Make Plans to Attend Festival of Farms on July 14; Several SFA Chapters Have Bevy of Events Planned

Celebrating our family farms and encouraging people to get out on the land, Festival of Farms is one of SFA's marquee events because its educational and collaborative themes get to the core of our mission.

At Festival of Farms, attendees learn about sustainable agriculture, meet other farmers, purveyors and eaters, and just generally have fun. The Festival is unique to each chapter, but the goal is the same — to build a unified sense of SFA's presence in communities across Minnesota and tighten connections within the local food community.

For more information about each SFA chapter's Festival of Farms events, please click on the links below.

- **Cannon River** — Four Cannon River chapter farms are available for touring at this year's event: Little Hill Berry Farm, Spring Wind Farm, Open Hands Farm and Cherry Leaf Farm. To register for a Festival of Farms bus tour, which will depart from Just Food Co-op in Northfield, go to [www.justfood.coop](http://www.justfood.coop), click on the “events” tab and scroll through the calendar to find the signup link on July 14.

- **Crow River** — Taking a “salad bar” approach to this year’s Festival of Farms, Crow River Chapter is offering a selection of 12 operations. Each farm will give tours at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. with “open house” time between the tours. Farms are grouped in five locales, so patrons should be able to tour two places with minimal driving — some of the farms even share the same property. These farms include tours as part of our ongoing GrazeFest series.

- **Lake Superior** — Enjoy a weekend of old-time music and dancing, educational farm tours on three Wrenshall-area CSA farms, and a local foods luncheon fundraiser with pig roast. Our Festival of Farms tour will visit Northern Harvest Farm, Stone's Throw Farm and Yker's Acres Farm from 2-6 p.m. and will cover topics of Community Supported Agriculture, pastured pig production, diversified vegetable production, sustainable farming, infrastructure and lack thereof, and beginning farmer challenges and successes. All three farms are graduates of Farm Beginnings, a comprehensive training and support program for beginning farmers.

- **South Central** — South Central Chapter is planning a low-energy farm day from MyBackAchers.com and Cedar River Horse Logging, 50277 130th St, Lyle. Starting at 10 a.m., the farm will host daylong demonstrations of alternative energy on the farm including hydroelectric power from a small creek.
Executive Director's Note

American Meat is a film by Graham Meriwether about the meat industry in the US. It is a thought provoking film that, in my opinion, rises above many other films in this genre for the following reasons:

1. It reports the facts about industrial agriculture and industrial farmers, but doesn't demonize them personally.
2. It addresses some of the negative aspects of industrial meat production, but offers a hopeful alternative.
3. It highlights the whole network of the meat issue in the US, the farmer, the consumer, chefs and retailers.

Like many recent films about sustainable agriculture, a significant portion of the film is devoted to describing Joel Salatin's Polyface Farm model of sustainable meat production. This description is contrasted with some examples of industrial models, as well as highlighting the work of a group of hog farmers in Iowa who are looking to convert from industrial pork to what they call, "Welfare Compassionate" pork production. Along the way, Meriwether does a good job of piquing your interests at a number of different levels.

If you are a newcomer to films like this, or have just begun thinking about food and agricultural sustainability issues, this film is a fair introduction. It won't be over your head, and it won't turn you off with an angry tone. You will come away better informed and empowered to make a difference. If you've already seen King Corn, Food, Inc., The Meatrix, Dirt, and The Future of Food, the issues in American Meat are familiar to you, but you should still see it. American Meat is thought provoking and focused on hopeful solutions. It can be a rallying point for those of us who are trying to bring our movement to full strength.

This movie has gotten me thinking about what my role personally is in solving the meat issues in our nation, as well as the role of SFA in addressing these issues. I certainly don't have all the answers, but American Meat has energized me to work even harder. We need something in every county in Minnesota that we don't currently have. Come Thursday and find out what I'm talking about.

I'll be on a panel with Chef Lucia Watson, filmmaker Graham Meriwether, Jan Joannides of the Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, Todd Lein, general manager of Thousand Hills Cattle Co., and Chef and TV personality Scott Pampuch discussing the movie at the American Meat premier on Thursday, July 12, at Edina Cinema. I'll have more to share then!

