2016 SFA Conference Dates Announced; AC Voting Site Live

It's never too early to mark your calendars, so get ready.

The [2016 SFA Annual Conference](#) will be Feb. 13, 2016. We are already compiling session topic ideas and need your help – please vote in the widget on the [AC homepage](#). Was there a session you missed this year and want to see in 2016? Have a unique idea for a topic that has been on your mind? [Enter it here!](#) Then vote often so we can create a conference schedule around the needs of our network.

Also, we are happy to announce the third annual [Midwest Soil Health Summit](#) will return Feb. 17-18, 2016, to Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, Minn.

We are looking forward to compiling a slate of leaders and expert farmers who are dedicated to improving the health of the soil on your farm.

This year's MSHS included expanded programming like Soil Health Basics I and II, an International Roundtable, and more, and we expect the expanded programming schedule to return in 2016. Keep watching SFA Connect and our [SFA News blog](#) for announcements.

Also, check out photos from both 2015 conferences [on our Facebook page](#).

A Few Spots Left for Deep Roots 'Nuts and Bolts' Workshop

IN THIS ISSUE

- [2016 Conference Dates Announced; AC Voting Site Now Live](#)
- [A Few Spots Left for Deep Roots 'Nuts and Bolts' Workshop](#)
- [SFA Soil Health Webinar a Success; Next is April 3](#)
- [Intro to Small Ruminant Husbandry Class Set for May 16](#)
- [Check This Out](#)
  - Annual Conference Photo Feature
  - [Cattle Fundamentals Workshop is March 19 in Moose Lake](#)
  - [Farmers Market & Local Food Grant Workshop](#)
  - [Two More Post-Harvest Handling Workshops Planned](#)
  - [Mill City Farmers Market Job Opening](#)
  - [Survey on Cover Crops Seeks Farmer Participation](#)
"Nuts and Bolts," a workshop designed for those with a desire to farm but with little or no experience with common farm tools and equipment, is set for 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sat., March 21 at Paradox Farm, 11643 State Hwy 78, Ashby, Minn. In this workshop, students will gain practical experience with farm tools and materials.

Click here to register.

Get prepared for the upcoming season of food production by participating in this Deep Roots Farmer Development Program workshop. You will increase your handiness while developing competence with farm tools and materials. Get the edge for summer farm internships by listing this course on your resume! This is also an appropriate preparatory course for Farm Skills 101.

Small class size guarantees that all students receive ample individual attention. Course instructors are seasoned farmers. Students should have gloves and safety glasses and wear closed-toe shoes and long pants.

COURSE OUTLINE

- Common hand tool identification and use on the farm
- Hands-on operation of common tools
- Ergonomics and body mechanics
- Common hardware identification & use: nails, nuts, bolts, staples, screws
- Building materials, such as lumber
- Small carpentry project completed during class

Directions: Paradox Farm is 7 miles north of Ashby; 10 miles south of Battle Lake. Bring a sack lunch. Cost: $99. No walk-in registration.

Questions? Email sue@sfa-mn.org or call 218.747.2202.

SFA Soil Health Webinar a Success; Next is April 3

Nearly 75 folks registered for our free Keep Cattle in Minnesota webinar, "Strategies for Implementing Cover Crops," led by Livestock & Grazing Specialist Kent Solberg on March 6.

The webinar is archived on our Keep Cattle in Minnesota homepage.

As Kent discussed in the webinar, cover crops are a powerful tool farmers can use to improve soil health. Specifically, cover crops aid in keeping soil covered, add diversity to the rotation, keep a living root in the soil, and serve as the "bridge" between cropping systems and integration of livestock.

Kent reviewed the principles of building soil health and integration of cover crops, and he discussed real-world examples of how adding cover crops to your farm can move you toward productivity and profitability.

This webinar is the second in a series of KCIM webinars SFA has planned. Others are slated for
April 3 and Nov. 6; keep watching SFA Connect for details about all upcoming KCIM webinars and programming.

For more information, visit our Keep Cattle in Minnesota homepage.

