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15 Years of Celebrating Local Food, Farmers and Restaurants

by Bruce Miller, Membership & Outreach Director

Minnesota Cooks is an education and outreach program presented by the Minnesota Farmers Union, in conjunction with AURI, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Minnesota Grown program and the Minnesota Farmers Union Insurance Agency.

Minnesota Cooks celebrates the collaboration of dedicated family farmers, the talented local foods-minded chefs and restaurant owners who work tirelessly to highlight delicious farm-fresh foods on their menus.

In addition, Minnesota Cooks has expanded its outreach and now partners with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) on the Emmy award-winning television program, Farm Fresh Road Trip.

MINNESOTA COOKS STATE FAIR SCHEDULE – Sunday, Aug. 27

10 a.m.
The Buttered Tin and Hope Creamery – Possibly the World’s Best Cinnamon Rolls
Lowry Hill Meats and Pork & Plants – Red Wattle Farmers Sausage with Chimichurri and Summer Vegetables

11 a.m.
Honey & Rye Bakehouse and York Farm – Cherry Madeleines with Cherry Glaze
Farm to Fork and rebelSoil – Roasted Eggplant Roulades with Goat Cheese, Greens and Heirloom Tomato Sauce

Noon
Cup N’ Saucer and Elm Creek Veggies – Oven Roasted Maschoff Farms Asparagus with Villa Rustica Olive Oil, Sauce Gribiche, Garlic Scape Pesto, Welcome Meats Bacon Powder, N’ Cherry Lane Farms Micro Lemon Balm Forager Bakery and Capra Nera Creamery – Minnesota Street Corn

1 p.m.
Terra Truck and The Horticultural Research Center – Fall Greens Salad with Curry Roasted Squash, Blue Cheese, Walnuts and Apples with an Apple Cider Vinaigrette
Main Street Farmer Eatery and Petit Pastures – Sloppy Joe @ Saint and Main

2 p.m.
OMC and Beeworks – Cilantro Chipotle BBQ Sauce
Heirloom Kitchen and Riverbend Farm – Garden Gazpacho

3 p.m.
6Smith and Untiedt’s Vegetable Farm – Spicy Lemongrass Aged Sirlion and Bibimbap with Untiedt’s Pickled and Fresh Vegetables and Spicy Garlic Aioli
Sassy Spoon and Abraham’s Table Farm – Beef Bolognese over Spaghetti Squash

For additional information, please contact me at bruce@mfu.org.
New Staff Member
First of all, MFU would like to welcome its newest staff member: Brita Moore joined the team on July 10 as Public Relations Director. She brings a strong background in agriculture journalism and great enthusiasm for Minnesota’s rural communities. We are grateful to have her on board.

Buffers
The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has provided two more resources for landowners who need to come into compliance with the buffer law. One is a cost-share program, which allocates $5 million. The funds will be distributed to local soil and water conservation districts for cost-sharing contracts with landowners or authorized agents to implement riparian buffers or alternative practices on public waters and drainage ditches.

BWSR has also launched a new website specifically addressing questions about the buffer law. Visit mg.gov/buffer-law for answers about alternative practices, tips on implementing the buffer, financial assistance and more. See page 4 for more information.

Agricultural trade
MFU is pleased about the recent deal struck with China allowing the United States to export beef there. However, the ensuing discussions have prompted more questions about country-of-origin labeling (COOL). According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, beef being exported must be traceable to the U.S. birth farm or first place of residence. As part of this trade deal, the U.S. will import chicken raised and processed in China. The concern now is that Chinese consumers will receive COOL on beef from us, while American consumers do not have the same privilege. We don’t know the same details about Chinese chicken that consumers there will receive about American beef. We will continue to do all we can to help American consumers find the information they need to know and help American farmers market their products.

State Fair
August is a big month for MFU, as we’ll be sponsoring several activities at the Minnesota State Fair, such as the Milk Run, Celebrity Milking Contest and 4-H/FFA winner signs. We’ll also be out at the fairgrounds every day at the MFU Coffee Shop, where you can try our Sweet Corn Blueberry Éclair and Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee. Both of these were named to the State Fair’s Top New Foods List. You might have seen me recently on the Fox 9 news channel displaying the cold press. It’s made with local maple syrup and heavy cream, along with coffee beans from J&S Bean Factory in St. Paul. The éclair is made by MFU member Birchwood Café.

MEET PRESIDENT
GARY WERTISH
Gary Wertish was elected MFU President in January 2017. Previously, he served as MFU Vice President from 2009 until his election as President.

With a long history of Farmers Union service, Gary has been on the Farmers Union Industries Board of Directors; past MFU and NFU policy committees; and worked as a MFU Field Representative and Renville County President.

