'Give to the Max' is Here: Donate Today Through Nov. 12 and Double Your Gift to SFA Thanks to Our Matching Fund

By Jason Walker • SFA Communications & Membership Coordinator

At SFA, we are starting to see both an increased interest in our programming as well as positive results from the education and farmer networking efforts we’ve undertaken in the past few years. SFA is an inclusive organization open to all, and we believe that our brand of agriculture is the most positive way forward.

We are proud to announce that we have built a matching fund for the upcoming Give to the
Max Day, the popular annual fundraiser promoted by GiveMN.org. As of today, we have raised $10,000 for our matching fund from our board members and supporters like Lakewinds Co-op and Restaurant Alma. This means that every dollar you donate will be matched by the fund at least up to $10,000 – your $100 donation results in $200 to SFA.

**Click here to view our Give to the Max homepage and donate today.**

Our goal is to raise $20,000 on Give to the Max Day, and we can't do it without your support.

This year's fundraising holiday is officially Nov. 12, but GiveMN has stretched the event – it began Nov. 1, and any donation you make through [SFA's page on GiveMN](http://givemn.org) will qualify for the matching fund. Schedule your donation early and avoid the high-traffic GTM Day fray.

**SFA is growing the next generation of farmers who are going to farm in ways that feed our communities good food while improving water and soil quality.** We hope to hear from you.

**Click here to view our Give to the Max homepage and donate today.** And many thanks to those of you who have already scheduled your donations!

### Soil Health Webinar With Dr. Allen Williams is Friday

Dr. Allen Williams will join us for the next installment in our ongoing soil health webinar series. The free webinar, “Improve Soil Health and Yields by Integrating Cover Crops and Livestock Grazing,” will be 1-2:30 p.m. Nov. 6.

[Click here to register.](http://www.sfaonline.org)

Bridging to his presentation at SFA's 2016 Midwest Soil Health Summit, Dr. Williams (right) will discuss using cover crops to integrate livestock into cropping systems and the value of grazing management to soil health.

He will also address how integrating livestock and grazing management benefits to soil health rank high among NRCS field staff as areas they are seeking more information and training. Finally, the webinar will address his recent Conservation Innovation Grant project as well as grazing cover crops.

This webinar is presented with support from The Pasture Project.

For more information about this and other virtual SFA education, visit [our webinar homepage.](http://www.sfaonline.org)

### ‘Grazing Cover Crops’ Events Set for Nov. 12-13

SFA and the Pasture Project are hosting a two-day event series, “Grazing Cover Crops: Innovations in the Field,” on Nov. 12 and 13 in Redwood Falls, Mankato and Blue Earth, Minn. Learn how to use grazing cover crops as a conservation strategy by hearing from experts and touring two local farms.

The Nov. 12 event begins at 1 p.m. with a presentation at Pizza Ranch, 1360 E Bridge St, Redwood Falls, followed by a field review of cover crops and grazing management at Dan Tiffany's farm.

On Nov. 13, a discussion surrounding the expansion of grazing cover crops and opportunities to build soil health will be held from 8:30 to 11 a.m. in Mankato at Mankato City Center Hotel, 101 E Main St. Then at 1 p.m. the presentation moves to the Scott Haase farm, 7301 377th Ave, Blue Earth, to see grazing cover crops in action and learn about benefits, impact and strategy. Directions to Haase farm (watch for SFA signs): From the north, follow U.S. 169 through Blue Earth, go under the railroad track, and turn west onto 14th St. Then turn left on 377th Ave and follow south approximately 2.5 miles to the farm.
A group rate of $79/night is available at the Mankato City Center hotel by calling 1.877.345.5577. Mention Winrock International to book at the group rate. The deadline to book rooms at this rate is Nov. 5.

These events are free but space is limited. RSVP by Nov. 5 to Robert.mcgill@winrock.org.

Executive Director's Note: A Word About Philanthropy

We are entering the giving season, and with holiday celebrations, office parties, year-end fundraising drives, and Give to the Max Day, it's easy to feel pulled in several directions at once. If you are being asked to give, donate, or share, it's an indication you are valued as a partner, friend, associate or supporter.

