October is National Pork Month
Minnesota ranks 2nd in the number of pigs raised and 2nd in the value of pigs in the U.S.
Join Minnesota Farmers Union in supporting family pork farms. Thank you for all the hard work you do to provide delicious pork products.
Fifteen years ago, Minnesota Farmers Union created Minnesota Cooks as a way to demonstrate, at the Minnesota State Fair, that locally grown food is a viable way for some farmers to earn a living.

In its early years, Minnesota Cooks conducted a stage show at the Minnesota State Fair’s Taste of Tuesday program. A few years ago, the State Fair wanted to honor veterans on that day and asked Minnesota Cooks to move to the first Sunday of the fair and offered to name that day as Minnesota Cooks Day.

The Minnesota Cooks team began work on next year’s program almost as soon as the Minnesota State Fair was over. You can help us out by letting us know if there is a restaurant in your community that buys food from local farmers and uses it on their menu.

The Minnesota Cooks Day at the 2017 State Fair was a huge success. A dozen restaurants, tasters and farmers showed up to participate. Mary Lahammer of Twin Cities TPT public television and Tracey Singleton, owner of the Birchwood Café, Minneapolis, hosted this year’s show. We also had a large number of very hard working community volunteers who helped plate the food, serve samples, washed dishes and assisted with clean up. Without these great volunteers, we could not put on this kind of large event. The weather cooperated, and we saw a record number of people watching our show.

This 2017 Minnesota Cooks Day once again showcased local foods, and helped inform and educate fairgoers on the relationships that farmers, chefs and cooks, and consumers share.

In addition to the Minnesota State Fair, Minnesota Cooks has expanded our outreach and Minnesota Farmers Union partners with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) to produce and air our television program, Farm Fresh Road Trip. The 2017 show will air on Oct. 1, on the Minnesota Channel at 7 p.m. Shortly after that it will be on the TPT archives which we will link to our MFU webpage.

If you have any questions or ideas for future Minnesota Cooks programs, please contact Bruce Miller at bruce@mfu.org.
State Fair
We had another successful year at the Minnesota State Fair. The Farmers Union Coffee Shop was bustling from morning to evening on all 12 days, serving coffee, ice cream and pastries to thousands of fairgoers. This year’s new foods – the Sweet Corn Blueberry Eclair made with Kernza® (a perennial wheatgrass developed by the Forever Green Initiative), Chili Maple Bacon Donut and Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee – earned high ratings with local food critics, such as Rick Nelson of the Star Tribune and Dana Moskowitz Grumdhahl of WCCO Radio. Several people chimed in their delight showing competitors and the signs given to the Fair Shop to do an interview that aired nationally. Speaking of Sen. Franken, he visited the shop on another occasion because his online followers chose the Sweet Corn Blueberry Eclair as the new food for him to try at the fair. WCCO-TV shot the big moment, which is also available online.

We would like to thank Birchwood Café, Grand Ole Creamery, Stony Creek Dairy and J&S Bean Factory for partnering with us on the pastries, ice cream, milk, cream and coffee beans, respectively. J&S is the producer of Farmers Union Coffee, which you can purchase anytime on our website. One of the highlights of our shop this year was a poster displaying the names and locations of the Minnesota farms from which we sourced our products. Our new foods were made with Minnesota-grown ingredients, and we take great pride in that.

We hope that’s what people who came through our shop this year were a poster displaying the names and locations of the Minnesota farms from which we sourced our products. Our new foods were made with Minnesota-grown ingredients, and we take great pride in that. We hope that’s what people who came through the Farmers Union Coffee Shop take away: that Minnesota farmers provide so much to our state. Lastly, we took the Fair as another opportunity to invest in youth agriculture programs. Together with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and Farmers Union Industries, we purchased four Grand Champion and Reserve Champion animals in the 4-H Purple Ribbon Livestock Auction. We also sponsored the branded back numbers worn by 4-H and FFA livestock showing competitors and the signs given to Grand Champion winners for both associations.