Gary and his wife Jeanne have four grown children and four grandchildren. Gary ran a diversified grain and livestock farm and now assists his son Tom operating the family farm near Renville.
gary@mfu.org

Farm Bill
The Congressional Budget Office has sent out its projections on agricultural spending that will serve as a guide for the 2018 Farm Bill. The $144.9 billion in funding is $4.6 billion more than President Trump’s budget from earlier this year, but it is $8.5 billion less than the 2017 fiscal year enacted level. We continue to be concerned that agriculture is receiving a funding cut at a time when farmers are struggling financially. As negotiations in Congress’s agricultural committees start up, we are hopeful that the voices of family farmers and rural Americans will be heard by our elected officials.

MFU provides its members the opportunity to speak out on what’s important to them in the Farm Bill in our Rural Voices Discussions. Please join us.
On July 10 of this year, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced two additional resources for landowners working to come into compliance with the state’s buffer law. The law, which was passed with bipartisan support in 2015 and signed into law by Gov. Dayton, requires the implementation of a buffer strip on public waters by Nov. 1, 2017 and a buffer on public drainage ditches by Nov. 1, 2018.

**Cost-Share Program**
BWSR has approved a new buffer cost-share program, allocating almost $5 million dollars to support landowners in meeting the requirements of the state buffer law. The funds will be distributed to soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and are to be used for cost-sharing contracts with landowners or their authorized agents to implement riparian buffers or alternative practices on public waters and public drainage ditches. These Clean Water Funds, passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Dayton at the end of the 2017 legislative session, provide important support to the governor’s Buffer Initiative.

The 2017 legislation also recognizes that some landowners may have hardships (such as weather) in meeting the public waters deadline. The added language allows for an eight-month extension for implementation when a landowner or authorized agent has filed a riparian protection “compliance plan” with their local SWCD by Nov. 1, 2017. Compliance waivers offer a buffer deadline extension until July 1, 2018.

**New One-Stop Website**
Minnesota landowners with questions about compliance waivers and other buffer topics also have another option available today with the launching of a new one-stop website for information and tips to implement the buffer law. The new site is a user-friendly and convenient resource for landowners and the public to learn about the law, find answers about alternative practices, get information about financial and technical assistance, and more.

The new buffer site, launched by the State of Minnesota, is found at [mn.gov/buffer-law](http://mn.gov/buffer-law). For more information on the buffer law, including the cost-share program, contact your local SWCD.

**Compliance**
Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been hard at work with landowners statewide and progress toward compliance is being made. To date 64 of Minnesota’s 87 counties are 60-100 percent in compliance with the buffer law. Statewide, preliminary compliance with the buffer law is 89 percent.

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The aerial view shows grass buffer strips along a stream in Olmsted County. Without a buffer of plants to filter runoff, pollutants such as sediment and algae-causing nutrients can drain to the water.

“The additional resources, both financial and online, are designed to help landowners be successful in complying with the law,” explained John Jaschke, Executive Director of BWSR. “Local SWCDs and landowners have been working together over the past 18 months, and we are making great progress with 64 counties already 60-100 percent compliant.”

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**How buffers protect water**

- **Trees**
  - Hold soil in place
  - Use up nutrients
  - Shade the water
  - Provide habitat

- **Tall native grasses**
  - Prevent erosion
  - Filter pollutants in runoff
  - Provide habitat

- **Perennial buffers** help maintain ditches by preventing erosion and fill-in

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Photo and graph from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources website – www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers
Summer 2017 certainly is a busy one, with lots of travel and meetings. These offer me a great opportunity not only to meet people, but also have educational opportunities. One of the most interesting gatherings occurred in Jamestown, N.D. National Farmers Union organized the Farmers Union State to State Forum. This was an opportunity for state organizations from across the country to bring in office staff and key players in their particular states. It gave states the opportunity to share ideas that have worked for them, as well as the chance to share what not to do. Subjects ranged from membership retention and recruitment to hosting successful events. We are very lucky here at Minnesota Farmers Union with strong leadership running our organization and members who are passionate and active.

MFU made a mark on the event right away. We kicked the day off with a presentation by Bruce, Michelle and Laura called “Hosting a Successful Listening Session.” They did a great job. The attendees had many questions, some as simple as what kind of venue did we use, to more complicated ones, such as what kind of budget they should expect to have. One of the things that I picked up on listening to the other states was that they were impressed that we were able to get the attention of our governor’s office. Many said they had been unable to get their Lieutenant Governor on the phone, let alone to attend one of their meetings. It really showed the impact that MFU is having in rural Minnesota. It was great to hear all the compliments from everyone the rest of day.

Other highlights from the day included a keynote address from N.D. State Senator Erin Oban, who grew up on a farm and currently represents the heart of Bismarck. U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota also delivered a video address, where she gave the highest of praise to National Farmers Union, stating that NFU is one of the most respected and hardworking organizations in Washington, D.C.

There were several different breakout sessions, too. I choose to attend one that focused on communications. This focused mainly on strong messaging in our online and social media presence. I really enjoyed this session; we talked about different ways to get people involved, developing functions that have a purpose and telling the stories of our heritage and how proud we should be of it. The last was one of the points the struck me. It’s our job as members to tell the stories. Tell your non-member friends about something you know the organization has done to impact life in rural Minnesota. Let’s keep spreading the word.

