May 17, 2016

An Easy Way to Comprehensively Share Your Event: New Checklist Puts Abundant Eyes on SFA Programming

By Jason Walker • SFA Communications & Membership Coordinator

When an SFA Chapter, Networking Group, or approved member is hosting an SFA event, we have built the infrastructure to facilitate the following.

Upon submission of basic event information through our SFA Event Entry Form, which is available both on the Chapter Resource Portal and Networking Group Resource Portal, the SFA Communications Team will:

- Build an event registration page
- Build an event homepage on www.sfa-mn.org
- Add the event to the SFA Events Calendar, which qualifies the event for coverage under SFA's event insurance policy
- Advertise the event in the SFA Connect newsletter, which is sent every two weeks to over 3,000 sustainable ag supporters in the Upper Midwest
- Share event details on the SFA news feed
- Share event details on our Facebook page
- Share event details on the SUSTAG email listserv
- Email the event details to people in the event's geographic vicinity, when appropriate
- Email registrant information to the organizer on the eve of the event for ease of check-in

This process ensures that each official SFA event is communicated properly to produce maximum visibility and ensure branding consistency. We hope to add an on-site online check-in/paid registration function in the future.

A similar process is already in place for SFA's Soil Health Network; Network members should input their events and view the calendar on our Soil Health Portal.

For more information, contact jason@sfa-mn.org.

SFA Grazing Workshop With Dr. Allen Williams is May 26-27

SFA is co-sponsoring a grazing workshop with two-time Midwest Soil Health Summit speaker Dr. Allen Williams on May 26-27 at the University of Minnesota Dairy Cattle Research Center in St. Paul.
Dr. Allen Williams on May 26-27 in Wolf Lake and Menagha, Minn.

The workshop will begin May 26 at the Lions Hall in downtown Wolf Lake. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and program at 9:30 both days. The May 27 programming includes a field day at Al Lake’s farm, 16168 560th Ave, Menagha. Both days will wrap up around 3:30 p.m.

Registration, which includes lunch, is $50 for both days and $20 for students or children under 18. Preregistration is strongly recommended – click here to register.

Info: Kent Solberg at 844.922.5573 Ext. 701 or kent@sfa-mn.org.

Garlic Growers Field Day is July 9

A free SFA field day for current and prospective garlic growers will be 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat., July 9 at two farms: Living Song Farm, 7616 25th St SW, Howard Lake, MN, with a tour of Jerry Ford’s garlic operation; and Chris and Joanne Kudrna’s farm, Plum Creek Garlic, 2547 195th St E, Clearwater.

Click here to register.

Joining the farmer presenters will be Dr. Carl Rosen, a soil scientist who has done extensive research on growing garlic in northern climates and is head of the Department of Soil Water and Climate at the University of Minnesota.

The event begins with a tour of Living Song Farm followed by a potluck lunch. Then, the group will travel to Plum Creek Garlic for a tour and end-of-day snacks and beverages.

The event, part of SFA’s Festival of Farms series, is produced by SFA’s Upper Midwest Garlic Growers Group and the Crow River Chapter. Info: jerry@sfa-mn.org or 1.844.922.5573 Ext. 700.

SFA EVENTS

May 26-27: Soil Health event with Dr. Allen Williams, Wolf Lake/Menagha area

June 1, 2016: Soil Health Network Event on buffer law, Clinton

June 11, 2016: Cannon River Farmer-to-Farmer Exchange, Faribault

July 9, 2016: Garlic Growers Field Day, Howard Lake & Clearwater

July 14, 2016: Forage Council Summer Tour, Cloverleaf Grass Farm, Wadena

July 2016: Festival of Farms

Aug. 13, 2016: Minnesota Garlic Festival, McLeod County Fairgrounds, Hutchinson

Sept. 2016: Soil Health Experts Field Days

Feb. 11, 2017: SFA Annual Conference, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph

Feb. 15-16, 2017: Midwest Soil Health
Cannon River Farmer Exchange is June 11 in Faribault

Tiffany Tripp and Andy Olson of Graise Farm are hosting the first 2016 Cannon River Farmer to Farmer Exchange from 5 to 9 p.m. Sat., June 11 at their farm, 16914 Dixon Trail, Faribault.