Seeking health care solutions
One of the casualties of the farm economic crisis is that many farmers are unable to afford health insurance. With premium and deductible costs skyrocketing on the individual exchange market, it’s become increasingly difficult for farmers to get the care they need without getting off-farm jobs. The dangers of the agriculture industry make access to health care vital. This is why we need a new health care solution. We want to see this change as soon as possible.

Recently, I submitted an op-ed piece to newspapers across Minnesota about the need for a bipartisan health care solution (see page 8). It’s time for the two parties to stop playing the politics of “repeal and replace” with the Affordable Care Act and base their decisions on what helps people. The op-ed ran in papers such as the Austin Daily Herald and Red Wing Republican Eagle. Health care was also one of the main talking points at the National Farmers Union Legislative Fly-in, from which we recently returned (see page 6 for highlights). We not only talked with senators and representatives about the cost of insurance, we also asked them to act to stop the decline in rural health provider options. MFU will continue to work with legislators at the state and federal levels to come to a solution that meets the needs of farmers and rural residents.

Fly-in
Health care was one of three main issues we talked to legislators about at Fly-in, along with the next Farm Bill and renewable fuels. It was great to have such a large group there. With the change in administration, now is the time to make sure family farmers are present in policy discussions. We all agree that we need to get the federal deficit under control, but with the Farm Bill costing less than 2 percent of the federal budget, you can’t balance the budget on the backs of farmers. Now is the time to invest in rural America, not cut from it.

Douglas to serve as convention keynote
As we look ahead to the 76th Annual Minnesota Farmers Union Convention, I am pleased to share that renowned meteorologist Paul Douglas will serve as the keynote speaker at the banquet on Nov. 18. Douglas is Minnesota’s first American Meteorology Society Certified Broadcast Meteorologist and founder and senior meteorologist at Praedictix. His speech, “A Rapidly Changing Climate: Threat – and Opportunity,” will outline the solutions we need to implement to slow the effects of climate change. Farmers are some people who are most affected by climate change. Many are on the forefront in finding ways to mitigate it. Douglas believes more people will get on board with solar, wind and other clean energy technologies in time, which many farmers in Minnesota have already done.

We look forward to his talk and invite each of you to the convention, held at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Minneapolis, on Nov. 17-19. There is no cost to attend and everyone is welcome. More details can be found on pages 12-14.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I would like to start off by commending the MFU staff on their work in this busy summer. Gary’s leadership was key in making all the different events a success. We recently returned from our annual Legislative Fly-in to Washington D.C. with National Farmers Union (NFU). We had three main talking points: the next Farm Bill, health care and renewable fuels. I know all of these are very important issues in rural Minnesota, and I’m proud of our state for being a leader in renewable fuels for many years.

It is exciting that NFU remains focused on a strong investment in the world of renewable energy. Biofuels, higher blends of ethanol in gasoline and advanced bio-based technologies are reaping tremendous benefits for our environment and providing much-needed economic stability to America’s farming and rural communities. We believe that the U.S. should implement federal-level policies that encourage expanded markets for these energy sources and remove regulatory barriers that inhibit their growth. To that end, NFU has begun an initiative to advance federal policies that support homegrown and home-produced renewable energy sources. NFU hired veteran energy, environment and agriculture policy specialist Anne Steckel to lead the effort.

“American family farmers and ranchers are facing a rapidly changing climate, a severely depressed farm economy, and deteriorating rural infrastructure and services,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “Expansion of homegrown, renewable energy production provides solutions to each of these issues and significant benefits for American consumers and the environment.”

The Farmers Union initiative will promote legislative and regulatory solutions for expanding markets for higher blends of ethanol, like E30, and advanced biofuels.