**Intro to Small Ruminant Husbandry Class Set for May 16**

Anyone considering adding goats or sheep to their sustainable food production system or those who want to manage their small ruminants more holistically should attend our SFA Deep Roots class, *Intro to Small Ruminant Husbandry*, 1-5 p.m. Sat., May 16, 2015, Paradox Farm, 11643 State Highway 78, Ashby, Minn. (ten miles south of Battle Lake; seven miles north of Ashby)

This course provides students opportunity for hands-on work with sheep and goats. In a working-farm setting, students can learn how small ruminants can fit into a natural systems farm. Course topics include: holistic management, ruminant nutrition, animal handling, fencing, grazing strategies, holistic veterinary care, shelters, weight and age estimation. Wear clothing appropriate for working with animals: closed-toe shoes, gloves, long pants.

Cost is $80 and space is limited. [To register, click here.](#)

**Check This Out**

- Landowners are often concerned about what their renters are doing to take care of the land and ensure soil health is being built. [This article takes a stab](#) at addressing this issue.
- Lisa Young of AgriNews attended the Midwest Soil Health Summit and wrote a great comprehensive recap. [Check it out here.](#)

**Annual Conference Photo Feature**

Photographer extraordinaire Crystal Liepa once again documented our 2015 Annual Conference, held Feb. 14, 2015, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. To learn more about Crystal, [visit her website.](#)
Cattle Fundamentals Workshop March 19 in Moose Lake

The University of Minnesota Extension is hosting a free Cattle Fundamentals Workshop from 6 to 8 p.m. March 19 at the Moose Lake Library Community Room, 313 Elm Ave, Moose Lake.

Targeted for beginners but important for all producers, the event’s topics will include basic husbandry, vaccination considerations, nutrition management and cattle handling equipment. Speakers are Dr. Eric Mousel, UMN Cow Calf Educator; and Troy Salzer, Carlton County Extension.

To register, call 218.384.3511.

Farmers Market & Local Food Grant Workshop

The Regional Rural Development Centers and USDA Ag Marketing Service have developed grant-writing workshops and resources focused on improving the success of farmer applications to USDA grant programs, specifically the Farmers Market Promotion Program and Local Food Promotion Program.

Two local grant-writing workshops are planned:

- 1-5 p.m. March 27, Morrison County Government Center, 213 1st Ave SE, Little Falls
- 1-5 p.m. April 9, Regional Extension Office, 1961 Premier Dr Suite 110, Mankato

These workshop are free but registration is required. Click here to register.

For more information, contact Greg Schweser (Mankato) at 612.625.9706 or schwe233@umn.edu; or Ryan Pesch (Little Falls) at 218.236.2270 or pesch@umn.edu.

Two More Post-Harvest Handling Workshops Planned

Renewing the Countryside and Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture will be hosting four post-harvest handling workshops from mid-February to early April in various locations in Minnesota. The half day workshops will be presented by farmers Lisa Baker of Bakers’ Acres and Laura Frerichs of Loon Organics and will cover a range of topics from on farm food safety to sorting and grading to transport.

The cost to attend is $20 for the first person and $10 for the second if coming from the same farm (fee includes lunch). Workshop attendees will also get a discounted rate for the Wholesale Success book.

Events include:

- March 20, Little Falls
- March 25, Cannon Falls

To register, click here. For more information, contact Devon Ballinger at Renewing the Countryside at 612.716.1706 or devon@rtcinfo.org.

Mill City Farmers Market Job Opening

The Mill City Farmers Market is looking to fill the position of Day Staff at the market. The job runs Saturdays from May to October and results in 9-12 hours a week of work. Day Staffers work Saturdays from 5:30 a.m. to about 3 p.m., with occasional weekend hours.

For more information or to apply, visit the market homepage.

Survey on Cover Crops Seeks Farmer Participation
Farmers are invited to share their thoughts on cover crops - regardless of whether they use cover crops themselves - in a national survey, now in its third year of collecting valuable data on the increasingly popular management practice. The results, which will be released this summer, will help growers, researchers, agricultural advisors, ag retailers and policymakers more effectively address questions about cover crops and learn about best practices.

Prizes will be given to random participants. To take the survey, click here.
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

Unsubscribe  |  Privacy Policy