Session Descriptions

9:30 A.M. SESSIONS

WEED CONTROL STRATEGIES
Room 204A

Session Leaders: Gary Brever, Ploughshare Farm; Al Sterner & Jean Peterson, Peterson Produce; Paul Schmidt, Sunfresh Foods.

What to Expect: Seasoned farmers from three very diverse operations lead a discussion on weeds. Bring techniques and ideas to share.

ARTISAN CHEESE
Room 204B

Session Leaders: Anne Borgendale, Cheese Buyer at Linden Hills Co-op; Deborah Pikovsky, Starthrower Farm; Jodi Ohlsen Read, Shepherds Way Farm

What to Expect: Yes, there will be samples in this discussion on the state of Minnesota artisan cheese and cheesemaking. Joining in will be several talented, hard-working and award-winning Minnesota cheesemakers and farmers. This will tie directly into the “Cheese, Wine & Beer Pairing Smackdown” in the Culinary Sessions.

‘DON’T FENCE ME IN’ FENCING SHOWDOWN
Room: 204C

Session Leaders: Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist; Tom Prieve and Sue Wika, Paradox Farm

What to Expect: Join graziers and livestock pros for a discussion on techniques for keeping animals where you want them. Bring your ideas and examples.

SFA CHAPTER RESOURCES DISCUSSION
Room 120A

Session Leader: Jerry Ford

What to Expect: SFA’s Network Coordinator, Jerry Ford, rolls out the Chapter Resources Program, which will help each of our chapters to become even more active and vibrant. Intended for chapter leaders and interested members, this session will introduce you to this new program, and Jerry will be looking for your input.

11:05 A.M. SESSIONS

SEED SAVING
Room: 204A

Session Leader: Greg Reynolds

What to Expect: Greg Reynolds, who is also heading up the annual Seed Swap, will bring us the latest in the cultivation of your own seed stock in this lecture-format presentation.

NEW CROPS: QUINOA, AMARANTH, NETTLES & MORE
Room: 204B

Session Leader: John Mesko

What to Expect: This session ties in with our New Crops Project, so we’re glad it scored in the top 10 on the session preference survey. It will feature field reports and an open forum on these emerging specialty crops.

KEEP CATTLE IN MINNESOTA
Room: 204C

Session Leader: Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist

What to Expect: Keep Cattle in Minnesota is a collaborative effort between the NRCS, Grazing Lands Conservation Association, Minnesota Dairy Initiative and Sustainable Farming Association to encourage dairy and beef production in Minnesota through the use of cost saving management practices. Join Kent Solberg for an overview of these cost saving measures designed to improve soil health, productivity and your bottom line. Bring your experiences and questions to share.

PLANTING AND HARVESTING CALENDARS
Room: 120A

Session Leader: Eric Ament, Anahata Herbals

What to Expect: A group discussion on how to streamline this year’s plan going into the growing season so that it saves you time, and will include techniques how to “save your back.”
Session Descriptions

1:20 P.M. SESSIONS

SEASON EXTENSION
Room: 204A
Session Leaders: Sue Wika and Tom Prieve, Paradox Farm; Carol Ford, Garden Goddess Enterprises; Mark Boen, Bluebird Gardens
What to Expect: Join these leading growers for an open discussion of season-extension techniques.

ROOT CELLARS
Room: 204B
Session Leaders: John Fisher-Merrit, Food Farm; Greg Reynolds, Riverbend Farm; Jerry Ford, Living Song Farm.
What to Expect: A master of sustainable root cellaring, John Fisher-Merrit’s family has been running Food Farm’s winter storage for many years, while Greg and Jerry have recently built two very different cellars. Come with your experiences and questions to share.

INTEGRATING CROP & LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION
Room: 204C
Session Leaders: Wayne Monsen, SFA Keep Cattle in Minnesota Coordinator; Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist; Luverne Forbord, Prairie Horizons Farm; Jim VanDerPol, Pastures A Plenty.
What to Expect: Join Luverne Forbord, Kent Solberg, and other producers for an open discussion on integrating crop production and livestock to maximize your farm’s potential.