Also, this past month I attended several of the listening sessions regarding the Draft Nitrogen Rule. Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson said, “The approach is to involve the agricultural community in problem solving at the local level. We all need to work together to respond to and address localized concerns about unsafe levels of nitrate in groundwater.” They will be compiling comments until Aug. 25. If you need help getting a comment card or with submitting a comment, you can contact me and I will be happy to help.
Farmers Union county organizations are the base of our statewide grassroots organization. Our members are family farmers and spouses of dues paid members. Members’ unmarried children between the ages of 16 and 21 are also voting members at any Farmers Union county convention.

Each year, Farmers Union counties hold their annual county conventions, which are gatherings of Farmers Union members from that county. At the convention, there is often a speaker or speakers who address critical issues for family farming.

Participants bring forth resolutions and members can discuss and vote on these resolutions that could become Farmers Union policy. All Farmers Union policy starts at the local level with the county conventions in the summer and fall, moves to the state level for debate at the state convention in November, and then to the national level at the national convention in March. MFU state leadership advocates for this policy in Congress and the Minnesota Legislature.

In addition to passing policy resolutions, county conventions elect delegates who are interested in representing the county at the MFU state convention, elect or reelect a county president who serves on the MFU Board of Directors and elect any other necessary officers.

County conventions are held at various times between July and October. Some are held during the day, some at night. Farmers Union conventions are usually informal, giving members a chance to catch-up with their neighbors, meet new people and discuss issues in their areas.

All Minnesota Farmers Union members receive a postcard notification (watch for yours) informing you of when and where your local convention will be held. (Scheduled conventions are listed on page 13.) If it’s been a while since you attended a Farmers Union county convention, why not give it a try in 2017?

Your convention will be coming up soon, so bring your family, join your friends and neighbors and be an active member.

Oh, and in answer to the most asked question: If I go, will I get elected as a delegate or officer? The answer is pretty simple. No, not unless you want to get elected.

Farmers Union county conventions continue to be the heart of Minnesota Farmers Union. Take a couple of hours and come join us at yours.

**MFU Working on Food Safety Issues: FSMA**

Minnesota Farmers Union is a participant in the Local Food Safety Collaborative, funded through the FDA in conjunction with the National Farmers Union.

The goal of this work is to provide outreach, education and training to small local food farmers, producers and processors on the Produce Safety and Preventive Controls rules of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).
MFU will target value-added and diversified farmers and processors. Our project will build upon existing available resources and modify the delivery of any required trainings to serve local food producers in particular. It will concentrate on identifying and better understanding the unique needs of the sector in attaining compliance with FSMA, and establishing targeted resources and training to address their needs. MFU will conduct outreach programs for local producers and processors to raise awareness of FSMA and help Minnesota farmers understand how FSMA applies to them. A key focus will be smaller or disadvantaged farmers, producers and processors, including those looking to become processors.

As part of our outreach, we’ll direct producers and processors towards existing resources, such as the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) and Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) trainings, and local resources, such as the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. We are working closely with Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff to coordinate training opportunities for farmers and others working in the area of product safety. This may include development and distribution of education and outreach materials such as FSMA fact sheets. We’ll also host informational sessions on FSMA at state or county meetings, including those which can be geographically targeted to reach out into regional rural areas. This could include working with other organizations and participating in conferences and workshops with groups such as the Hmong American Farmers Association; the Minnesota Farmers Market Association; the Sustainable Food Network; the Immigrant & Minority Farmers Conference; the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Conference; and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Organic Conference.

As another part of this work, MFU will seek to engage with local, regional and state entities working on food safety education, outreach and training, including the Minnesota Department of Agriculture; the University of Minnesota Extension program; the State/Regional FDA office; food hubs; and others who we discover will be working on similar goals of helping farmers and processors understand and comply as necessary with FSMA.

Finally, MFU will distribute and assist producers in completing the needs assessment survey being developed by the main local food safety collaborative partners. Anyone interested in participating in this survey should contact me at bruce@mfu.org.

**New at the State Fair!**

This year at the 2017 Minnesota State Fair, the Farmers Union Coffee Shop is excited to offer three new menu items!

Making the Minnesota State Fair New Foods list are:

- Maple Chili Bacon Donut
- Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee
- Sweet Corn Blueberry Éclair

The focus of these 2017 new summery sensations is ‘Minnesota Grown’, with all the ingredients, except the coffee, of course, sourced from Minnesota farms.

Be sure to visit MFU booth at the Minnesota State Fair and try out these new fresh taste treats, or our classics, such as Mocha on a Stick.

The MFU booth is located on the north side of Dan Patch Avenue between Cooper and Cosgrove Streets.

Thanks to our partners, the Birchwood Cafe, J&S Bean Factory, Grand Ole Creamery, Stoney Creek Dairy and UP Coffee Roasters.

**Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee**

Locally sourced heavy cream and maple syrup in a cold brew coffee infused with nitrogen.