Everything starts with a food event at Lucia's from 5:15-6:15 followed by the screening at 7pm at Edina Cinema.

'American Meat' to be Screened at Sites Around State

In its Minnesota debut July 12 at the Edina Cinema, the new documentary "American Meat" chronicles America's grassroots revolution in sustainable meat production. The film explains our current industrial meat system and shows the feedlots and confinement operations, not through hidden cameras but through the eyes of the farmers who live and work there. It then shifts to the burgeoning sustainable, local-food movement of farmers, food advocates, chefs and everyday folks who could change everything about the way meat reaches the American table.

John Mesko detailed the Edina event in his Executive Director's note above, but the film is slated to be screened this summer at various locations across the state. The schedule (more screenings may be added):

- July 12 – Lucia's Restaurant/Edina Cinema
- July 13 – River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
- July 15 – Zinema2 Theater, Duluth/Zeitgeist Arts Cafe
- July 17 – Heartland Restaurant/Mounds Theatre, St. Paul

U. of M. Extension to Host Urban Garden Field Days
Raspberry Renovation Workshop Planned Near La Crescent
Twin Cities Urban Ag Bus Tour Scheduled
New Organic Transition Website Unveiled
Farm Beginnings Deadline is Aug. 1
Grazing Seminar Series Planned at World Dairy Expo
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Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop Set
Cover Crop Cost-Share Dollars Available
Participate in Survey to Help Farmers Protect Hearing
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SUPPORT SFA
Join SFA
Give to SFA
Gardens of Eagan Workshops Focus on Farming Skills

A hands-on workshop for returning veterans pursuing a career in farming or non-veteran beginning farmers is set from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. July 14 at Gardens of Eagan's Organic Field School, 25494 Highview Ave, Farmington. This workshop will focus on business planning and marketing for diversified, entrepreneurial agricultural enterprises, such as grass-based livestock, mixed vegetables, orchards, and organic production.

Also, attend a workshop on starting a diversified vegetable farm from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. July 22 at the Organic Field School. Explore what it takes be successful in popular marketing channels such as Community Supported Agriculture, farmers' markets and wholesale marketing. Participants will engage in hands-on activities to evaluate what marketing options will work best for their operations, and how to enter those markets effectively. The program includes lunch and a tour of the Gardens of Eagan vegetable farm. Presenter Tammy Hinman is a farmer and horticulture specialist for NCAT.

For more information and to register, contact NCAT by calling Hannah Lewis at 515-450-8126 or email hannahl@ncat.org.

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.

SFA EVENTS


Aug. 11, 2012: Minnesota Garlic Festival, McLeod County Fairgrounds, Hutchinson

SFA WORK

Minnesota Dairy Initiative
Upcoming event Aug. 7: Organic Dairy Day, West Central Research and 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
Our meat processing survey is now live. Anyone living in northern Minnesota can benefit from this project, and the first step is gathering your feedback. Help us expand access to local meat and poultry in our state. Take the survey 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.

Click here to keep up-to-date on the dates/sites and learn how to buy tickets for each screening when they become available.

- July 19 – James Gang Coffeehouse & Eatery/Grand Events Center, Northfield
- July 20 – Sontes Restaurant/Heinz Center, Rochester
- July 25 – Blue Heron Coffeehouse/Winona State
- July 27 – Dream Acres Farm, Pizza on the Farm, Wykoff
- July 31 – Traverse des Sioux, St. Peter
Longtime SFA Member Chris Barnier Shares His Story

Current SFA member and former SFA board member and treasurer Chris Barnier has contributed a lot to our organization over the years. He's also done a fair amount of organic farming, and recently shared his story with a website based in his hometown of Little Falls.

From the article: "It seemed obvious to me that we should minimize or reduce the amount of damage to the natural world. In fact, I felt that it was not just obvious, but morally proper to treat creation with respect. In agriculture, that meant avoiding pesticides and chemical fertilizers, even though none of the agriculture professors seemed to believe that."

Read Chris's entire essay here.

