Carlson leads Sustainable Farming Association into a new era

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's mission is to support sustainable farming practices through farmer-to-farmer networking, education, innovation and demonstration. This non-profit organization has been a voice and a resource in sustainable farming for over 25 years and counting.

There's currently nine chapters in SFA which cover the varying agricultural landscapes found in Minnesota. As newly-elected president of SFA, Connie Carlson brings her vast experience in both the agricultural and business sectors to the organization.

Sustainable farming is nothing new for Carlson. In fact, she was raised on a diversified organic farm in Madison, Minn. The farming operation included hogs, small grains, corn and soybeans. Her parents, Carmen and Sally Ferrholz, own A-Frame Farm and instilled in Carlson the importance of taking care of the land. "I had a deep connection to the land, soil and community."

Sustainable Farming Association focuses on soil health and specialty crops

By Alison Durheim | June 19, 2019 at 10:17 PM CDT - Updated June 20 at 8:28 AM

NEW ULM, Minn. (KEYC) - Interest in growing specialty crops like asparagus and garlic is increasing in Minnesota.

One group has noticed and is now working to save farmers money.

The Sustainable Farming Association has been working for nearly 30 years in the interest of soil health and specialty crops.

With the current low prices and poor spring weather, the association hopes to work with producers and give their expertise to help them save on expenses and earn extra income.

"Some producers are looking at ways to diversify their farm income and are looking at specialty crops as a strategy to do that, but they do boost income," said Theresa Kevery, executive director of the Sustainable Farming Association.

Learning more about silvopasture: Minnesota group hosts educational events

By Jonathan Knutson | Agweek Staff Writer on Aug 12, 2019 at 8:30 a.m.

Silvopasture is a term that many people may be unfamiliar with. But the concept behind it — combining trees with pasture to benefit both livestock and the land — is an old one that's garnering growing attention.

On Sept. 18 in Becker, Minn., the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota hosts an educational session on silvopasture, oak savanna restoration, grazing management, and how these techniques can boost farm profitability.
SFA Communications Director Jason Walker has forged relationships with the ag press and other staff and chapter leaders have relationships with their local press.

SFA prepares a Soil Health Program communication plan that uses guest commentaries, radio presentations, letters to the editor, social media, and press releases featuring soil health practitioners, Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff members, and other agencies.

SFA will continue its Soil Health Portal as a vibrant, information-rich resource, and expand its Soil Health Network, providing timely, cutting-edge information.

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**RED RIVER FARM NETWORK**

**MN Farmers Strive to Leave a Legacy of Better Soils**

Published July 31, 2019

Red Lake Falls. Trinity Creek Ranch owner David Miller started raising cover crops in 2012 with one field to graze cattle. Seven years later, the family is integrating more cover crops into the system. Miller says a more tolerant, resilient soil is the result. “The end goal is a legacy; to improve the soil, leave the farm in better shape than I got it. That’s not to say my father didn’t do a good job, but he didn’t have the tools we have now,” he says. “It’s really changed. We have a good opportunity and want to take advantage of it.” In the afternoon, attendees walked fields, starting with corn interseeded with a cover crop mix including sunn hemp, flax, cereal rye, faba beans and more. The second field featured sunflowers interseeded with flax, buckwheat and kale. Other fields featured rye and soybeans. Cattle will graze some of the fields. [Listen to the story.](#)

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**StarTribune**

**Twin Cities gardeners look to grow connections among themselves**

New association is focused on networking.

By Austen Macalus Special to the Star Tribune | MARCH 19, 2019 – 3:42PM

It will be a while before all the snow is gone, but Twin Cities gardeners already are looking forward to the rows of sweet peas, tomatoes, peppers and other veggies that will line their soil.

After a harsh winter, the growing season can’t come soon enough for Michelle Bruns, a gardening blogger from White Bear Lake.

“Especially this time of year, everyone is itching to get their fingers in the dirt,” she said.

Bruns was among the two dozen eager green thumbs who came together for the inaugural meeting of the Twin Cities Growers Network last week.

“There’s no group of metro growers that exists. There are lots of nonprofits and organizations that focus on local food,” said Jason Walker, of the Sustainable Farming Association, which helps run the network. “But there’s none that actually links the growers and producers together.”

Even though there’s lots of information online, Walker said face-to-face interaction goes a long way — like having someone to call for advice about crop rotations or to help watch a plot when you’re out of town.

“It adds a sense of security that all the YouTube videos in the world can’t replace,” he said.
SFA Multimedia Coordinator Katie Feterl has curated a robust presence on SFA social media pages.

SFA will continue to focus on soil health via its social media postings to its nearly 6,500 followers.