This Thursday, Give to the Max for SFA

By Jason Walker • Communications Coordinator

The election is over and the holidays are quickly approaching, which means end-of-year giving is beginning in earnest. And the unofficial start of "giving season" in Minnesota is this Thursday's Give to the Max Day, a chance for nonprofits across the state to be in the spotlight for donors and supporters.

SFA is, of course, a nonprofit, and so we're grateful to our members and supporters who will choose to financially contribute on Thursday. Give to the Max Day has become such a big event that groups like SFA can really benefit – our current and longtime supporters can make contributions as usual, but Give to the Max has so entered the local zeitgeist that it's common for newcomers to stumble across SFA and give as a result.

And the fact is, your contributions matter. Giving to SFA is not like giving to a gigantic organization with soaring overhead costs. SFA's budget is slowly growing, yes, but it's also vitally pillared by your donations. Making a contribution can directly help us advance our mission of advancing farmer-to-farmer networking and sustainable agriculture.

Again, your contributions matter. Big-time.

Thanks in advance to all who consider donating this Thursday. Click here to visit our Give to the Max page.

Tickets On Sale for SFA-Benefiting North Coast Nosh

Are you ready to eat, drink and be merry … all in support of SFA?
Then get your tickets now for the latest installment of the Heavy Table's North Coast Nosh, set for Sunday, Dec. 9, at the Crow River Winery in Hutchinson. The North Coast Nosh was named “Best Foodie Event” in 2012 by Minnesota Monthly, which praised the event as a “cozier” alternative to big food fests, with “small, local, upstart” vendors. A major portion of the proceeds will help support SFA.

This, the seventh edition of the Nosh, will also feature a special, small group pre-Nosh option for guests interested in additional educational and sampling opportunities.

The North Coast Nosh events are worth attending regardless because of the high-quality food and drink from local purveyors: expect artisan cheese, craft beer, lovingly created baked goods and candies, fine charcuterie, and more. But even better, this Nosh will also help financially support SFA. It's a win-win.

Vendors confirmed for the Nosh include: Badger Hill Brewing, Caves of Faribault, Chez Arnaud, Chowgirls, Crow River Winery, Duluth Coffee Company, Gamle Ode Aquavit, Groveland Confections, Indeed Brewing, Joia Soda, Lucid Brewing, Pastures a Plenty, Patisserie 46, Peace Coffee, Poorboy Candy, St. Croix Chocolate Company, Sunny Road Cheese, and TRRRific Products. Vendors may be added as the event approaches.

To buy tickets to both the Nosh and the intimate pre-Nosh event, click here.

Nominations Sought for SFA Distinguished Service Awards

SFA award season has begun: We’re seeking nominations for the Farmer Emeritus and Distinguished Service awards, to be presented at the Leaders Breakfast during the 2013 SFA Annual Conference on Feb. 16 in Chaska.

Criteria are pretty simple: Farmer Emeritus nominees should have a distinguished career history of farming in Minnesota; Distinguished Service nominees must have a demonstrable strong connection to local food or sustainable agriculture.

If you know someone who fits either or both of these descriptions, please consider nominating them. Our SFA awards are special honors that reward the backbone members of our sustainable agriculture community, and we value a wide range of nominees. Last year’s winners were Kent and Linda Solberg (Farmer Emeritus) and DeEtta Bilek and Mary Ellen Frame (Distinguished Service).

Please download the nomination form here, complete and send to: SFA, c/o Mary Hanks, 10500 295th Street W, Northfield, MN 55057, or email your nomination to Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us.

Executive Director's Note

By John Mesko
I'd like to recognize an organization that is making significant contributions to the sustainable agriculture movement. **Lakewinds Food Co-op**, and its General Manager Dale Woodbeck have taken a very respectful approach to advancing the cause of our movement. In addition to the tremendous support they give to the movement by purchasing much of their fresh produce and even meat from local producers, supporting SFA conferences and events, Lakewinds has founded the **Organic Field Fund**. Through this fund, Lakewinds makes a genuine claim to their spot at the table when it comes to discussing the future of sustainable agriculture and food and farming in general. SFA is a proud recipient of one of the Organic Field Fund 2011-12 grants, in relation to our **New Crops Project**. Without this support, the New Crops Project would not be where it is today. Lakewinds has just released an exciting video about the Organic Field Fund, that highlights the other recipients and the various projects everyone is doing. For our part it features our Program Coordinator Bobby Wenner. Check it out on YouTube here! And thanks Lakewinds!