ADJUST 2015: WHEN THE FARMING REALITY DOESN’T MATCH THE BUSINESS PLAN
Room: 120A
Session Leader: John Mesko, SFA Executive Director
What to Expect: A follow-up to last year’s popular open forum on making adjustments when things aren’t quite working out on the farm, this session will bring us together to increase our knowledge and awareness as we continue to build a beginning farmer education program with an emphasis on realistic and flexible business plans.

3:10 P.M. SESSIONS

INTEGRATED PERENNIAL CROPPING SYSTEMS
Room: 204A
Session Leaders: Jim Chamberlin, Island Lake Farm; Tyler Carlson, Early Boots Farm.
What to Expect: Join us for this exciting discussion on the potential of perennial cropping systems. With a focus on farm-scale permaculture and agroforestry, Jim Chamberlin, SFA board president, and Tyler Carlson of Early Boots Farm ask, “Can we design and manage agricultural systems with the resilience, stability, and diversity of nature and still have production agriculture?”

SOIL HEALTH AND COVER CROPPING
Room: 204C
Session Leaders: Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist; Carmen Fernholz, Coordinator of Organic Research for the University of Minnesota.
What to Expect: Join Carmen Fernholz and Kent Solberg for an open discussion on how we can increase the vitality of soil in our crop fields with such techniques as intensive rotation, cover crops, mycorrhizal fungi and more.

FARM TRANSITIONS: GET YOUR STORY STRAIGHT
Room: 120A
Session Leaders: Brett Olson, Renewing the Countryside
What to Expect: Whether you know who will be taking over the reins of the family farm or not, being able to convey what the next generation has to work with is important. Even your children who grew up on the farm may not have a good handle of what constitutes the farm. A farm is more than an itemized list of acres and machinery. The full picture of the farm includes its history, peculiarities of the land, business systems and relationships. In this session we’ll help you begin to pull together these items, along with a job description for what actually goes into running the farm and business. This “farm portfolio” will provide valuable information for the future success of your farm.
Presenter Biographies

**Eric Ament** is the owner of **Anahata Herbals** and is dedicated to encouraging a local herb supply. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a degree in Outdoor Education and his small six-acre farm is located on the northeast end of Duluth.

**Mark Boen** and his wife have raised produce on their farm **Bluebird Gardens** since 1978 with most of those years selling at stands. They have completed their fourth year as a CSA farm and this year served 2,139 members. They have two greenhouses, eleven high tunnels and 313 acres. With the new land they are acquiring this year, they will have alternating strips of crop and cover crop over their whole farm.

**Anne Borland** is currently the Cheese Buyer for **Linden Hills Co-op** in Minneapolis. She previously worked as an apprentice cheese maker at Cricket Creek Farm, Williamstown, Mass., and Shepherd’s Way Farms, Nerstrand, Minn. Prior to entering the world of cheese Anne worked with SFA and Buy Fresh Buy Local Pride of the Prairie. She grew up on a dairy farm in southwest Minnesota and is obsessed with all things dairy, cooking and food systems.

**Gary Brever** has owned and operated **Ploughshare Farm** since 2002. Located north of Alexandria, Minn., Ploughshare Farm is a 160-acre farm with 35 acres in vegetable production and a CSA serving 600 members throughout the state. Gary was awarded the Farm/Farmer of the Year by Edible Twin Cities in 2009, featured on The Splendid Table in December of 2011, and named MN Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year by the Jaycees in 2012.

**Tyler Carlson** raises grass-fed beef in central Minnesota. He uses rotational grazing, perennial polycultures, and cover crops to build soil, provide ecological connectivity and habitat for wildlife while protecting water resources. **Early Boots Farm** is in the process of transitioning annual crop fields to integrated agroforestry systems including silvopasture and alley cropping.