“Federal-level policies like the Renewable Fuel Standard have reaped tremendous gains for the farming and rural communities that grow and produce renewable, bio-based fuels,” said Steckel. “NFU will continue its avid support of the RFS and pursue innovative policy solutions that expand renewable energy demand, development and infrastructure.”

The effort follows a special order of business that was passed by delegates to the NFU 115th Anniversary Convention in March. “The modern biofuels industry has brought billions of dollars of capital investment, millions of dollars of new tax base, and many thousands of new good paying jobs with benefits to struggling rural communities,” said Steckel.

“We need to be expanding our use of the renewable energy fuels that clean up our air, bolster rural economies, and save American consumers money at the pump,” she added. Leaders in the biofuels and renewable fuels industry lent their support to the initiative, noting NFU’s long history advocating for clean, homegrown fuels.

“We are excited to see NFU elevating its advocacy for higher ethanol blends and promoting advanced cellulosic biofuel technologies,” said Growth Energy CEO Emily Skor. “Encouraging legislative and regulatory pathways that increase the availability of high-octane fuels helps American farmers as well as automakers and consumers seeking better performing biofuel choices. These kinds of forward-thinking, clean energy options are made possible by the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) – our nation’s most successful energy policy.”

“Expanding market access for ethanol will help rural communities prosper and enable American drivers to benefit from homegrown, low-cost, high-performance choices at the pump,” said Brian Jennings, Executive Vice President of the American Coalition for Ethanol.

“The American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE) welcomes the continued leadership of NFU as we all work to clear a pathway for widespread use of high-octane fuels in the future.”

“The National Farmers Union has long been an ardent and effective advocate for farmers and value-added agriculture,” said RFA President and CEO Bob Dinneen. “I am quite pleased that NFU is poised to expand its advocacy to focus more directly on the U.S. ethanol industry, both through higher level blends and increased advanced biofuels production. Ethanol is the cleanest, lowest cost, highest octane source of fuel on the planet and we want to ensure greater market access for higher level blends. Consumers win when there’s a choice at the pump and we welcome the National Farmers Union’s efforts to ensure greater market competition.”

This is the kind of leadership we need in these times of low commodity prices. A strong RFS is good policy for rural America and Minnesota. I hope everyone is experiencing a safe harvest. I know in my area we need some additional nice weather for our corn crop to mature, but the forecast looks like it might help us out. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call or send an email.
FSMA UPDATE

Maryland State Departments of Agriculture, Cornell University, New England Farmers Union, Deep South Food Alliance and others—will deliver outreach and training to diversified, sustainable, organic and identity-preserved farmers and processors. NFU is also working with state Farmers Union chapters, including MFU. MFU is taking a lead in working with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota Extension, the Minnesota Farmers Market Association, the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers, MOSES and the Sustainable Farming Association. Together, these groups will provide specialized training and resources to meet the needs of local food farmers and processors.

What is FSMA?
FSMA is the most sweeping reform of the United States food safety laws in more than 70 years. President Obama signed it into law on Jan. 4, 2011. The law aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.
FSMA gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) broad new powers to prevent food safety problems, detect and respond to food safety issues, and improve the safety of imported foods. To do so, FSMA authorizes new regulations for farmers who grow certain kinds of fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) and for certain facilities that process food for people to eat. The regulations focus on addressing food safety risks from microbial pathogen contamination (e.g., Salmonella, E. coli O157:H7 and Shigella).

Specifically, FSMA requires FDA to establish new regulations for:
• Standards for produce production
• Food safety measures for facilities that process food for human consumption

