Send Us Your Memories to Celebrate 25 Years of SFA

By Jason Walker • SFA Communications & Membership Coordinator

Next year is a big one for SFA – 2015 marks 25 years since our formation – and we need your help.

As SFA begins a yearlong series of special events and publications revolving around our Silver Anniversary, we are seeking submissions for a special edition of the yearly CornerPost magazine – SFA-related memories, stories, photos, videos, documents. This can be anything you have to share that can help tell SFA's story, whether it happened 25 years or 25 days ago.

A selection of these historical nuggets will be published in the upcoming CornerPost edition as well as archived on our homepage.

Even if you want to just send two sentences about what SFA means to you, that would be terrific. No submission is too large or too small, as we are hoping to collect as diverse a range of information as possible.

Additionally, we’re having a video contest: Make a short video (no longer than two minutes) about SFA, sustainability and what it means to you. The videos will be posted on our website, and the best video (as chosen by a panel of distinguished SFA staff) will receive a semi-fabulous prize package of SFA swag as well as free admission to the SFA Annual Conference. Then, at the conference, we'll play the winning video during the opening plenary session.

Email your materials to history@sfa-mn.org, and we’ll start compiling. Or, mail to SFA, Box 192, Princeton, MN 55371. Submissions can not be returned without prior consent.

Deadline for submissions is Oct. 31.

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Get your winter planning off to a sustainable start: **Registration is NOW OPEN** for the SFA Annual Conference, Minnesota’s farmer networking showcase set for Feb. 14, 2015, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph.

A founding concept of SFA is that there is wisdom in our farming community. So, just like last year, YOU will help to determine and lead the sessions, which will include casual but focused networking conversations on topics that you choose. Using an online voting system, SFA members chose session topics; we will analyze the data and create the schedule around your wishes. Vote on our [AC homepage](#) and view the leading session topics.

Again on Saturday morning will be our yearly Leaders Breakfast and SFA Awards ceremony at 7:30 a.m. This event costs just $15 and includes breakfast, a special “State of SFA” address, and the awards ceremony. This is a separately ticketed event from the Annual Conference.

Also, family programming is returning – admission for children ages 3-12 is just $10 and includes separate programming from [Budding Farmers](#). Children 2 and under are free but will be the responsibility of their parents.

Of course, everything you expect from the SFA Annual Conference will return as well – culinary demonstrations from Mary Jane Miller; a trade show; the end-of-day local food, wine and beer reception; plus plenty of networking, fun and fellowship.

The venue at St. Ben's is a familiar, centrally located one that’s easily accessible. Lunch is not included with registration; instead, you'll enjoy a lengthy break, during which, you may eat at St. Ben's, walk to one of the local-foods restaurants in St. Joe, or bring a sack lunch. The idea is to give you the freedom to network at your own pace, and to take advantage of the quaint surroundings.

**Register through Sept. 30** at the Early Bird rate of $35/members and $45/nonmembers. SFA members will receive a separate email with discount registration instructions. Only SFA members will receive this separate email.

Vendor/Exhibitor Registration is open as well. [Visit our Annual Conference homepage](#) to download the proper form.

See you there!

**Executive Director's Note**

I want to make sure that you know about the 3rd Annual Seedstock Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Conference: [Reintegrating Ag: Local Food Systems and the Future of Cities](#) in which I will be participating. The conference will explore the economic impact as well as the community and environmental benefits that can result from the development of a robust local food system.

Slated for Tuesday and Wednesday, November 11 - 12, 2014 at the UCLA Anderson School of Management, the first day of the conference will offer an Urban Agriculture Field Trip on which attendees will get a sneak peak at Los Angeles’ first multi-faceted food production business incubator for local entrepreneurs along with a tour of a blossoming 1.5-acre high school campus urban farming operation in Pasadena and a visit to a hydroponic shipping container farm in the Downtown Los Angeles.
Arts District. The second day of the conference will feature panels and keynotes that will explore, among other topics, the following:

* Reintegrating Agriculture into the City

* The local food production and commercial potential of controlled environment agriculture in cities;

* How city and county policy can encourage investment in and support of local and urban agriculture;

* Business models and technological solutions from irrigation technology to supply chain innovations necessary to augment the growth of local food systems

I would love to see you there. Below are some more details on the conference as well as a link to register along with a promo code that will provide you with a 'friend's discount' of 20% off the ticket price.

