Registration Now Open for SFA Annual Conference, Midwest Soil Health Summit

Registration is now open for SFA’s 2016 winter conferences – get the following dates on your calendar and register NOW for the best prices.

Click here to register for the SFA Annual Conference, set for Feb. 13, 2016, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. Until Nov. 1, early bird registration is just $35 for SFA members and $45 for nonmembers. You may also register children 3-12 for the Budding Farmers program and for the SFA Leaders Breakfast.

Click here to register for the SFA Midwest Soil Health Summit, set for Feb. 17-18, 2016, at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, Minn. The MSHS features soil health experts and farm leaders for two days of education and farmer networking – all geared at improving the health of your soil. Early Bird pricing is $125 for SFA members and $175 for nonmembers until Nov. 1.

Sponsor & Exhibitor registration is open for both conferences on their respective homepage linked above. And remember that SFA Business/Organization members earn significant discounts on sponsorships and exhibitor space at our conferences. To learn more about SFA Business/Organization memberships, click here.

Vote Now for 2016 Annual Conference Session Topics

A founding concept of SFA is that there is wisdom in the community, so YOU will help to determine and lead the sessions, which will include casual but focused networking conversations on topics that you choose. Using an online voting system, SFA members choose session topics; we will analyze the data and create the schedule around your wishes.

To enter your topic ideas and vote using our system, visit our Annual Conference homepage.

Executive Director’s Note

Festival of Farms Events Scheduled: Pelican Rapids, Alexandria, St. Cloud Area, Ramsey, Howard Lake

Forage Council Summer Tour is June 23 in Fort Ripley

The Farm of Minnesota Hosting Crop Management Seminar

Food Safety Plan Workshop is June 22 in Brainerd

SUPPORT SFA

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The modern sustainable agriculture movement has established successful production models. We’ve developed and advocated for successful small and mid-sized marketing models. One of the next areas on which we are working is overcoming financing issues and developing a sustainable financing model for our brand of agriculture.

This is not an easy task, but our friends at Renewing the Countryside have been working on this for many years and have made progress. A number of years ago, at the SFA Annual Conference, we hosted Woody Tasch, founder of Slow Money, as he discussed alternatives to funding and financing the kind of agriculture which accounts for all costs, including environmental costs. Slow Money has continued to develop, and now Renewing the Countryside is taking the next big step in bringing Slow Money to Minnesota in a big way!

If you are a farmer, or someone interested in the long-term viability of sustainable agriculture, I would invite you to attend RTC’s Slow Money Event, Wed., June 17, in St. Paul. We need to advance solutions in all facets of agriculture, and this event is the gateway to exploring and moving forward those financial solutions.

You won’t be disappointed. Here are five reasons you’ll want to be there:

1. If you are passionate about local foods and farmers, this event will lay the groundwork for opening up new channels for supporting these businesses.

2. This will not be boring. Those who come will learn things, and will have fun doing it.

3. This will be a who's who of local foods. See old friends and make new.

4. The venue, Como Dockside has been remodeled and their chef is Ella Wesenberg, formerly of the Modern Cafe, so the food will be great!

5. After the event, you can head downstairs where there is a free concert by the Big Band Zuhrrah Flames.

Click here to learn more and register!

Several Festival of Farms Events Now Scheduled

The following is a compendium of what SFA has planned for 2015 Festival of Farms. For more information on these and any updated or additional events, visit our Festival of Farms homepage.

LAKE AGASSIZ CHAPTER Festival of Farms, “Building a Community of Farms in Lakes Country,” will be 1-4 p.m. July 11. The event, which is free and open to the public, will begin at at Lida Farm, 44593 25th Ave, Pelican Rapids; and then move to Lost Farm just a few miles down the road.

Lida Farm is a 20-acre vegetable farm in operation for over 10 years that features diverse marketing strategies, integration of small-scale livestock production, and innovative methods of season extension including a deep winter greenhouse; Lost Farm is a beginning-farm operation focused on self-sufficiency while exploring local markets for sustainable products. Enterprises include pastured livestock, market gardening, sustainable woodworking, and value-added food preservation.

Please RSVP online here or by calling Noelle Harden at 218.280.5253.

SFA EVENTS

July 2015:
FESTIVAL OF FARMS

Aug. 15, 2015:
MINNESOTA GARLIC
FESTIVAL, McLeod
County Fairgrounds,
Hutchinson, Minn.

Sept. 2015: HARVEST
FESTIVAL, Bayfront Park,
Duluth

Feb. 13, 2016: SFA
ANNUAL CONFERENCE,
College of Saint Benedict,
St. Joseph, Minn.
CENTRAL CHAPTER is hosting Festival of Farms from 12:30-8 p.m. on July 11 with a bus tour to and from three local farms, a local foods dinner, and more.