Currently, MFU is working with our partners on two different kinds of FSMA Training programs. The first is in conjunction with the national Produce Safety Alliance (PSA). This is a Train-the-Trainer FSMA course on Nov. 28-29 at the MFU State Office. This is the FSMA course for those who wish to be trainers.
The two-day course will provide detailed information about Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), co-management of natural resources and food safety, FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements and a review of the seven-module PSA Grower Training curriculum. The course will also cover principles of adult education; how to incorporate the PSA curriculum into other produce safety trainings; developing working partnerships; expectations for trainers; and how to register a PSA Grower Training Course with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO).
Upon successful completion of the full train-the-trainer course, attendees will become PSA Trainers. Completing this training allows you to deliver curriculum modules as a trainer in PSA Grower Trainings, under the direction of a PSA Lead Trainer. Anyone presenting at a PSA Grower Training must be, at minimum, a PSA Trainer, and every Grower Training must have a Lead Trainer present.
The second kind of training, which will be more relevant for others who grow and sell produce locally, will be the Farmer and Grower Trainings which will be offered next January and March 2018 in Minnesota. Dates will be announced soon.
For more information, please contact me at bruce@mfu.org.

BRUCE MILLER, MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH DIRECTOR
bruce@mfu.org

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is set to have broad impacts on the farming community. Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) is partnering with National Farmers Union (NFU) to help ensure produce farmers, growers and processors have the information and training they need to comply with the new law.
NFU received a grant from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to work on resources and training opportunities to enhance FSMA compliance. In particular, NFU and its national partners—National Young Farmers Coalition, Washington and Maryland State Departments of Agriculture, Cornell University, New England Farmers Union, Deep South Food Alliance and others—will deliver outreach and training to diversified, sustainable, organic and identity-preserved farmers and processors. NFU is also working with state Farmers Union chapters, including MFU.
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Produce Safety Alliance Train-the-Trainer Course
Nov. 28-29, 2017

Location: Minnesota Farmers Union – 305 Roselawn Ave. E., St. Paul, MN
Trainers: Don Stoeckel and Gretchen Wall, Produce Safety Alliance (PSA)
Cost: Subsidized to $75 fee per participant
Register online at www.psp.tix.com
For more information about PSA training courses, visit the PSA website at: producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training
For more information about the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, visit the FDA website at: www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm334114
MFU offers FREE agritourism sign to members

Thinking of inviting the public onto your farm this fall for a farm tour, breakfast, U-pick or some other event? 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, MFU 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.

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)
MFU member Peter Schwagerl attends Beginning Farmer Institute

I recently had the privilege of attending the Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) hosted by National Farmers Union (NFU). This is a one-year program that is designed to provide training in farm management, leadership, policy development and advocacy.

Our first session was held at the NFU office in Washington, D.C., and included a wide range of topics. Representatives from the USDA spoke regarding loan and conservation programs designed to help both beginning and established farmers while other guest speakers covered farm management topics including financial planning, risk management and marketing strategies.

We also had great discussions with NFU leadership and the government relations team about the current challenges facing family farmers and some potential policy and advocacy strategies to mitigate those challenges. Finally, we had the opportunity to tour Common Good City Farm, an urban fruit and vegetable farm in Washington, to learn about innovative and sustainable methods of providing healthy, fresh and local food to our communities.

I not only learned a lot through the formal training offered by the program but also gained a lot of information and inspiration from the many informal discussions I had with the other farmers in our group. We represented a wide range of geographic locations and farming operations but shared a common passion for family farming and were excited to share our many ideas and experiences with one another.

By the end of the first session I not only had several new ideas to try within my own farm and community, but also knew that I had a wonderful group of fellow producers that I could turn to for advice or support in the future. I look forward to seeing the group again when we convene for our second session in Salinas, Calif., in November.

If you are interested in learning more about the BFI program and how you can apply for the 2018 class, please visit the program’s website at www.nfu.org/education/beginning-farmer-institute.

Schwagerl raises pork at Prairie Point Farm in Big Stone County.
Op-ed: Bipartisan health care solutions are needed to boost rural America

By Gary Wertish, Minnesota Farmers Union President

At one of Minnesota Farmers Union’s (MFU) Rural Issues Discussions last spring, a farmer told us that his yearly health insurance premium plus deductible was more than $40,000. There was hardly a dry eye in the room when he spoke about this.