### 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](#).

![Conference Photo](image)

### Photo Contest Winner for October: Barb Eller

Who doesn't want to win a free T-shirt, let alone a cool SFA one? Here's your chance. Send communications coordinator Jason Walker your photos, and the best each month, chosen by a panel of distinguished judges, gets an SFA T-shirt. Send your photos to jason@sfa-mn.org, and we'll include the winner in SFA Connect. Note: We don't have unlimited quantities of T-shirts, so certain sizes may not always be available. But we'll try our best. And check out our [Facebook page](#) for all the photo submissions.

**October's winner:** Barb Eller of Onamia, who sent this photo of a Hereford-Galloway-Shorthorn calf. And thanks to all our other submitters for October!

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**Planning For Your Farm's Future**

Our Victoria, Fergus Falls, Northfield, Browerville, Clearwater workshops are behind us, and today is our workshop in Madison. Stay tuned for registration information about our next workshop.

**The Farm Transitions project is in conjunction with Renewing the Countryside.**

**Public Policy**

Are you interested in state and federal ag policy? Offer your feedback 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.

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**The Northeast Regional Correctional Facility has a meat processing plan that is inspected for part of the year. See a slideshow of the facility here.**
Lake Superior SFA Hosting 'Farmers Take the Stove'

Coming up this Thursday, Nov. 15: Farmers Take the Stove, the ninth-annual fundraiser for SFA's Lake Superior chapter that includes a splendid dinner grown, cooked and served by farmers. This year's event is set for 6 p.m. at Peach Church, 1111 E 11th St, Duluth.

Local bluegrass combo The Riverside Bog Stompers will provide music, and our unique "sustainable silent auction" will feature farm experiences and products. Bid on a sleigh ride, woodlot management, or hands-on how-to experiences in maple syruping and starting seedlings. Other silent auction items include raised garden beds, delicious and wholesome cakes, massage by Carolyn Sheets, and more.

Tickets are $12 for adults, $5 for kids 6-10, and free for 5 and under. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; music and program starts at 6. This event is open to the public, and there's ample free parking at the church. Please RSVP at info@lakesuperiorfarming.org or 218-393-3276 so we know how many people to feed.

More information: Lake Superior SFA's homepage or Facebook page.

Got Local Farmer-Buyer Networking Event Planned

Farmers, brewers, chefs and food buyers: Interested in a networking opportunity? Attend a free Got Local? workshop from 2 to 4 p.m. Tues., Nov. 13 at Kitchen in the Market (inside the Midtown Global Market), 920 E Lake St, Minneapolis.

With increasing consumer interest in locally grown food, restaurants and institutions want more local foods on their menus but often don't have the time to track sources down. Farmers and food buyers tell us they are looking for direct markets and new opportunities. Renewing the Countryside and Kitchen in the Market are teaming along with local sponsors to host this farmer/buyer workshop designed to connect producers and food buyers. We will discuss best practices in working together and engage in speed networking to forge new relationships for the
2013 growing season! Topics include:

- Value of Local Food and Public Perception - Stephanie March, Mpls. St Paul Magazine
- Snapshot of a Successful Farmer/Chef Pair – Benjamin Jacoby, The Craftsman and Dayna Burtness, Laughing Loon Farm
- Farmer/Buyer Speed Networking + drinks and appetizers

Registration required at [http://bit.ly/gotlocal](http://bit.ly/gotlocal) and enter the password "got local." More information: Molly Turnquist at msturnquist@gmail.com or 320-420-1772.

**Back to Basics Sustainable Living Fair Set for Jan. 26**

Happy Dancing Turtle will be hosting its annual Back to Basics sustainable living event from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Jan. 26, 2013, at Pine River-Backus school in Pine River. This year's theme will be "Steps Toward Sustainability: The Solution Is YOU!" Chuck Marohn, President of the Community Growth Institute, will be the keynote speaker.

Happy Dancing Turtle is looking for sponsors, exciting new ideas and knowledgeable presenters for workshops as well as quality vendors and exhibitors, providing quality products and information to help participants lead more sustainable lives.