**Jim Chamberlin** and his wife **Audra** operate **Island Lake Farm**, a 107-acre self-sustenance farm and forestry operation providing for their family and friends. They raise several kinds of livestock, a large vegetable garden, a diversity of perennial food and forage crops, operate a small sugar bush and mushroom yard, harvest and process wild rice, actively conduct timber stand improvement in the farm woodlot, and are partners in a Peterson swing blade sawmill. Jim served as an SWCD Forestry Technician for over a decade and has training in ecologically based forest management, agroforestry and permaculture.

**Carmen Fennoholtz** farms 400 acres of corn, soybeans, and various small grains in western Minnesota with his wife, **Sally**. They have been certified organic since 1974. He also coordinates organic research for the University of Minnesota and serves on the boards of the Organic Farming Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) and Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES).

**John Fisher-Merritt** is an organic farmer from Wrensall, Minn., near Duluth with 40 years of experience growing vegetables. He designed, built and has successfully operated a 24’X32’ root cellar for 13 years. Along with his wife **Jane** and his son **Janaki**, he was named 2010 Organic Farmer of the Year at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in LaCrosse, Wis.

**Carol Ford**’s passive solar greenhouse is the heart of **Garden Goddess Produce** in Milan, Minn. She and her late husband **Chuck Waibel** wrote the book on winter production in the upper midwest, “The Northern Winter Greenhouse Manual,” which details the design and growing methods in a cool winter environment that also boasts low energy costs and gourmet quality produce. Carol has recently begun a two year project through the Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships to develop an association of winter producers to share resources, information and marketing.

**Jerry Ford** and his wife, **Marienne Kreitlow**, operate **Living Song Farm** on land farmed by the Kreitlow family since 1898. They raise beef cattle, replacement dairy heifers, garlic, onions, potatoes and hay, and hope to certify organic this spring. Jerry is also the Network Coordinator for SFA and the Director of the Minnesota Garlic Festival.

**Luverne Forbord** and his wife **Mary Jo** steward **Prairie Horizons Farm** in West Central Minnesota, where they rotationally graze cattle on certified organic pastures and native prairie, raise certified organic grains and legumes, and are continuing to diversify their farm with native fruits, vegetables and value-added enterprises.

**Mitch Kezar** has been nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize in spot news photography, and has shot for National Geographic, Time, Newswest and a host of hunting and fishing industry publications. Capitalizing on skills honed during a 15-year career as a photojournalist, he works to craft unforgettable images that tell stories and convey emotions. He is the founder of **Windigo Images**, a Minnetonka stock photo agency, the world’s largest image library specializing in hunting, fishing and outdoor subjects. He now lives in Delano.

**John Mesko** is a farmer, educator and leader in the sustainable agriculture movement. He has led a resurgence of activity and impact for SFA since becoming Executive Director in 2009. After growing up on a diversified Minnesota farm, John became an industrial agriculturalist, with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from Purdue University and a career which included a research position with Dow Agrosciences and leadership positions in Extension Education with Purdue. With his wife, Lisa, and their daughters, John started his own direct-marketed, grass-fed livestock operation before taking the helm at SFA.

**Mary Jane Miller** has been a corporate food consultant for over 15 years specializing in product development, consumer recipes, and food trend spotting. Some of her clients are Thousand Hills Cattle Company, Target Corporation, Caribou Coffee, and General Mills. Mary Jane likes to share her culinary curiosity by writing for the Star Tribune Taste Section, Edible Twin Cities, and on her own blog at MaryJaneMiller.com. She also acts as the chef wrangler for the MN Garlic Festival, cooks for Governor Dayton, and is a regular on Twin Cities Live at KSTP TV.
Wayne Monsen has worked in sustainable agriculture for most of his life: first as a farmer, then nearly 22 years (recently retired) as a sustainable agriculture specialist at the MN Department of Agriculture (MDA), and now as project coordinator for the SFA’s Keep Cattle in Minnesota Project as well as an inspector of organic farms and processing facilities. While at the MDA, Wayne managed the sustainable agriculture grant and loan programs for many years and designed and wrote grazing plans for both the NRCS and DNR.

