Annual Conference registration now open; sign up before Dec. 1 for just $40

Registration is now open for our Annual Conference, and there's a sensible reason to do it now: Anyone may register for the conference for $40.

That's right, both members and nonmembers may sign up for SFA's beneficial and enjoyable Annual Conference for just $40. But the deal ends Dec. 1, at which point registration will be $60 for SFA members (and $85 for nonmembers/member renewals). So sign up by Thursday to get the discount and save $20.

Click here to visit our registration page.

New this year is our Leaders Breakfast, sponsored by Organic Valley. Registration for this event, featuring awards and donor recognition, is just $12.50. Details coming soon at sfa-mn.org.

The keynote speaker at this year's conference will be Dr. Val Farmer, an expert on rural mental health issues and the unique psychological problems farmers face living and working in rural areas.

Other sessions include (more will be added):

- **Farm Transitions**: Thinking of transitioning into or out of farming? This session will give you some food for thought and show you some creative ways to get more out of that transition.
- **Meat Processing Facilities in Minnesota**: What needs to happen to increase the number of inspected facilities? How can you be involved?
- **Farm Bill 2012 Update**: Learn about what's new in this very important legislation, and how did the super committee work?
- **Diet, Stress, and Health**: Farming is hard, don't make it harder. Learn how to deal with stress and diet related illness.
- **Beginning Farmer Curriculum Update**: The University of Minnesota has been working with SFA to develop beginning farmer curriculum. See a preview and help shape the project for the future.
- **Vegetable and meat quality**: How to maintain the quality of your product from harvest to the customer.

Notes: There is no "non-meal" option offered at any level. There are no partial registrations. Fee is for the full-day program Sat., Feb. 18. Fee is the same regardless of
what time the registrant shows up on the day of the conference or whether the registrant eats lunch.

Also, child daycare will not be available at this year’s Annual Conference. Additional lunch meal tickets will be available at the Conference for $10, and well-behaved children are welcome to attend with their parents. Teens and college students receive special registration rates; check the website for details.

A note from Executive Director John Mesko

It was fun to see a nice article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune recently about Moonstone Farm in Montevideo. SFA Board Member Richard Handeen and his wife Audrey Armer were profiled nicely in a story about the value of sustainable agriculture’s impact on wildlife and the environment.

This is a great example of the kinds of impact SFA members are making in Minnesota. If you or an SFA member are highlighted in local, regional, or state-wide media let me know, we want to make everyone aware of it.

Thanks Richard and Audrey!

Project seeks greenhouse for energy audit training

The Minnesota Project has launched a program to teach interested stakeholders how to perform energy audits on farm operations to the standard required by state and federal energy efficiency funding programs.

As part of the program, The Minnesota Project is looking for a greenhouse operation at which to conduct a "site visit" for our class. On the site visit, our energy audit trainer will walk our trainees through the facility, and the group will put together an energy audit for the facility.

If you have a greenhouse and are looking to get an energy audit completed in the next 4-8 weeks, contact Jake Fischer at 651.789.3330 or jfischer@mnproject.org.

Minnesota Organic Conference is Jan. 13-14

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Organic Conference returns to the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud on Jan. 13-14, 2012. Enjoy dozens of practical workshops, a trade show, organic meals and ample opportunities to meet other organic farmers. Featured speakers include:

- Charles Benbrook, chief scientist at The Organic Center
- Jim Goodman, journalist and Wisconsin organic beef/dairy farmer
- Elaine Ingham, president and director of research at Soil Foodweb Inc.
- John Mesko, Executive Director of The Sustainable Farming Association

Also, three preconference workshops are slated for Jan. 12: "Practical GAP's Implementation on Your Diversified Vegetable Farm," "All About Selling Meat – What You Need to Know" and "Introduction to Beekeeping."

To learn more about the conference, call 651.201.6012 or email Meg.Moynihan@state.mn.us.
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.

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