Meanwhile, federal legislators have been unable to agree on a health care solution that works for everyone. They have been playing the politics of “repeal and replace” on the Affordable Care Act, while farmers, rural residents and others on individual health insurance plans suffer under the burden of high costs.

ACA isn’t perfect. Many farmers, young and old, have told us the cost makes it difficult to keep farming full-time without seeking employment elsewhere for the insurance benefits. The depressed farm economy may even leave some choosing not to have health insurance at all. It’s time for legislators to stop playing politics with our health care and come to a bipartisan solution that will end up with more people having insurance, not fewer, especially in rural areas.

Amending ACA to become a comprehensive single-payer health plan would make things much easier for rural citizens. MFU supports a plan that enables all people to be fully participating members of medical, mental, dental, hospitalization, alternative and nursing home care plans. This would ensure that every person can get the health insurance they need, when they need it.

At the state level, we have an opportunity for progress with MinnesotaCare. It’s already helped several Minnesota farmers, including Stearns County Farmers Union President Mike Orbeck. He told reporter Don Davis during Farmfest that he discovered MinnesotaCare on the MNsure website, after his deductible on his previous individual policy got too expensive. Now he pays a price he can afford.

MinnesotaCare is available for those who cannot afford an individual market insurance policy, but who also make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. We want to see it strengthened and expanded to include a buy-in option, so more people will have access to it.

Another option we’ve seen play out in neighboring Wisconsin is a farmer’s health care cooperative. Legislation was passed in Minnesota in the recent session that includes language that allows farmers and agribusinesses to work with providers to establish cooperative health plans. Farmers work with the co-op model in many other instances, so it is worth trying it with health care.

Mike Orbeck is lucky to have found an option that works for him. But the uncertainty he felt is shared among countless farmers and rural residents on the individual health insurance market. The rhetorical debate playing out in the U.S. House and Senate leaves people everywhere unsure of what their insurance is going to look like. We want to see more cooperation among legislators about an issue that’s critical to the country and take action to reform ACA. As our members and staff travel to Washington, D.C., for the 2017 National Farmers Union Legislative Fly-in, a health care model that serves rural residents better is one of MFU’s top priorities.

MEET BRITA MOORE

I am delighted to have been named Minnesota Farmers Union’s Public Relations Director! I’ve had an exciting three months on the job, attending my first Farmfest ever and being at the Minnesota State Fair for 11 of the 12 days. Not to mention I’ve gotten out to many of the other events in between, like the Beginning Farmer Experience at Mighty Axe Hops and the Healthy Soils Field Day in Oronoco. All the road time is worthwhile, as I’ve enjoyed getting to know our members.

My main responsibility is to tell MFU’s story. That means I spend most of my time connecting with media outlets, writing social media posts and putting together the content for Minnesota Agriculture. I’ve also worked with President Gary Wertish on two op-ed pieces that went to newspapers all over Minnesota.

Before coming to MFU, I was the assistant managing editor of Agri News, a weekly agriculture newspaper based in Rochester. I’ve been a magazine editor for a small company in Kasson as well. My degree is in English from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. However, I am not from the Midwest at all – I was born and raised in the Seattle area, where my family still lives. I’m happy to have become a Minnesotan!

I encourage you to help tell MFU’s story as well. Reach out to your local newspapers, with agriculture story ideas or letters to the editor. It’s critical for citizens to understand what’s happening in farming right now, because it affects everyone.

If you would like some guidance on writing a letter to the editor or talking to media, contact me. My email address is brita@mfu.org and my phone number is (651) 308-2435.

I look forward to meeting all of you!
USDA’s Farm Service Agency announced that dairy producers can start enrollment for 2018 coverage with the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy).

In a major policy change, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue is using his authority to allow producers to withdraw from the MPP-Dairy Program and not be required to pay the annual administrative fee for 2018. The decision is in response to requests by the dairy industry and a number of MPP-Dairy Program participants.