Brett Olson is co-founder and Creative Director for Renewing the Countryside. Having grown up in eight communities across the Great Plains, he is well aware of the challenges and opportunities farmers face. He has facilitated numerous farm transitions workshops and provided one-on-one consultation to farmers wishing to explore options for farm transfer. Brett has been the senior staff person at RTC in youth entrepreneurship, including farming, farmer-buyer connections, and farm transitions.

Jodi Ohlsen Read is a cheesemaker, living and working with her husband Steven and four boys on their sheep dairy farm, Shepherd’s Way Farms, in Nerstrand, Minn. Jodi and her family established Shepherd’s Way in 1994 as a sheep dairy and later began making cheese in 1998. Originally following a writing career path, Jodi shifted gears to become the full-time cheesemaker in 2002. She is also the current Minnesota Cheesemakers Guild president.

After a 34-year career in business, Deborah Pikovsky, with her husband Scott, purchased an old confinement dairy farm in Glencoe, Minn., and began a labor of love called Star Thrower Farm. Her background in food safety was put to good use in the pastured sheep dairy and farmstead cheese business that is the heart of Star Thrower Farm. Deborah facilitates tours and special events at the farm to share the importance of responsible land stewardship, humane and respectful animal husbandry, and supporting strong rural communities.

Greg Reynolds and his wife Mary own and operate Riverbend Farm, which was certified organic in 1994. Crops are produced in a four-year rotation that includes two years of sod-based soil building and two years of crop production. Nearly all of the cover crop seeds used in the soil-building phases of crop rotation are grown on Riverbend Farm. All Riverbend produce is sold within 50 miles of the farm, and their Markets include local independent restaurants, schools, and food co-ops in the Twin Cities, and an 80-member CSA.

Paul Schmidt and his wife Karen run 475 acres of certified organic cropland. Their first 300 acres were certified in 1999. The rotation on this land is currently corn, oats and two years of hay. They also have a vegetable enterprise which consists of one acre of garlic and one acre of asparagus. Paul has been heavily involved with utilizing programs such as CSP and EQUIP and is involved in the Tools For Transition project with the U of M for farmers transitioning ground to organic production. In addition to these enterprises, the Schmidts run 300 acres of conventional corn and contractually market 12,000 head of conventional hogs annually.

Kent Solberg and his wife Linda own and operate a grass-based livestock farm near Verndale, Minn. Kent has been involved in planned grazing management, pasture-based livestock and integrated crop and livestock systems over 20 years. For the past five years they have been using cover crops and seeded annuals to extend their grazing season and improve soil health. He serves as SFA Livestock & Grazing Specialist and has taught college-level courses on forages, grazing, and livestock management.

Jean Peterson and Al Sterner of Peterson Produce earning their living farming vegetables over 30 years ago when they turned the family dairy farm into a produce growing operation with an on-farm roadside market. From asparagus to zucchini with a focus on sweet corn and pumpkins, a wide variety of vegetables has been grown and a flower and bedding plant greenhouse was added 10 years ago. They have transitioned from a conventional to a sustainable farm approach, relying on flame weeding and better mechanical equipment with a focus on paying local kids for weed control rather than using chemicals. They helped form the Crow River Chapter of SFA, having been members since the chapter’s beginning.

Molly Turnquist, MPH, RD is a Program Manager at Renewing the Countryside. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Nutrition and Dietetics from Concordia College and graduated from the Coordinated Master’s Program in Public Health Nutrition at the University of Minnesota in August 2012. Molly is a certified trainer for child care providers through the MN Center for Professional Development and works as a Registered Dietitian consultant with a school district through Dakota County Public Health. As a Public Health Dietitian, Molly hopes to play a role in ensuring access to healthy, sustainably grown food for individuals, families, and communities through promoting a healthy and sustainable regional food system.