MOSES Seeks Farmer of the Year Nominations

The Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service is seeking nominations for its 2013 Organic Farmer of the Year award. Take advantage of this opportunity to properly acknowledge the outstanding efforts of an organic farmer or farm family. The award will be presented at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 21-23, 2013, in La Crosse, Wis.

Click here for more information. Previous award winners include SFA members Martin and Atina Diffley.

CSA Farmers 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.

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.

MDA Assessing Farmers' Needs After Floods, Storm

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is seeking information from fruit and vegetable farmers and established community gardens that lost crops due to recent flooding or storms. The agency is also seeking garden centers and nurseries that may be willing to donate annual fruit and vegetable plants to these growers so they can replant some of their crops.

MDA is asking farmers or community gardens that suffered crop losses due to floods or storms and are in need of annual fruit and vegetable plants to call MFAN at 1-877-898-MFAN (6326). Nurseries or garden centers willing to donate excess fruit and vegetables are asked to call the same number, 1-877-898-MFAN. When calling the number, press zero (0) to leave a message.

Organic Dairy Day Planned on 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 no right or wrong answers and all answers will be handled in a confidential way. The 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.

Urban & Small Farm Conference Slated for September

Will Allen’s Growing Power first hosted the National-International Urban & Small Farm Conference in West Allis, Wis., in 2010, when nearly 1,500 participants gathered to share ideas for building healthy and resilient community-based food systems. It included farmers, aspiring farmers, renewable energy experts, urban planners, corporate executives, politicians, academics, chefs, microbiologists, and people from countless other walks of life. One of the great outcomes of the first conference was the cultivation of new relationships, and the sharing of knowledge. This year’s conference will build on our efforts from two years ago.

In 2012, we expect to have even more breakout sessions, more speakers, and more tours at our event Sept. 7-9. We anticipate over 2,000 participants will attend, and 200 of the nation’s most well-known food-system experts will share their knowledge.

For registration, visit www.growingpowerfarmconference.org.

U. of M. Extension to Host Urban Garden Field Days

Urban market gardens are increasing in number throughout Minnesota. To help these growers be successful, University of Minnesota Extension in Hennepin County is hosting two field days.
The first field day will cover Pest and Disease Scouting in market gardens at 6:30 p.m. July 11. Topics covered include: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) discussion, warning signs for many of our common pests and diseases, and management options for those common problems.

The second field day, at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 8, will cover handling produce harvest after harvest. Talk with U of M Horticulture specialists Cindy Tong and Michele Schermann about harvesting your produce.

Both field days will be at 2820 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, one of Stone's Throw Urban Farm's locations. The price for each is $5; registration is encouraged. For more information and to register, contact Betsy Wieland at 612-596-1175 or eliza003@umn.edu.

### Raspberry Renovation Workshop July 14 in La Crescent

Jake Overgaard of University of Minnesota Extension Winona County will be giving a free on-farm workshop July 14th, from 1-2 pm on raspberry renovation at Hoch Orchard and Gardens near La Crescent. Participants will learn how raspberry plants develop, the importance of renovation, and how to renovate. High tunnel production will be discussed as well as variety selection. There will be an opportunity for hands-on learning (bring a pair of work gloves if interested).

Information: over0128@umn.edu or 507-457-6440.

### Twin Cities Urban Agriculture Bus Tour is Aug. 14

University of Minnesota Extension is partnering with Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education in Minnesota on a bus tour of urban farms in the Frogtown neighborhood. The tour will visit a variety of types of gardens in St. Paul; urban farmers, non-profit organizations, government agency staff, educators and interested community members are all welcome. The tour will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 14 and will begin and end on the U. of M.'s St Paul Campus.

Cost is $15, and registration is required. Information/registration: 612-596-1175 or eliza003@umn.edu.

### New Organic Transition Website Unveiled

A new website has been launched to house information related to the Tools for Organic Transition (TFT) Project, a four-year research project designed to yield new insights about the economics of organic transition; create unique data resources for farmers, other agricultural professionals and lenders; and inform policymakers of the potential economic barriers to organic certification. Click here to visit the site, where you’ll find profiles of newly certified and transitioning farmers, project newsletters, research findings, survey results and events.