Tiffany and Andy will host a farm tour and share different electric fencing that is used for chickens and pastured-pig paddocks as well as their DIY chicken tractor and pig and chicken waterers that help lower overhead costs. A bonfire and barbecue will follow the tour; please bring your own meat to grill and a dish to share.

This event is free and open to all. Click here to RSVP. Info: tatrippmn@gmail.com or 507.491.8188.

Registration Opens for 2017 SFA Annual Conference; Vote Now to Determine Conference Session Topics

Registration is now open for the 2017 SFA Annual Conference, set for Feb. 11 at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn.

Through Nov. 30, SFA members may register for the Super Early Bird price of just $35, while nonmembers may register for $45.

To ensure we’re providing timely, cutting-edge education, voting has also begun on Conference session topics. Vote on your preferences and even submit your own topic ideas; we’ll create the schedule around the wishes of our farmer community.

Sign up now, get the best price, put the SFA Conference on your calendar, and start voting on the session topics you want addressed! The more votes we get, the better the sessions can be tailored.
Nearly 300 people filled the Gorecki Center at the 2016 SFA Annual Conference. Don’t miss the 2017 version.

And watch soon for registration for the 2017 Midwest Soil Health Summit, which will be Feb. 15-16 at an all-new venue: Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls.

Here are the current top ten session topics for 2017:

- Time to Call the Butcher: What to Expect, Terminology, and How to Help Customers Navigate the Process of Custom-Ordering
- Deep Winter Greenhouse Production: Mastering the Three Winter Seasons
- How to Find Land and Community
- Year-Round Income Streams on 15 Acres or Fewer
- Farming is Great, But I Need a BREAK!: Strategies and Tools for Dealing with Livestock When You Need to Get Away
- Pricing Nitty Gritty
- Starting and Managing a Profitable Orchard
- Wintering Livestock
- Fencing Innovations: The Latest and Greatest
- Deep Winter Greenhouse Design: Location, Location, Location

Mesko, Snake River Farm Featured at Bison Conference

The National Bison Association Conference is coming to Minnesota on June 20-22, and both SFA Executive Director John Mesko and two-time Midwest Soil Health Summit presenter Gabe Brown are featured speakers.

The conference, focused on sustainable agriculture to foster bison viability, will be held at the Rockwoods Grill and Banquet Center, 9100 Quaday Avenue NE, Otsego. To register and learn more, visit the conference homepage.

In conjunction with the Bison Conference, longtime SFA member Tom Barthel’s Snake River Farm in Becker is hosting a free workshop for ag professionals on the basics of bison production from noon to 4 p.m. June 21. Networking, lunch, a farm tour and “bison toolkit” are included in the program. To RSVP or for more info, email jim@bisoncentral.com or call 303.292.2833.

Screening of 'Butterfly Effect;' Film Features SFA Farmers

A film featuring SFA farmers Sue Wika and Katy Olson, “The Butterfly Effect” by filmmaker Deb Wallwork will be screened at 7 p.m. May 24 at the Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. This event is free and open to the public.

Wallwork, of Fergus Falls, screened this film at the 2016 SFA Annual Conference. But if you missed it there, this is an opportunity to view her stories of farmers, scientists, and others who are working to bring attention in various ways to the plight of monarch butterflies in the face of habitat loss.

For more information, contact Wallwork at debmn@mac.com.

Soil Health Network Event: June 1 in Clinton

Big Stone SWCD is hosting an SFA Soil Health Network event to inform the public about the upcoming buffer law and soil health from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 1 at the Clinton Memorial Building on Main St in Clinton. The event is free and lunch is provided – click here to register and learn more.
The program will include a buffer map presentation, a meeting to discuss soil health possibilities and alternatives, and will include presentations from the DNR and Farmers Union. This event is co-sponsored by the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District, Big Stone SWCD and Big Stone County.

More info: 320.839.6149 Ext. 3.

Check This Out

- The Beyond Beauty initiative, which is exploring the opportunities and challenges of cosmetically imperfect fruits and vegetables, recently released a report that addresses fresh-cut processing and distribution of Minnesota-grown imperfections. Read it here.

- From No-Till Farmer Magazine, here's a comprehensive profile of a farmer's “addiction” to cover crops. Because, as he says, “Rye not?”

Annual Conference Photo Feature

Photographer extraordinaire Crystal Liepa once again documented our 2016 Annual Conference, held Feb. 13, 2016, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. To learn more about Crystal, visit her website.
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.

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