That's certainly how we feel about our partners at SFA. We value everyone who contributes to building the kind of food and farming system we all want to see:

- A system which actually has the potential to mitigate climate change rather than contribute to it
- One where the environment, animals and people are made better, not run down
- A diverse system of farms and farmers who can truly feed the world AND improve the environment

The purpose of our fundraising efforts is not to keep SFA running, it's to address these important issues. If you are concerned about clean soil and water, our Midwest Soil Health Summit is preparing current farmers to farm clean. If you are concerned about the growing need for new farmers, our Deep Roots Program is preparing the next generation of farmers to farm clean.

Finally, with SFA's matching fund in place this year, your donation is going to be worth double! Click here to join me and many others who already have donated to SFA during Give to the Max 2015. Thank you.

WOC Talks to Tap Wisdom of SFA Community

Similar to the popular TED Talks, SFA has a new program that we call WOC Talks (Wisdom of the Community). The idea is that SFA members and supporters will submit talks on subjects relating to sustainable farming and food systems, and the organization will select some of them for presentation at the SFA Annual Conference on Feb. 13, 2016, in St. Joseph, Minn.

The selected WOC Talks will be filmed and then placed on SFA's website and YouTube channel.

Your talks can be existing presentations adapted to the WOC Talk format, or you may create a new presentation. Please be aware that we cannot broadcast any material that you might include in your talk that has a third-party copyright unless you obtain written permission to use the material.

For more information and the complete rules, please visit our WOC Talks homepage.

Registration Open for 2016 Annual Conference, MSHS

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 Jan. 1, registration is just $45 for SFA members and $55 for nonmembers. You may also register children 3-12 for the Budding Farmers program ($10) and for the SFA Leaders Breakfast ($15).

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. Pricing is $150 for SFA members and $200 for nonmembers.

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.

Deep Winter Greenhouse Course Added for Feb. 21

Our Nov. 7 Deep Roots short course, “Deep Winter Production of Greens and Livestock Fodder Utilizing Passive Solar Energy,” is sold out, but we just added a new Deep Winter short course for Feb. 21! If you were hoping to register and missed the November class, click here to sign up for Feb. 21.

At our Deep Winter short course, Paradox Farm owners Sue Wika and Tom Prieve provide detailed overview of the construction and operation of their deep-winter greenhouse, which utilizes passive solar energy with underground heat storage. The greenhouse provides greens for local consumers. In addition, the structure is utilized to produce fodder for the farm livestock.

To learn more about this short course, click here.

Deep Winter Producers Group Meeting is Nov. 7

Are you interested in growing healthy, tasty produce in the depths of winter in Minnesota? Come to a gathering of the newly formed SFA Deep Winter Producers Networking Group and find out what's going on in our state, from winter greenhouse design to production and all points in between.

The meeting will be held at 5 p.m. Sat., Nov. 7, at St. Benedict’s Monastery, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, Minn., in the Rosamond Building, Room A (just north of the College of St. Benedict Campus). All experience levels welcome, and no registration is required.

We'll hear about the latest research in these innovative winter greenhouses, as well as exciting opportunities this winter to find out even more! Come join in the discussion with growers ranging from experienced greenhouse producers to beginners still pondering how to make it happen on their own farms. Afterward, join us for dinner at the nearby Gorecki Dining Center on campus. Great food, all you can eat for $12.

Membership in this networking group is free. Information: Carol Ford at 320.226.9435 or deepwinter@sfa-mn.org.
Cover Crops Event Set at Cunningham Farm in Pipestone

A “Cover Crop Snapshot” soil health event is on tap from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Nov. 10 at the farm of Ian Cunningham, 565 81st St, Pipestone. Cunningham (above) was a speaker at the 2015 Midwest Soil Health Summit and this year planted a cover crop on 100 percent of his acres.

The event, sponsored by SWCD, USDA and NRCS, will include a discussion on how Ian is integrating cover crops on his farm as well as how he integrates cattle into the system. This year, Ian’s fall seeded cover crop included a 50/50 mix of winter rye and oats after soybeans and cereal rye after corn.

The event is free and no registration is required. Info: 507.825.5478 ext. 3.

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.
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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