Information: Robert King, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, 612-625-1273 or rking@umn.edu.

### Farm Beginnings Accepting Applications Until Aug. 1

The Land Stewardship Project (LSP) is now accepting applications for its 2012-2013 Farm Beginnings course, sessions of which will begin this fall and are being offered in the communities of Morris, Minn., and River Falls, Wis. The application deadline is Aug. 1. For application materials or for more information, see www.farmbeginnings.org or contact Karen Benson at 507-523-3366 or lspse@landstewardshipproject.org.

### Grazing Seminar Series Planned at World Dairy Expo

Save the date for the Grazing Seminar series, which will be held starting at 10 a.m. Oct. 5, in the Mendota 3 Room of the Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wis., during
the 2012 World Dairy Expo. Topics will include using automatic milking systems (robotic milkers) in grazing systems, balancing pasture supplementation with high grain costs, and a question-and-answer session with grazing experts from around the world. The seminar speakers will be on hand for a grazing reception immediately following the last seminar so farmers can network and socialize. More information available here.

Pastures for Profit Grazing Videos Available

Video recordings of the Ohio State Pastures for Profit Grazing School are available for download from the Ohio State University Extension Forage Team. The 30- to 45-minute presentations were recorded live in mp4 format during a Pastures for Profit grazing school offered in April of 2012 and cover a variety of topics. View the videos here.

U of M Small Farm Team Hosting Beef Workshop

So, beef on a small farm? Actually, it's a great fit – small farms are still the backbone of the beef industry, and of the more than 14,000 beef farms in Minnesota, over 12,000 have fewer than beef 50 cows. The University of Minnesota Small Farm Team will host a Beef Management Workshop from 9 a.m. to noon July 14 at UMore Park near Rosemount. The class will provide an overview of the basic elements needed to successfully manage a beef herd, regardless of size. Dr. Alfredo DiCostanzo has developed a herd of about 50 Angus cows at Umore Park, and the class will observe and discuss the cows grazing on pasture.

For information, visit www.extension.umn.edu/smallfarms or contact Wayne Martin at marti067@umn.edu or 612.625.6224 or Betsy Wieland at eliza003@umn.edu or 612.596.1175.

Organic Valley Seeks Sustainability Program Coordinator

Organic Valley is looking to hire an On Farm Sustainability Program Coordinator who will be responsible for the oversight and implementation of the On Farm Sustainability Program. This role works with farmers to implement a variety of sustainability initiatives on their farms; including renewable energy, ag plastic recycling, water conservation, nutrient management and ecosystem services. This position is responsible for working with media sources and within CROPP to message this work. This role also works with the cooperative to promote and source sustainable alternative fueling sources. Position is in La Farge, Wis.

For information, click here or email hr@organicvalley.coop.

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.
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](http://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.

Summit Seeks to Expand Food Opportunities for Low-Income Minnesotans

How can we work together to increase access to healthy food for low-income Minnesotans? What are the health and economic benefits of a healthy food system? Learn answers to these questions and more Aug. 21-23 at the Food Access Summit at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. This statewide summit will provide information and action-oriented ideas on how food policy, food systems and food literacy impact low-income Minnesotans. Participants will learn about barriers to healthy food for low-income Minnesotans and share perspectives from a variety of sectors.

Information: [hungersolutions.org/food-access-summit](http://hungersolutions.org/food-access-summit).

U of M Field Day: Diversifying Organic Cropping Systems

The University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center's annual Organic Field Day will be 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. July 11 at Lamberton. Attendees will take field tours to present ongoing organic research, including a visit to the SWROC’s high tunnel season extension facilities. Field tour stops will focus on edible beans; forage management to suppress weeds and build fertility; alfalfa mulch; popcorn variety trials; and high tunnels for season extension to produce organic vegetables.

The Organic Field Day is free and open to the public. An $8 fee will be charged for lunch. If you plan to attend, or would like to have an exhibit, please register in advance by contacting the SWROC at 507-752-7372 or werne022@umn.edu.

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](http://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)**  
Box 192, Princeton, MN 55371  
763-260-0209 • [info@sfa-mn.org](mailto:info@sfa-mn.org)

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