Jim VanDerPol farms with his wife LeeAnn, son Josh and daughter-in-law Cindy on 320 family acres in Chippewa County, western Minnesota. The farm includes organic cropping, a beef grazing operation, a farrow-to-finish hog operation and a meat sales arm to market the farm’s pork. Efforts are made to blend the livestock and the crops whenever and wherever possible. Jim was the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Chair in Agricultural Systems for the year 2000, and worked to help establish a lower input hog facility and research and teaching program on the West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris. He and LeeAnn are SFA Farmers Emeritus.

Sue Wika, PhD, and Tom Prieve, DVM, operate Paradox Farm, located in the beautiful oak savannah hills near Ashby, MN. Paradox Farm is a permaculture farm featuring integrated livestock systems. Tom practices large animal veterinary medicine. Sue is certified in permaculture design and has completed extensive coursework in holistic management. Both Sue and Tom are instructors for the Sustainable Food Production program of SFA. Visit www.sfa-mn.org for upcoming courses.
Culinary Session Descriptions

Mary Jane Miller again leads this popular feature.
FARM TO DAYCARE INSIGHTS & ADVICE
TIME: 9:30-10:30 a.m.
PRESENTERS: Brett Olson, Renewing the Countryside, Molly Turnquist, MPH, RD, Renewing the Countryside
Brett Olson and Molly Turnquist will talk about the project that brought more local fruits and vegetables to Minnesota daycares last summer. We’ll bring these ideas to life and share tastes of some of the most popular ones. Come with your questions about how to market farm-fresh produce to the daycare community, as well as practical advice you can bring home to your own table.

THE CARE & HANDLING OF GRASS-FED BEEF
TIME: 11:05 a.m to 12:05 p.m.
PRESENTERS: Mary Jane Miller
We’ll cook and taste our way through steaks to grill, ground beef to shape, and pot roasts to braise. You’ll take away plenty of tips and tricks learned from lots of careful testing and enthusiastic tasting. Sponsored by Thousand Hills Cattle Company.

FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTING BETTER SHOTS FOR BLOGS, SOCIAL MEDIA, & MORE
TIME: 1:20-2:20 p.m.
PRESENTER: Mitch Kezar, Windigo Images
Mary Jane Miller cooks and Mitch Kezar shoots. We’ll take you through a photo session showing you how the pros work from food styling, lighting and simple camera settings.

BEER VS. WINE CHEESE-PAIRING SMACKDOWN
TIME: 3:10-4:10 p.m.
Presenters: Anne Borgendale, Cheese Buyer for Linden Hills Co-op; Michael Agnew, Certified Cicerone and National Beer Judge; Marcus Hanson, Sommelier
Which is better to serve with cheese? Beer or wine? You be the judge. In this corner, Michael Agnew, Minnesota’s first Certified Cicerone with the Cicerone Certification Program, and National Beer Judge with the Beer Judge Certification Program. And in this corner, sommelier Marcus Hanson from the Three Crows Delano, MN. You’ll taste your way through an assortment of Minnesota cheeses and try out the beer and wine each of our contestants has chosen. They’ll try to convince you their choice is the best but ultimately you are the judge, voting for which is the better pairing.

SEED SWAP 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Lobby behind Registration
Managed by Greg Reynolds, Riverbend Farm

Seed Corn
Alfalfa
Clover
Grass
Forages

Agriculture... designed for the long game- play like it™
(855) 945-2449
P.O. Box 385, Warren, IL 60187
request@american-organic.com

Organic Certification Services

USDA ORGANIC

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association
1900 Hendon Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108
1-855-213-4461 / www.mciaorganic.org
IN MEMORIAM: Carl Ziebarth

Carl Ziebarth, 97, of Faribault, passed away Oct. 24, 2013, in Minneapolis following complications from an automobile accident on May 23, 2013. Services have been held. The family suggests donations to Catholic Indian Mission, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, PO Box 639, Fort Yates, ND 58538 or Sustainable Farming Association, Box 192, Princeton, MN 55371 (online at www.sfa-mn.org).