**Sweet Corn Blueberry Éclair**

Kernza® flour éclair filled with sweet corn pastry cream and topped with blueberry glaze.
LEARNING & EXPLORATION AT CAMP

With two week-long camps in the books and three to go, the Minnesota Farmers Union camp season is off to a great start. Our Southern Elementary Camp held at Sibley State Park near New London had a record 75 very energetic campers!

At the time of writing this, I am at our Northern Junior High camp. The campers are hearing a lesson that explains cooperatives and the role they play in the world. The Farmers Union Campground at Lake Sarah is the setting for our two Northern camps.

Day Camps
To kick off the summer, the counselors and I held a week of day camps. Thanks to the Triple O Dairy farm near Randolph, MFU was able to host more than 80 campers who got to learn about dairy farming straight from the source. Other highlights of the day camps were a day at the Izaak Walton League in Bloomington hosted by Ted Suss, a day camp in Willmar and assisting with the Breakfast on the Farm near Goodhue. These day camps are a great way to spread the word about MFU and MFU camps.

All-States Camp
At All-States Camp, held in Bailey, Colo., Farmers Union youth members from across the country gathered to explore their leadership potential, discuss issues important to their generation and identify ways to effect positive change in their communities.

Throughout the week, campers from ages 17 to 20 participated in programs that emphasize leadership, teamwork and cooperative education while also enjoying traditional camp activities. In addition, campers gained hands-on experience in Denver, Colo., while volunteering at Re:Vision, a food and farming cooperative co-founded by NFU Beginning Farmer Institute alum Eric Kornacki.

As a part of All-States, the campers elect six of their peers to NFU’s National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC), which represents thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country. I am excited to announce that two longtime MFU campers were elected by their peers to serve on NYAC. Congratulations to Kirsten VanDerPol and Hunter Cardinal! I am certain that you will make MFU proud!

NYAC members will further hone their leadership skills at a learning session in Washington, D.C., through presentations at NFU’s 116th Anniversary Convention, as well as by planning next year’s All-States Camp. If you or anyone you know is interested in MFU Youth Camps, information can always be found at www.mfu.org/camp.

KANDIYOHI & SWIFT COUNTY FARMERS UNION PICNIC

Kandiyohi and Swift counties joined together on July 13 for a joint Farmers Union county picnic. There were members of both counties in attendance, along with MFU Director of Government Relations, Thom Petersen, and MFU Intern, Katie Wilts. The evening started off with a potluck supper, including pork chops, hot dishes and homemade pecan pie. This supper was an opportunity for members of both counties to catch up on each other’s lives, families and farms.

The business meeting was hosted by Kandiyohi County President Donnell Williamson and Swift County President Tom Clemen. Hannah Wilts, a Swift County member, informed attendees of the Swift County day camp that was to be held on July 20 at the Harmon Wilts Farm. She also spoke about the Beginning Farmers Experience on July 16 at the Mighty Axe Hops farm in Foley. Next was a discussion with Jacki Anderson, the Economic Development Officer from Rep. Collin Peterson’s office. Members in attendance had the opportunity to speak with her about issues they face in their day-to-day lives. Broadband internet is a key issue that was discussed.

The meeting closed with Thom Peterson giving a 2017 legislative update, along with an update of the happenings at the MFU state office. A few key topics Thom discussed included the beginning farmer tax credit, the school levy property tax credit and ditch mowing. He also invited everyone to attend the Rural Issues Discussion on July 27 in Willmar. He shared that this event is a great way to make known what you want included in the next farm bill.

The meeting closed with Thom Peterson giving a 2017 legislative update, along with an update of the happenings at the MFU state office. A few key topics Thom discussed included the beginning farmer tax credit, the school levy property tax credit and ditch mowing. He also invited everyone to attend the Rural Issues Discussion on July 27 in Willmar. He shared that this event is a great way to make known what you want included in the next farm bill.

MFU’s Thom Peterson (left) and Kandiyohi County President, Donnell Williamson (right)

These two counties will have their county convention on Sept. 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Sherrie’s Café in Kerkhoven.
Producers west of Minnesota have been experiencing drought conditions this growing season. On June 23, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue authorized emergency grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres during the primary nesting season in North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana in the counties meeting D2 or greater, as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Since that time the drought has continued to deepen and the forecast is for hot, dry weather in the upcoming week in the northern plains. As such, the Secretary is authorizing emergency grazing of CRP for any county in which any part of its border lies within 150 miles of a county approved for emergency grazing of CRP.

In addition, for any county in which any part of its border lies within 150 miles of any county approved for emergency grazing of CRP, USDA will allow CRP contract holders who hay their acreage according to their mid-management conservation plan to donate their hay to livestock producers. CRP contract holders still have the ability to sell their hay with a 25-percent reduction in their annual rental payment as they’ve been fully authorized to do in the past.

Emergency haying is not authorized at this time. The Secretary will continue to monitor conditions and will consider expanding emergency authority if conditions worsen.