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- John Mesko - Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
- A.G. Kawamura - Former Secretary of California Dept. of Food and Agriculture
- Nicola Kerslake - New Bean Capital
- Dwight Detter - Whole Foods Market
- Daniel Allen - Farmscape
- Nurit Katz - Chief Sustainability Officer at UCLA
- Kimberly Kessler - Resnick Program for Food Law & Policy

REGISTRATION & TICKETS: A limited number of discount tickets for those of you in my network are available at 20% off the list price. So register quickly to reserve your spot by going to [http://seedstockconference.eventbrite.com](http://seedstockconference.eventbrite.com) and entering the promotional code SEEDSTOCKFRIEND to receive your discount!

Deep Winter Greenhouse Workshop Registration Now Open

A class from the SFA Sustainable Food Production Program, “Deep Winter Production of Greens and Livestock Fodder Utilizing Passive Solar Energy,” will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Jan. 31, 2015, in Ashby, Minn.

This newly listed class is distinct from the Feb. 13 Deep Winter class that is offered in combination with the SFA Annual Conference.

During the class, farm owners Sue Wika and Tom Prieve will provide a 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. Students will be in the greenhouse to see how greens and fodder are planted and harvested.

This particular Deep Winter class is more in-depth and will provide opportunity for students to "get their hands dirty" in the greenhouse by planting and harvesting greens. It will also cover greenhouse construction in a more detailed manner.

Cost is $100/person. Bring a sack lunch. Beverage and fresh winter salad (grown on site) provided. The class will be held at Paradox Farm, 11643 State Hwy 78, Ashby, MN 56309 (Directions: 7 miles north of Ashby; 10 miles south of Battle Lake). Storm date is Feb. 7, 2015.

Space is limited. [Click here to register.](#)

Lake Agassiz 'Good Food, Good Farms' Event is Nov. 5
SFA Lake Agassiz Chapter is sponsoring a local-food event, “Good Food from Good Farms,” from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wed., Nov. 5 at the Heritage Community Center in Thief River Falls, bringing sustainable farmers and consumers together for education and networking opportunities. If you are passionate and committed to growing and/or eating good food, you will not want to miss this exciting event. Light refreshments will be served and admission is free.

Local celebrity chef Sue Doeden will demonstrate cooking with local food and provide samples to taste. Along with the demonstration will be four “lightning workshops” to visit, including:

- Lake Agassiz Chapter SFA information table offering Free Membership until April 2015 and highlighting the 2015 Lake Agassiz Chapter SFA Chicken Festival
- Homemade Cheese Press for your kitchen
- Thief River Falls Growing Forward food network
- High Tunnels

Come share ideas, learn new skills, find new markets, and meet others who think and live sustainably. For more information, email Marie Petry at grass@wtc-mail.net.

Chapter Update: Southeast

The Sustainable Farming Association's Southeast Chapter is sponsoring an informational meeting, “Alternative Energies,” from 9:30 a.m. to noon Tues., Sept. 30.

The meeting will take place at Mike Lee's farm, 6304 Highway 42 NE, Elgin, which is 2.8 miles south of town. Mike has been using solar energy to provide his farm's energy and will explain his system and experiences. Lee also has a large outdoor furnace that should be of interest.

At or around 10:30 or 11 a.m., the group will caravan to the Jon Hassler Theater, 412 W Broadway, Plainview, for refreshments. There will be discussion on geothermal, solar and wood-burning energies, with company representatives.

There will be no charge for this event, but freewill donations will be accepted. Bring a friend. For more information, contact Edgar Hansgen at 507.932.4219 or ejhansgen@hotmail.com.

SFA Chapters: Comment on New Resource Portal

SFA has created a Chapter Resource Portal for chapter coordinators and leaders: Learn how to properly represent the Association in your communications, read our Chapter Resource Guide, download appropriate logos and templates, view your chapter charter and other official SFA documents, and more.

We hope you find this useful and would love to hear your feedback. Check it out, make suggestions and email them to Jerry Ford by Oct. 1 so we can take your suggestions and improve the Portal before your annual chapter meeting.

Students: SFA Scholarships, Internships Available

Scholarships to attend the SFA Annual Conference are available for current students and require a volunteer commitment; for more information, email Jerry Ford at jerry@sfa-mn.org.

Also, SFA is accepting applications for Sustainability Conference Internships. These hands-on internships are for late fall and winter 2014/15 and require attendance at the SFA Annual Conference on Feb. 14 as well as the Midwest Soil Health Summit on Feb. 18-19. Those interested in an application should contact SFA Network Coordinator Jerry Ford at jerry@sfa-mn.org.

Connect for updates on our upcoming on-farm events.

Keep Cattle in Minnesota

Keep Cattle in Minnesota will build on SFA's foundation to grow and sustain the beef and dairy industries in Minnesota while protecting our vast environmental resources.

Sustainable Food Production Program

Sustainable Food Production, formerly part of M State Fergus Falls, is a much-needed beginning-farmer curriculum that emphasizes all three tenets of sustainability, plus provides extensive skills training.