The event begins and ends at the City Park in Alexandria (118 City Park Rd). Buses will transport attendees to each of three SFA farms: Lakeside Prairie Farm, Berry Ridge Farm, and Fruitful Seasons Dairy. These farms feature draft-horse power, grass-fed beef and dairy, pastured pork and chickens, berry production, vegetables, high tunnels, oats and wheat. Then, at 6 p.m., a local foods dinner will be prepared for attendees by chef Eugen Wittemann. To register, or for more information, visit www.sfa-mn.org/central.

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SFA is hosting a free GARLIC GROWERS FIELD DAY & GATHERING from 2-6:30 p.m. Sun., July 12, with Plum Creek Farm. The event begins with a field day at the farm, 2547 195th St, Clearwater, MN 55320, for a look at Chris and Joanne Kudrna’s garlic, and have some open Q&A time. Dr. Carl Rosen will be there for the really technical questions.

Around 3:30 or 4 p.m., the group will head to Chris and Joanne’s house, 3655 Plum Creek Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56301, for potluck and more conversation. The possibility of starting a “garlic growers association” under SFA’s nonprofit umbrella will also be discussed. The event will end by 6:30 p.m.

RSVP: Jerry Ford at jerry@sfa-mn.org or 763.244.6659.

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Garden Farme is again hosting its PICNIC SCIENTIFIQUE, “Soil as System,” from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat., July 11 at 7367 175th Ave NW, Ramsey. The event is free and no registration is required. The day will include a garden walk with Garden Farme’s Soil Sci Committee on “Testing for Soil Health;” Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center will present a summary outline of aboveground impact in “Soil, Society, Economics;” and another garden walk on “Soil System Linkages - Determined or Stochastic?”

Information: Bruce Bacon at bbacon@mtn.org or 763.753.5099.

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WARM-UP TOUR ON JULY 9: University of Minnesota Extension and Natural Resources Conservation Service are teaming up with SFA to sponsor a special “warm-up tour” on “Grazing Management and Pasture Forage Quality” from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thurs., July 9, at Living Song Farm, 7616 25th Street SW, Howard Lake, MN 5534. This event is free and no registration is required. Jerry Ford, who has been rotationally grazing since 2006, will be the host. Other speakers include Tom Gervais, NRCS grazing specialist; Julie Reberg, NRCS District Conservationist; and Rod Greder, Wright County Extension Educator.

Information: Rob Greder at 763-682-7381 or gred0014@umn.edu.

Forage Council Summer Tour June 23 in Fort Ripley

The Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council, a SFA networking group, is hosting its 2015 Summer Tour, “Managed Grazing & Timber Production: Getting the Most Out of Your Woodlands,” from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 23 at St. Mathias Community Park in Fort Ripley. Planned are presentations from University of Missouri research station superintendent Dusty Walter and Early Boots Farm owner Tyler Carlson, a tour of the Rosanne and Bruce Caught dairy/beef farm and the Steve Moe silvopasture sites, and plenty of discussion and networking.

Cost is $20 and includes refreshments, lunch, and the program. To register and learn more, visit www.sfa-mn.org/forage-council.

The Farm of Minnesota Crop Management Seminar

Dan and Donna Moe of The Farm of Minnesota are hosting a seminar on organic crop management.

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Deep Roots Farmer Development Program is a much-needed beginning-farmer curriculum that emphasizes all three tenets of sustainability, plus provides extensive skills training.

New Farm Reality Check: Look Before You Leap is now being presented at various conferences and other forums as a result of our Adjust 2015 project.

Our ongoing GrazeFest series of grass-based livestock and cover cropping events is led by Livestock and Grazing Coordinator Kent Solberg. Visit our GrazeFest homepage and watch SFA Connect for updates on our upcoming on-farm events.

Keep Cattle in Minnesota will build on SFA's foundation to grow and sustain the beef and dairy industry.
Food Safety Plan Workshop is June 22 in Brainerd

The Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace of Little Falls is hosting a farmer educational event for fruit, vegetable and other specialty crop farmers from 3 to 7 p.m. June 22 at Central Lakes College, 501 W College Dr, Brainerd, to help farmers learn Good Agricultural Practice concepts and complete a farm food safety plan.

Michele Schermann from the University of Minnesota’s On-Farm Food Safety Team will present each section of the University’s food safety plan template, and local 4-H and FFA students will help each farmer transfer their information into the electronic template.

Cost is $25 and advance registration is required. For registration information, visit http://sproutmn.com/training-2 or contact Lisa Baker at 320.309.0746.

New Crops Project

SFA’s New Crops Project aims to expand the availability of local foods in Minnesota and help farmers expand their markets.

Minnesota Dairy Initiative

For information about MDI and its ongoing projects, email SFA Livestock and Grazing Coordinator Kent Solberg.
SFA Connect is your bi-weekly link to the Sustainable Farming Association

The Sustainable Farming Association 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 (SFA)
Box 192, Princeton, MN 55371
763-260-0209 • info@sfa-mn.org