Eligible CRP participants can use the acreage for grazing their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reductions assessed for acres grazed. A map displaying counties approved for CRP emergency grazing and the donation of hay under mid-contract management authority, will be available at: www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/emergency-haying-and-grazing/index. (Map also shown below)

To take advantage of the emergency grazing provisions, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Center visit offices.usda.gov.

**MPP Dairy Signup Delayed**

The 2018 MPP-Dairy annual coverage election period scheduled to start on July 3, 2017, has been delayed.

The signup start date will begin on Sept. 1, 2017. The signup was delayed until Sept. 1 to allow county offices to concentrate on finishing up with 2017 crop acreage reporting, emergency grazing requests and LFP applications.

Since the 2018 signup is delayed, the postcard mailing announcing the 2018 annual coverage election period will also be delayed. The postcard has been used in the past as an announcement of the signup start date.
Why is working with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and MFU important to you? I grew up on a dairy and grain farm, fully intending to make farming my career. My parents were always active in community issues as well as being involved with 4H/Extension and MN Farm Bureau. It was watching them that I became aware of the need to be involved in whatever industry a person makes their livelihood. Having taken part in the annual MFU Fly-In to Washington, D.C., as well as attending State Conventions, I witnessed the influence a group of individuals can have when they work together on a common cause. This just makes good sense to me.

What community organizations are you passionate about? I have been a member of a local Kiwanis Club for over 10 years which has given me many opportunities to help at the local homeless shelter and the Dorothy Day Food Pantry. I have been a long-time member of the Moorhead Business Association. I am also a member of the Agassiz Club which is a local group of agribusiness people which meets periodically throughout the year. This club has been in existence since the late 1940s. My wife Joyce and I have been involved with Moorhead Spuds Boosters and have served on its board. We also helped coach soccer and baseball when our children were in grade school.

What is your number one concern when reviewing and selling farm insurance? When we work with insurance customers, we try to focus on correct coverage versus price. I realize when commodity prices are low and budgets are tight, this sounds a bit preachy, but we try to find a common ground with customers and find acceptable alternatives for each situation. Having grown up on a farm and having farmed myself, I find this helps add credibility to our solutions.

Dennis has been an Agent for Farmers Union Insurance Agency since 1989. Visit our website at www.mnfuia.com and “Find an Agent” to find a local FUIA Agent in your area. Follow us at MNFUIA on Twitter and Facebook.

On June 24, MFU members Duane and Doreen Laveau opened up their dairy farm near Wrenshall for a Breakfast on the Farm event. MFU along with Farmers Union Insurance Agency helped sponsor the event and provided coffee and prizes for the nearly 500 visitors who came to see the family dairy operation. The day featured milking demonstrations, a petting zoo and other agricultural exhibits. The Laveau farm is also the first farm in Carlton County to be certified in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification program. MFU thanks Carlton County President Mark Thell and his wife Terri for all of their work at the event, as well as Area Field Staff Representative Wayne Boettcher.
RENEWABLE ENERGY RECAP

MICHELLE MEDINA
DIRECTOR OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
michelle@mfu.org

MFU Renewable Energy Working Session

Minnesota Farmers Union hosted its second annual Renewable Energy Working Session at the state office on July 17-18 with 20 members from across the state participating. Members ranged from those interested in learning more about renewable energy, to members with distributed generation facilities, to members of rural electric cooperative boards, to large-scale installers.

The most important point made was that there needs to be better communication between concerned groups. All parties need to come together to understand the issues with renewable energy and why there are disagreements. MFU looks forward to being a catalyst of conversations and facilitating dialogue between cooperatives and our members on renewable energy.

Members are concerned about net metering fees and want to know what the actual cost of their system is to the rest of the members in the cooperative. There is growing concern over the removal of Public Utilities Commission oversight on these fees; however, MFU policy supports local control, which allows each cooperative to set their own fees. Farmers being willing partners has spurred on renewable energy progress in Minnesota, but questions around siting of large solar arrays continues. If solar arrays are installed, they should not ruin the landscape for future agricultural use.

With several cooperatives signing 60-year contracts for coal in the last few years, members are concerned that the cooperatives are more responsive to the generating cooperatives than they are to their members. The point was made a few times that perception are very important going forward, and that we need to foster communication between farmers and rural electric co-ops.

A final concern is that members do not fully understand their rights as members of cooperatives. MFU will work to help educate members on their rights, about voting, attending board meetings and more.

Finally, it was clear that our membership is looking for more education around renewable energy, and MFU will be working on this in the near future.

MFU Renewable Energy Working Session

Every Minnesota Farmers Union member has access to competitive and value-added benefits provided in conjunction with National Farmers Union. These are benefits that can be enjoyed by Farmers Union members in all or most states, ensuring we can enjoy the best possible value for our dues. Benefits can be accessed through www.nfu.org by clicking “Member Benefits.”