To opt out, a producer should not sign up during the annual registration period. By opting out, a producer would not receive any MPP-Dairy benefits if payments are triggered for 2018. The decision to opt out is only for 2018 only and is not retroactive.

The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer.

MPP-Dairy gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment ends on Dec. 15, 2017, for coverage in calendar year 2018. Participating farmers will remain in the program through Dec. 31, 2018, and pay a minimum $100 administrative fee for 2018 coverage. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level from the previous coverage year during open enrollment.

For more information about the MPP-Dairy Program, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by a local FSA office to learn more. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit https://offices.usda.gov.

And finally, FSA is always working on ways to better communicate quick and concise information to our customers. With this in mind, FSA is now promoting a new way to deliver important messages to our producers. Producers are now able to receive notifications from their county office through text messages. So whether you are in the field, the barn or on the tractor, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

All a producer needs to do is text MN and the name of their home county (all one word) to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts. For example, using Morrison County as the home county, a producer can text MNMorrison to FSANOW (372-669). Standard text messaging rates apply based on your wireless provider. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time. Sign up today!

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has extended its “Crisis Connection” telephone hotline service for another year. The program has renamed the service Farm & Rural Help Line, with the toll-free number (833) 600-2670. You are encouraged to call this line if you need any kind of assistance. It’s available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

MDA is also working with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), Minnesota Sheriff’s Association and Farm Service Agency FSA to develop a professional development training session about farmer mental health issues.

The target audience is agriculture advisors (farm business management, University of Minnesota Extension, veterinarians, bankers and more) and others who interact with farmers. They are basing the content around what ag advisors told them that they’re observing in the farmers they know and work with. The vision for the training is that it will be a 3-hour workshop that will be repeated twice in six different parts of Minnesota.

If you or any farmers you know would like to speak with Ted Matthews, the state rural mental health specialist based out of MnSCU, his number is (320) 266-2390. He meets with farmers one-on-one and free of charge. No insurance card, paperwork or referral is necessary.
Rolling J Farms

After nearly 40 years of milking Holsteins, Eddie Jostock of Wabasha County decided to make a change. He and his family moved away from the hard work of dairying into expanding their hog operation and raising red and black Angus beef. His son Alan has even added meat goats to the rolling landscape at Rolling J Farms. That’s not to say they’re completely out of the dairy world.

“My youngest daughter (Becky) is engaged to a dairy farmer,” Eddie said. “She likes cattle. They have robots so they have a little different perspective.”

Eddie and his wife Lynn dairied on the farm Eddie’s parents bought in 1944 until 2015. Eddie grew up there, and he and Lynn raised their four children there alongside the cattle and pigs, while also renting land on another nearby farm. The 50-cow dairy, which also produced dairy beef, has transformed into a quickly-growing Angus herd, which they’ll soon be able to market.

Their pigs keep the Jostocks busy too: They have about 250 baby pigs to market hogs at a time, with about 50 sows, farrow-to-finish. Breed-wise, it’s a mix of Berkshire, Duroc and Chester white. They’ve increased the sow numbers since retiring from dairy as well. The pigs get sold to Niman Ranch, a California-based meat company. The Jostocks raise pork in bedded pens without antibiotics or hormones, per Niman Ranch guidelines. They can use genetically modified grain. Diversity has always been a part of the Jostock farm operation. Eddie said that growing up, they had sheep and laying chickens in addition to dairy and hogs.

“Something my dad always said was not to have all your eggs in one basket,” he said. “If milk prices were down, maybe the pig prices would be up, and vice versa.”

Alan, who’s purchased several of the Angus cattle himself, added the meat goats.

“Our landlord offered to help me get started,” Alan said. “She understands that our farm needs to have livestock on it. It’s too hilly not to have it in some pasture.”

