinator to use their own computer (PC) with internet connection; be competent in use of Excel, website management, and email marketing software. Must have reliable automotive transportation and flexible schedule. Experience in communications and fundraising is desired.
The Lake Superior Harvest Festival is LSSFA's premier, visionary annual event that showcases agriculture and promotes local food production as a key component of healthy community, economy and the environment. The coordinator is responsible for all aspects of the festival including sponsorships, publicity, plan site layout and equipment needs, and management of vendors and exhibitors. The coordinator is assisted by the Harvest Festival Committee and the LSSFA board.

Contract pay for 2012 is $9,000. For a detailed job description and information on how to apply, please contact Jamie Zak at jamienels@yahoo.com or call 218-728-2687. This is an excellent opportunity for those seeking to make positive change in our local food system. See www.lssfa.org for more information on this organization.

Job search timeline

Post date - 12/20/11
Resume and Cover Letters due - 1/15/12
Interview Period - 1/17-19
Start Date - 2/1/12

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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