Carl Archie Ziebarth, the son of William A. and Annie Matilda (Peterson) Ziebarth, was born Sept. 6, 1916, in Wrenshall, Minn. Carl grew up on a farm near Wrenshall. A World War II veteran, he served in North Africa and Italy with Company F, 135th Infantry, 34th Division and received three Purple Hearts and five overseas service bars. After the war, Carl attended the University of Minnesota, earning a Bachelor of Science in agriculture and later a Master of Science in education. He taught vocational agriculture for over 35 years.

Carl practiced sustainable farming and cared deeply for the land. He raised small grains, corn, and soybeans. Carl was honored with SFA’s Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award in 2010.

Carl is survived by his children, Ann Ziebarth (Jeff Crump), John Ziebarth (Kathy) and daughters Lauryn and Julie, and Matt Ziebarth (Jana Stephens) and sons Dan and Sam; and by his brother Kenneth James Ziebarth and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 60 years Betty Ziebarth; and infant son Anthony James.

SFA Midwest Soil Health Summit

Feb. 19-20, 2014 • Arrowwood Resort • Alexandria, Minn.

The Summit will convene some of the most innovative farmers and researchers in the Upper Midwest for two days of networking, speakers, panel discussions – all geared at improving the health of your soil.

The keynote will be Gabe Brown of Brown’s Ranch in Burleigh County, N.D. Brown is a pioneer in diverse cover cropping, having used no-till techniques for two decades. His family ranch encompasses 5,400 acres, all managed sustainably and with the goal of building ideal soil health conditions.

Following Brown’s address will be a presentation by Richard Bieber, a producer from South Dakota who has been practicing no-till for 27 years and cover cropping for over a decade. Other speakers:

• Wendy Taheri, Research Microbiologist with the North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory, will present on cover cropping and mycorrhizae in soils.
• Kent Solberg, SFA Livestock and Grazing Coordinator, will be leading a session on designing and customizing cover crops.
• Jay Fuhrer, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Bismarck, N.D., will lead a session on how to make soil health principles work on your farm.
• Ryan Stockwell of the National Wildlife Federation will present a session on the financial side of implementing soil health practices on farms, guiding participants through the maze of rules and regulations surrounding crop insurance and incorporating cover crops into a farm plan.

Cost is $100 for SFA members and $150 for nonmembers • Register at sfa-mn.org/midwest-soil-health-summit

www.gardensofeagan.com
2014 SFA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

GORECKI CONFERENCE CENTER

LOWER LEVEL

ROOM 120A
9:30 a.m. – SFA Chapter Resources
11:05 a.m. – Planting and Harvesting Calendars
1:20 p.m. – When the Reality Doesn’t Match the Business Plan
3:10 p.m. – Farm Transitions: Get Your Story Straight

ROOM 120B
All Day – Kids’ Programming

UPPER LEVEL

7:30 a.m. – Leaders Breakfast
8:30 a.m. – WELCOME, STATE OF SFA WITH JOHN MESKO, CHAPTER SHOWCASE
9:30 a.m. – Weed Control Strategies
11:05 a.m. – Seed Saving
1:20 p.m. – Season Extension
3:10 p.m. – Integrated Perennial Cropping Systems
9:30 a.m. – Artisan Cheese
11:05 a.m. – New Crops: Quinoa, Amaranth & More
1:20 p.m. – Root Cellaring
4:20 P.M. – SOCIAL TIME WITH LOCAL BEER, WINE & CHEESE