Conservation-minded

Rolling J Farms is one of many in southeast Minnesota that are marked with steep hills. This puts the land at risk for erosion. The Jostocks are doing all they can to make sure that doesn’t happen with their soil.

“A lot of people have torn up pastures on places they shouldn’t have,” Alan said. “You can’t haul it back from the Gulf of Mexico when it washes down there.”

Only about half of Rolling J’s acres are tillable, so they keep many of them in pasture. They’ve also been experimenting with cover crops recently. Eddie said his dad had the ingenuity to start using contoured strips with their row crops.

“The benefit for us is being able to save our land,” he said. “My parents were left with something, I was left with something and I want my children and grandchildren to be left with something.”

Why MFU?
The Jostocks appreciate how Minnesota Farmers Union provides a support system for farmers and a way to make their voices amplified in the Legislature.

“I think it’s a way to bring farmers together, so you don’t feel like you’re the lone ranger on the good or bad things that happen in life on the farm,” Eddie said.

Alan said he finds MFU to be an opportunity for farmers to make a difference, even if they don’t have all the time in the world.

Eddie’s taken an active role in bringing people together as the President of the Wabasha County Farmers Union. He and Lynn attended this year’s National Farmers Union Legislative Fly-in in Washington, D.C.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

Do you have photos you’d like to share with us? Send them our way! We’ll display our favorites at the Minnesota Farmers Union State Convention, Nov. 17-19.

Some examples of what to send:
• Breakfasts on the farm
• County picnics, fairs and other events
• Highlights from your farm
• Children’s FFA/4-H events

Guidelines for sending photos:
• Send a high-resolution digital photo file (1.5MB or larger, not to exceed 10MB)
• Most smartphones have cameras that take high-enough quality photos
• Include your name, address and a brief caption of the photo
• All submitted photos become property of MFU. The information received with your email will serve as a permission slip that MFU can use your photo(s) in printed materials and/or for advertising purposes. No images will be returned.

The DEADLINE is Nov. 1 to be included in the State Convention slideshow.

Send photos to MFU Public Relations Director Brita Moore at brita@mfu.org. There will be future opportunities to send photos, too!
The EPA has lifted the summertime RVP ban on E15 sales for Minnesota as well as 37 other states and Washington D.C. due to fuel supply disruptions from the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

In a statement Aug. 31, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt exercised the agency’s emergency fuel waiver authority “to help ensure an adequate supply of fuel throughout the country.”

The RVP was set to end on Sept 15. Through this waiver, the ban ends two weeks earlier. According to the EPA, it has waived requirements for reformulated gasoline and low volatility conventional gasoline through Sept 15 in the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas.

The waiver supersedes an earlier waiver by the EPA on Aug. 30 which lifted the RVP ban in 12 states in response to fuel supply disruptions following the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. Several Gulf-area refineries have shut down while pipelines have been disrupted due to damage from Hurricane Harvey. These disruptions in supply have led to higher gas prices in recent days.

Pruitt sent a letter on the waiver to Gov. Mark Dayton and the governors of the other 37 states as well as the mayor of Washington, D.C. “The waiver authority was exercised under the Clean Air Act and was granted by EPA Administrator Pruitt, in coordination with the U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry,” the EPA said.

Minnesota currently has 156 E15 stations located throughout the state, a list of which can be found at www.mnbiofuels.org/resources/e15-e85-blender-pump-map.


Why is working with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and MFU important to you? I enjoy working with Minnesota Farmers Union and Farmers Union Insurance Agency because of the outstanding and supportive people I’ve met from both organizations; we have a shared interest in rural issues.

What community organizations are you passionate about? I am a member of the Elks and Eagles in Willmar, and a committee member of West Central Ducks Unlimited. I am also currently a member of the Willmar High School Wrestling Booster Club and sponsor their High School Wrestling Tournament annually.

