SFA in 2020: An Earned & Social Media Profile

Crisis shows how our farm-food economy needs to be transformed

We can have a system that serves equitably for all.

By Theresa Keaveny | MAY 15, 2020 — 6:02PM

Skyrocketing grocery demand has led to shelves bereft of eggs and chicken. News reports detail meat shortages and — yikes! — the coming high price of bacon. Last month, President Donald Trump ordered meat-processing plants hit hard by COVID-19 to stay in operation.

Yet Minnesota farmers are taking the last-resort step of euthanizing their animals. Why is this happening?

The short answer is that meat-processing plants shut down because of employee outbreaks of COVID-19. The loss of institutional markets like schools and restaurants has thrown a wrench into the system. You can’t sell gallons of fluid eggs to a family the way you can a larger institution.

Look more closely, though, and a more troubling picture comes into focus. Processing plants have been forced to reopen, but the president’s order said nothing about health and safety measures to protect plant workers: slowing down production lines, creating physical distances, staggering breaks, adding hand-washing stations, testing and providing personal protective equipment. These measures are vital to employee safety and public health and must be required if we expect the plants to stay open.

Establishing roots: Wayzata High grad’s business venture grows into a CSA

Sarah Lindblom of Solar Fresh Produce operates a weekly, sold-out CSA

By Kristen Miller kristen.miller@apgecm.com | Jul 28, 2020 Updated Aug 4, 2020

“Seeing women like Sarah is very inspiring because they are committed to principles of sustainability and protecting our food-producing resources — air, land, water and people,” said Theresa Keaveny, executive director of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. “That gives me hope for a brighter agricultural future, where more of our food is sourced from local farmers, which is of higher quality, and greater nutritional value than processed or factory-farmed protein.”

“I never thought I’d be running a farm by myself,” Lindblom said. Instead, she thought she would still be working for other people or having to rent farmland.

Land access is the number one issue for beginners, said Lindblom who is president of the Crow River chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

Today, more beginning farmers are women as women make up 36% of the farmers in Minnesota, and 56% of farming operations include women as decision-makers, according to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
SFA Communications Director Katie Feterl and Associate Jason Walker prepare a communication plan that uses podcasts, 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. This plan works to spread awareness of our work on Soil Health, Silvopasture, promoting Minnesota-grown Garlic and Asparagus, and chapter festivals and events.

AGRICULTURE

Garlic grows great in Central Minnesota

Written By: Michael Denny | Jul 29th 2020 - 3pm.

The garlic plant is incredibly diverse and grows in a wide variety of regions around the world. According to Jerry Ford, network coordinator for the Sustainable Farming Association, when people think of garlic they typically imagine it growing in places like the Mediterranean but it does grow right here in Minnesota. He went on to explain that garlic grows best here and is very hearty. In Minnesota there are 70 different types of garlic, each one unique.

Anita Small and Phil Iverson specialize in porcelain hardneck garlic and grow roughly 6,000 bulbs every year. The duo sells their crops at farmers markets. Their farm is one of the Minnesota Premium Garlic Project field trial sites. During the tour they shared various techniques they used to grow their own brand of garlic while leading the group around the small farm.

Onamia alumna brings heirloom garlic crops to her fourth-generation family farm

by Evan Orbeck | orbeck@mileslacsmessenger.com | Aug 14, 2020

Growing garlic

Among these resources was the Minnesota Premium Garlic Project, which is connected with the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Extension office. Shardlow learned of this project’s efforts to foster new growers of premium garlic, which, she said, is “a high cash value and high productivity crop.”

“Garlic does well in our climate,” Shardlow explained, “and because of that, we’re in a good position to compete with foreign imports from China and domestic imports from California and to diversify local food production and get more cash to farmers locally.” Through the project, Shardlow has had access to workshops and field visits to other local growers. She also noted that the project director had been readily available to help answer her questions. “There’s a lot of community focused around helping a newbie get started,” she said.

‘Lake Superior Roots and Recipes’ Connects Residents with Local Produce, Ideas

Looking For Fresh Produce or Recipe Ideas? Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Assoc. Has You Covered

September 28, 2020 by Brett Scott

Link to full article
SFA Communications Director Katie Feterl curates a robust presence on SFA social media pages and in 2020 started a popular podcast, ‘Dirt Rich.’

SFA will continue to focus on soil health, garlic, asparagus, silvopasture, emerging farmers and pandemic-related resources via social media to nearly 8,500 followers.

**SFA MULTIMEDIA 2020 STATS**

**Social**
- Twitter followers: 2,219
- Facebook followers: 6,009

**Dirt Rich Podcast**
- First release: May 22, 2020
- Episodes: 16
- Total listens: 2,064

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**Thom Petersen @ThomyPetersen · Apr 9**
Joined @sfamn members tonight on Zoom to talk COVID-19 issues with farmers selling into local markets, farmers markets, CSA’s, online sales, etc....good idea sharing

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**Minnesota Farmers Union @MNFarmersUnion · May 18**
Crisis shows how our farm-food economy needs to be transformed - thank you Theresa Keaveny of @sfamn for this on-point opinion.

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**Sustainable Farming Association**
Published by Katie Feterl (7) · October 21 · ☑
Some Central Chapter folks gathered last weekend for a hands-on hedging workshop at Island Lake Farm before the snow arrived. Farmer-to-farmer networking & living fence building—great way to spend a Saturday!