New Crops Project

SFA's New Crops Project aims to expand the availability of local foods in Minnesota and help farmers expand their markets.

Minnesota Dairy Initiative

For information about MDI and its ongoing projects, email SFA Livestock and Grazing Coordinator Kent Solberg.
Click here to learn more at our internships homepage.

Check This Out

A new SFA Connect feature, “Check This Out” is a section of links to articles and videos chosen by SFA staff that you might enjoy. Consider:

- From the National Wildlife Federation’s Lara Bryant is an article describing how “cover crops are an excellent, but underutilized, management tool for reducing the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus runoff from agricultural land.” Read it here.

- From NRCS, this video, “The Science of Soil Health: Without Carrot or Stick” is a short interview with Penn State researcher Dr. Sjoerd Duiker that details how dairy farmers in his state are using cover crops to improve their business – without regulations or subsidies. Watch it here.

Annual Conference Photo Feature

Photographer extraordinaire Crystal Liepa once again documented our 2014 Annual Conference, held Feb. 8, 2014, at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. To learn more about Crystal, visit her website.

Cover Crop Field Day Near Fergus Falls on Oct. 6

West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring a Cover Crop Field Day from 10 a.m. to noon Mon., Oct. 6, at John Walkup farm southwest of Fergus Falls.

The field day will include a review of cover crop seed mixes, plant identification, annual cover crop uses for cropland and livestock management, a soil pit to show cover crop benefits, seeding methods and more.

The event is free, lunch will be provided and will be held rain or shine. The Walkup farm is southwest of Fergus Falls on County Highway 15 – five miles south of Orwell Dam and 1.5 miles north of County Rd. 26.

For more information, call the WOT SWCD at 218.739.4694.
Winter Injury Talk, Variety Tasting at Apple Workshop

Orcharding in the North and fruit scientist Thaddeus McCamant are hosting an Apple Workshop at 2 p.m. Oct. 4 at the CLC Ag and Energy Center campus and orchards in Staples, Minn.

The workshop will focus on winter injury and variety tasting and will include a session on understanding winter injury to fruit trees, an apple varietal taste test, a seminar on creating honeyed apple chips, and a Q and A period.

The event is at the field station office about 1/2 mile west of Central Lakes College on County Rd 2. Cost is $10 and registration is limited to 25. Contact Kent Scheer to register at rscheer@charter.net or 218.631.3084.

Food Licensing Questions Answered at Videoconference

What kind of a license do you need if you sell eggs, chickens and pork at a farmers’ market? Or if you sell jams and jellies? Or fruits and vegetables? Baked goods? Coffee?

Get your food licensing questions answered directly from Health and Agriculture staff from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 6, during a videoconference hosted at eight sites around the state. The Minnesota Farmers’ Market Association is teaming up with the Minnesota Dept. of Health and the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture to host this afternoon learning session using MDH’s & MDA’s statewide videoconference system.

In addition to learning about the various food licenses that are needed, participants will enjoy a fun hands-on safe food sampling lesson, presented by U. of M. Extension.

The eight videoconferencing locations are: Bemidji, Duluth, Fergus Falls, Mankato, Marshall, Rochester, St. Cloud, and St. Paul.

More details are coming soon! For more information, contact MFMA at info@mfma.org or 320.250.5087.

Sheep and Fiber Farm Tour is Oct. 11-12

The Four Annual Sheep & Fiber Farm Tour is set for Oct. 11-12 at five farms as well as Faribault Woolen Mills and two art centers in Southeast Minnesota.

The two-day event will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day and will showcase sustainable natural fibers as well as the animals and farmers who provide it. Sheep, yaks, alpacas, llamas, angora rabbits and goats will be on the tour. Yarn, roving, felt and other fiber products from these animals will be for sale as well as the famous natural fibers products of the Faribault Woolen Mill. Presentations will include natural dying, spinning, weaving, felt machine and needle felting during ongoing demonstrations at the different farms.

Also on the tour will be Janice Arnold, a well-known felt artist who has exhibited her natural fiber work at Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

Admission to the farms, mill, presentation and reception is free; there is a fee only for the Janice Arnold workshop.

Register and learn more at www.fiberfarmtour.com.

Registration Open for Food Access Summit

Registration is open for the Food Access Summit 2014: Organize for Equity, set for Oct. 28-30 at Duluth Entertainment Convention Center.

The Summit will highlight efforts that improve access to healthy food for Minnesotans with limited financial resources and launch the Minnesota Food Charter. In addition, it will provide social policy tools, training and action-oriented ideas to educate and organize participants to support local, state and national efforts to make the food system equitable for all.
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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