Join the workshop for a fun filled day of learning, networking, and inspiration. For more details please visit the Happy Dancing Turtle website [http://www.happydancingturtle.org/](http://www.happydancingturtle.org/).

**Grant Funds for Sustainable Farming Innovations**

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program will award up to $100,000 in 2013 for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects. The MDA is now accepting applications for the grant program which promotes environmental stewardship and conservation of resources and strives to improve profitability and quality of life on farms and in rural areas.

Grant applications are available on the MDA website at [http://go.usa.gov/YBSj](http://go.usa.gov/YBSj) or by contacting the Agricultural Marketing and Development Division at 651-201-6012. Completed applications must be received by MDA no later than Jan. 11, 2013.

**Minneapolis Schools Seeks Farmer-Student Links**

Many Minneapolis Public Schools students are more familiar with processed food from bags and boxes than farm-fresh fruits and veggies. Most have never met a farmer before. Therefore, MPS is looking for growers who'd like to make a difference in our students' lives, and get them excited about fresh, locally-grown fruits & veggies.

Get involved by visiting visit a school this winter and talking to students about what you do, why it's important, and how the food choices students make impact neighboring farmers. MPS can offer a small stipend for your time.

Or, become a pen pal to a class of elementary school students and write a letter to them once or twice a month. Share pictures, how the fall went, plans for the upcoming season, or what farmers do in their rare spare time.

MPS will help connect you with a school and coordinate all of the logistics. Contact Andrea at 612-568-2424 or farm2school@mpls.k12.mn.us for more information.

**Cover Crops Field Walk Planned Nov. 17 Near Lanesboro**

The relationship between cover crops and better soil is the focus of a short field day from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Nov. 17 at the Brian Hazel dairy farm north of Lanesboro. This is a free event, but to help guarantee enough coffee and rolls, please reserve a spot by contacting Caroline van
Opinions Sought in Farmer Internship Survey

A four-question, informal survey is being conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota to gather preliminary data for a SARE grant proposal. Our goal is to better understand farmers’ thoughts and concerns about internships. We welcome a diversity of farm models and sizes (fruits, vegetables, livestock, and grains). All information submitted will remain anonymous; we will not have access to any identifying information. All questions are optional.

To access the survey, click here.

Scholarship Created for Sustainable Food Program

Fergus Area College Foundation has established a scholarship to provide financial assistance to a second-semester student in the Sustainable Food Production program at M-State Fergus Falls. Program faculty will recommend eligible candidates, and the final determination of the scholarship recipient will be made each December.

Those interested in helping students pursue study in the sustainable agriculture field may make a tax-deductible donation to the Sustainable Food Production program scholarship fund. Checks should be sent to Fergus Area College Foundation, 1414 College Way, Fergus Falls, MN 56537. Or donate online at www.minnesota.edu/facf; click on “Making Donations” and write “Sustainable Food Production” in the comments section.

For more information, contact Carolyn Glesne at 218.736.1514 or facf@minnesota.edu.

NCR-SARE Announces Farmer Grant Call for Proposals

The 2013 North Central Region - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) Farmer Rancher Grant Call for Proposals is now available.

Farmers and ranchers in the North Central Region are invited to submit grant proposals to explore sustainable agriculture solutions to problems on the farm or ranch. Proposals should show how farmers and ranchers plan to use their own innovative ideas to explore sustainable agriculture options and how they will share project results. Sustainable agriculture is good for the environment, profitable, and socially responsible.

Interested applicants can find the call for proposals online as well as useful information for completing a proposal here. You can find more information about sustainable agriculture at sare.org or take a free National Continuing Education Program online course about the basic concepts here.

Proposals are due on Thursday, November 29th at 4:30 p.m. at the NCR-SARE office in St. Paul, MN. Potential applicants with questions can contact Joan Benjamin, Associate Regional Coordinator and Farmer Rancher Grant Program Coordinator, at jbenjami@umn.edu or 573-681-5545 or 800-529-1342.

MDA Has $1 Million in Funds for State Livestock Farmers

Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson has announced that $1 million in grant funding is being made available to livestock producers in the state for on-farm improvements. The Livestock Investment Grant Program was first funded by the Minnesota legislature in 2008. Since then, 89 grant recipients have invested an estimated $31 million in improvements to their operations.

The deadline to apply for the grant program is January 14, 2013. More information on the Minnesota Livestock Investment Program can be found on the MDA website.
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.

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