Health and Wellness
- Option to purchase the Wellness Access Card Discount Plan, a non-insurance card that provides discounts on dental, vision, prescriptions, telemedicine and more (www.careington.com/co/ nfu)
- Easy access to high-quality, full-service, Individual Vision Plans from VSP Vision Care (www.mynisi.com/farmersunion or 800.785.0699)

Emergency Protection
- $80 off of a single or family plan through EA+ (Emergency Assistance Plus) (EmergencyAssistancePlus.com)

Hotel and Car Rentals
- Up to 25% off when renting with Avis (www.avis.com) and Budget (www.budget.com)
- Up to 20% off the lowest public rate when staying at a Wyndham hotel property (www.wyndham.com)
- Up to 10% off the lowest public rate when staying at La Quinta Inn & Suites (www.lq.com)

Software and Office
- 10% off purchases at Small Farm Central (www.smallfarmcentral.com)
- 25% off the first year’s service with CSAware (www.csaware.com)
- 10% off with Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com)
- Up to 80% off select products with Office Depot (www.officedepot.com)

Low-Cost Education and Leadership Programs
Members have access to great leadership development opportunities for youth and adults through NFU and MFU programs. These benefits, together with our Minnesota publication, Minnesota Agriculture, and our core value proposition – incorporating cooperation, education and legislation – delivers a high return on member dues.

OFFICIAL CONVENTION CALL
76th Annual Convention of the Minnesota Farmers Union
Notice is hereby given that the 76th annual convention of the Minnesota Farmers Union will begin with registration at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2017 at the Ramada Plaza Minneapolis and continue through Sunday, Nov. 19, or until all business has been concluded. Business to be conducted at the state convention will include election of delegates to the national convention and discussion and passage of resolutions into MFU policy.

The basis of representation at the Minnesota Farmers Union state convention, as provided by the constitution and bylaws, shall be one delegate from each local union who will represent as many as ten regular dues-paying members and one additional delegate who will represent each additional ten dues-paying members or a major fraction thereof. Credentials blanks will be mailed to county presidents and should be returned prior to the convention to: Minnesota Farmers Union, 305 Roselawn Ave. E, Ste. 200, St. Paul, MN 55117. If county or local unites are unable to submit credentials in advance, they must be brought to the convention by the delegate and submitted at the time of registration.

Members of unchartered, at-large membership within a county are eligible to become delegates to the state convention provided they are elected at a special meeting conducted for the specific purpose of delegate election. At-large delegates will represent their counties by the same manner and terms as regular local delegates. To qualify, the delegate must be in good standing with Farmers Union.

Gary Wertish Anne Schwagerl
President Secretary
UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 6 • Todd County Picnic
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Clarissa Park
FFI: Alan Perish at 320-760-2516

Aug. 11 • Healthy Soils Field Day
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. • People’s Energy Cooperative, Oronoco
FFI: Dori Klein at 507-843-4560
or dori@mfu.org

Aug. 19 • MFU Full Board of Directors Meeting
9 a.m. • MFU state office
FFI: Laura Sherar at 651-639-1223 or
laura@mfu.org

Aug. 20 • COACT / Morrison County Picnic
2 p.m. • Pierz Park
FFI: Don Pylkkanen at 651-646-0900

The 25 by ‘25 Water Quality Goal is a new program designed to improve Minnesota’s water quality 25 percent by 2025. Without this action, the quality of Minnesota’s waters are expected to improve only 6 to 8 percent by 2034.

Gov. Dayton wants to hear from Minnesotans and is hosting a series of Town Halls over the summer and fall. In addition, he is calling on Minnesotans and civic organizations to organize their own Community Water Meetings this summer to provide further feedback and ideas. Gather your community, school, family and friends to have a conversation this summer about what you can do at the local level to help Minnesota reach our 25 by 25 goal!

More at www.eqb.state.mn.us/25by25.

County Conventions

Aug. 6 • Big Stone County Convention
12 p.m. • Camp for Christ Ortonville
FFI: Mike Jorgenson at 320-273-2437

Aug. 7 • Goodhue County Convention
7 p.m. • Area 57 Restaurant, Wanamingo
FFI: Deborah Mills at 651-764-0006

Aug. 10 • Waseca County Convention
5 p.m. • Pizza Ranch, Waseca
FFI: David Clausen at 507-234-6872

Aug. 14 • Polk and Clearwater County Convention
12 p.m. • Ness Café, Erskine
FFI: Judy Moen at 218-857-3554 or Richard Moen at 218-776-3513

Sept. 7 • East and West Otter Tail County Convention
12 p.m. • 116 Café, Fergus Falls
FFI: Dave Johnson at 218-736-7734
or Dean Lubitz at 218-346-4274

Sept. 7 • Jackson County Convention
12 p.m. • Pizza Ranch, Jackson
FFI: Gary Wilson at 507-736-4225

Sept. 7 • Pope, Douglas and Grant County Convention
6 p.m. • Lakeside Ballroom, Glenwood
FFI: Vernon Pooch at 320-815-8360

Sept. 11 • Morrison County Convention
7 p.m. • The Royal Café, Little Falls
FFI: Lee Johnston at 320-573-2328

Sept. 12 • Dodge and Olmsted County Convention
6:30 p.m. • Ashland Town Hall, Dodge Center
FFI: John Larsen at 507-273-1451

Sept. 14 • Swift and Kandiyohi County Convention
5:30 p.m. • Sherrie’s Café, Kerkhoven
FFI: Donnell Williamson at 320-974-3403 or Tom Clemen at 320-808-1015

Sept. 17 • Becker County Convention
5 p.m. • 59er Café, Detroit Lakes
FFI: Roger Schaefer at 218-334-4631

Sept. 17 • Todd County Convention
7:30 p.m. • Thunder Lodge, Long Prairie
FFI: Alan Perish at 320-760-2516

Sept. 18 • Crow Wing County Convention
12 p.m. • Pizza Ranch, Baxter
FFI: John Borden at 218-765-3432

Sept. 27 • Dakota County Convention
Time TBD. Dakota County Extension Office, Farmington
FFI: Linda Larson at 612-554-9963

Aug. 6 • Aug. 11 • Aug. 19 • Aug. 20

Aug. 19 • MFU Full Board of Directors Meeting • 9 a.m. • MFU state office
FFI: Laura Sherar at 651-639-1223 or
laura@mfu.org

Aug. 20 • COACT / Morrison County Picnic
2 p.m. • Pierz Park
FFI: Don Pylkkanen at 651-646-0900

Locations and Dates for the Water Quality Town Hall Meetings:

Mankato • Wed., Aug. 16 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
Minnesota State University

Marshall • Thurs., Aug. 17 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
Southwest Minnesota State University

Crookston • Tues., Sept. 5 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
University of MN–Crookston

St. Cloud • Wed., Sept. 6 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
St. Cloud Technical and Community College

Ely • Tues., Sept. 12 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
Grand Ely Lodge, 400 N Pioneer Rd.

Bemidji • Wed., Sept. 13 • 6:30-8:30 p.m. •
Bemidji State University

Healthy Soils Field Day
Friday, Aug. 11

Join MFU for a Healthy Soils Field Day in Oronoco
The day starts at 9 a.m. at People’s Energy Cooperative. Numerous local experts will give a presentation on soil health and cover crops. After a noon lunch, a tour will take place on Rod Sommerfield’s farm. Refreshments and lunch are included.

Time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., with farm tour to follow
Location: People’s Energy Cooperative, 1775 Lake Shady Ave. S, Oronoco
For more information and to RSVP, contact MFU Field Representative Dori Klein at 507-843-4560 or dori@mfu.org.

Join the discussion and help to make Minnesota’s water quality cleaner by 2025

Gov. Dayton wants to hear from Minnesotans and is hosting a series of Town Halls over the summer and fall. In addition, he is calling on Minnesotans and civic organizations to organize their own Community Water Meetings this summer to provide further feedback and ideas.

Gather your community, school, family and friends to have a conversation this summer about what you can do at the local level to help Minnesota reach our 25 by 25 goal!

More at www.eqb.state.mn.us/25by25.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

MFU Offers FREE Agritourism Sign to Members

**WARNING**

Inherent Risks of Agritourism

Under Minnesota law, a provider of agritourism activities is not liable for injury, damage, or death of a participant resulting from an inherent risk of agritourism. Inherent risks include: natural hazards and conditions of land, water and vegetation; behavior of wild, domestic, and farm animals; ordinary dangers of farm, ranch, processing, and other machinery, equipment and structures; and, other dangers or conditions integral to an agritourism activity. Participants assume the inherent risks of agritourism activities.

MINN. STAT. 604A.40 (2016)

Thinking of inviting the public onto your farm this summer for a farm tour, breakfast, U-pick, etc.? MFU worked to pass the state agritourism bill in 2015. To be protected, the provider of the agritourism activity must post signs warning attendees of the inherent risks of visiting a farm. These signs should be posted at the entrance to the property and be clearly visible to all visitors.

Upon request, Minnesota Farmers Union will provide interested members one FREE sign that meets the specific guidelines in accordance to the Limited Liability Law. With the sign, you’ll also receive a two-page guide to the law that was put together by Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG). Additional signs for members can be purchased for $7. Signs for non-members cost $10.

To get your sign, contact MFU Executive Assistant Laura Sherar at laura@mfu.org or 651-639-1223.

Notice is hereby given that filings are open for the office of Minnesota Farmers Union President and Vice President.

Anyone wishing to file for these offices must get a petition from the State Secretary via the State Office.

Please contact Laura Sherar at 651-639-1223 or Anne Schwagerl, State Secretary
c/o MFU, 305 Roselawn Ave. E, Suite 200. Saint Paul, MN 55117

Nominations procedure according to MFU Bylaws, Article VII, Section 4 state:

“The President and Vice President of Minnesota Farmers Union shall be elected and installed at the biennial meeting of Minnesota Farmers Union in odd numbered years on such date as may be set by the state Executive Committee.

a) Nominations for President and Vice President shall be made by petition and such nominations shall be in the hands of the State Secretary on or before October 1 of each odd numbered year.

The nominating petition shall require the signature of at least one member in good standing from each of five local or at-large county unions. To be valid, the nominating petition must bear the signature of the nominee, indicating that it is being filed with the nominee’s knowledge and consent.

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The State Secretary shall, on a date not more than 90 days nor less than 20 days prior to the final date for filing, publish in the official publication of Minnesota Farmers Union a notice that filings are open for the particular offices and that nomination petition forms shall be available to any member in good standing upon request to the State Secretary.

The State Secretary shall, on a date not less than 10 days prior to the first day of the convention, publish in the official publication of Minnesota Farmers Union a list of the persons nominated by petition for the particular offices.

If there are no nominations by petition, or if any of the nominees who are nominated by petition shall be unable to serve or become ineligible, convention delegates shall have the privilege of nominating from the floor the day prior to balloting.

Petition forms must be in the hands of the State Secretary by Oct. 1, and a list of candidates will be included in the October Minnesota Agriculture paper, deadline permitting.
Planning to have a booth at your county fair? Need some MFU swag to help get the message of Minnesota Farmers Union out in your community? If yes, then make sure you order your County Fair Kit today!

You can request the entire fair kit as a whole, or individual pieces that best suit your booth and county needs. **Please note that there is NO COST for the fair kits or individual items.**

### MFU Fair Kit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<td>Chip Clips</td>
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<td>Key Chains</td>
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<td>Temporary Farm Tattoos</td>
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<td>MFU Buttons</td>
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<td>Brochures</td>
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<td>MFU Camp Info Cards</td>
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<td>MN Agriculture Papers</td>
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I would like to request a banner with MFU logo ________

**Please allow two weeks to receive your fair kit items.**

Date ordered ________________  Fair Dates ________________

President __________________  County __________________

**Please return to:** MFU Fair Kit c/o Michelle Medina, 305 Roselawn Ave. E, Suite 200, Saint Paul, MN 55117.

You can also fax to 651-639-0421 or email to michelle@mfu.org.
Here Are 39 Great Reasons to Buy Your Insurance from Farmers Union Insurance Agency:

**ADA**
Rodney Mathsen  
(218) 784-4813

**ALEXANDRIA**
Daylon Faber  
(320) 763-9455

**BEMIDJI**
Ben Caron  
(218) 751-7761

**BENSON**
Tom Hollingsworth  
(320) 843-2422

**CANBY**
Mike Panka  
(507) 223-5527

**CROOKSTON**
Chris Swanson  
(218) 281-6724

**DAWSON**
Deborah Breberg  
(320) 769-2088

**DETOUR LAKE**
Joe McColloch  
(218) 844-5970

**DULUTH**
Brad Anderson  
(218) 481-0812

**ELK RIVER**
Rob Pampusch  
(763) 441-4250

**FARIBAULT**
Angela Francis  
(507) 209-7598

**FARMINGTON**
Jerry Theisen  
(651) 463-7667

**NEW!**
**FERGUS FALLS**
Grant Davenport  
(218) 736-5697

**FOSTON**
Barb Sweep  
(218) 435-2063

**FRANKLIN**
Joel Harmoning  
(507) 557-7000

**GOODHUE**
Dan Hedeen  
(651) 923-4433

**NEW! GOODHUE**
Alison Peters  
(651) 923-4433

**HALLOCK**
Jay Swanson  
(218) 853-2468

**IVANHOE**
Mike Panka  
(507) 694-1750

**LAKE CRYSTAL**
Matt Peterson  
(507) 726-2961

**LITTLE FALLS**
Dan Prokott  
(320) 632-3806

**LUVERNE**
Steve Cattinach  
(507) 283-8383

**MAHNOMEN**
David McColloch  
(218) 935-2175

**MARSHALL**
Dennis Klocow Jr.  
(507) 532-0418

**MENAHGA**
Kim Rasmussen  
(218) 564-5300

**MONTEVIDEO**
Ivan Anderson  
(320) 269-9463

**MOORHEAD**
Dennis Fjeld  
(218) 236-1966

**MOOSE LAKE**
Mark Sagvold  
(218) 485-8144

**MORRIS**
Debbie Anderson  
(320) 589-3245

**NEW YORK MILLS**
Lisa Preuss  
(218) 385-3344

**NORWOOD**
**YOUNG AMERICA**
Lisa Valiant  
(952) 467-2922

**OLIVA**
Paul Johannes  
(320) 523-1150

**ROCHESTER**
Chris Sanders  
(507) 282-4411

**ROSEAU**
Steve Dostal  
(218) 463-2369

**SAINT PAUL**
Brandon Hummel  
(651) 288-4076

**SAINT PAUL**
Cary Sundlof  
(651) 288-4069

**THIEF RIVER FALLS**
Jay Swanson  
(218) 681-6443

**WILLMAR**
Paul Johannes  
(320) 235-2540

**WINDOM**
Ted Winter  
(507) 831-3541

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