Please tell us a little bit about your family life. I am married to Seda Johannes; I have two sons, Nicholas and Alex; as well as two grandchildren. My son Alex just joined my agency this Summer as an agent. A lot of my free time is spent outdoors fishing and hunting. I raise Springer Spaniel hunting dogs, and one of the highlights of recent years was guiding Gov. Mark Dayton pheasant hunting.

What is your number one concern when reviewing and selling farm insurance? I have had many large Farmowners claims over the years, and two of my biggest concerns for farm owners are 1) Ensuring your buildings are properly valued; and 2) Having Business Income Extra Expense on your policy, which can provide coverage for you to rent equipment if your equipment is unusable, to rent storage for your grain or to pay for livestock buildings. These are both important for your farm coverage at the time of loss.

Paul has been a Farmers Union Insurance Agent since 1992 and an active MFU member for 25 years. Paul was awarded the Superior Service Award at the 2015 MFU Annual Convention for his excellence in service, production and insurance expertise.

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.
Minnesota Farmers Union 76th Annual Convention

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 76th Annual MFU Convention on Friday, Nov. 17 through Sunday, Nov. 19 at the Ramada Plaza Minneapolis, at 1330 Industrial Blvd. NE, in Minneapolis.

Our annual state convention offers an opportunity for members to network with other members and participate in lively discussions. Highlights include the annual policy debate, current issues breakouts, gubernatorial candidate lunch and fundraiser live auction.

For the full convention agenda, see page 14.

There is no cost to attend daily programming, but meals are ticketed events.

Minnesota Grown Meals: MFU works with our members and local growers to showcase local foods in all of our convention meals.

$15 per Saturday or Sunday lunch ticket
$30 per banquet ticket
$50 for full meal package (Saturday lunch, Saturday banquet and Sunday lunch)

Open to delegates, members and the public. RSVP required.

To Register: call (651) 639-1223, info@mfu.org, or Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.com/e/minnesota-farmers-union-76th-annual-convention-tickets-37919603555

Accommodations at the Ramada Plaza

To reserve a hotel room, contact the Ramada Plaza directly at (612) 331-1900, ext. 3 (the front desk) by Friday, Nov. 3 to guarantee a special rate of $93 plus tax and fees.

A credit card is required to book your reservation.

The Ramada Plaza is located at 1330 Industrial Blvd. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

Committees

The Credentials Committee will meet Fri., Nov. 17 at 6 p.m.

The Policy Committee will meet on Saturday, Nov. 4 and Sunday, Nov. 5 to review county resolutions.

After those meetings, a proposed policy document will be mailed to all state delegates.

On Monday, Nov. 13, the committee will meet by teleconference at 7 p.m. for a final review or additional county resolutions received during the last two weeks before convention. Delegates may also present concerns about the policy document at that time by calling into the teleconference.

To prevent delays in preparing the final policy document for review by convention delegates, no resolutions will be accepted for committee review after the Nov. 13 meeting.

Late resolutions brought to the convention Nov. 18 and 19 will have to be addressed as amendments on the convention floor. Delegates submitting these resolutions or other documents of similar length as amendments on the convention floor will be responsible for providing 250 copies of the proposed amendment for distribution to all delegates.

Members who wish to join the conference call or delegates who have questions about this procedure should contact Thom Petersen at (651) 288-4067 or thom@mfu.org.

Volunteers Needed!

If you are interested in volunteering on a committee at the convention call the MFU main office at (651) 639-1223 or info@mfu.org

ELECTION NOTICE

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 persons nominated by petition for the particular offices.

Nominated for President: Gary Wertish
Nominated for Vice President: Bryan Klabunde

Anne Schwagerl
State Secretary
Child Care
Child care at the State Convention is open to all members of Minnesota Farmers Union.
Ages for child care are 4 years of age and older.
You must register in advance by Friday, Nov. 10.
Contact Education Director Glen Schmidt at glen@mfu.org or (651) 288-4066.

OFFICIAL CONVENTION CALL
MFU 76th Annual Convention
Notice is hereby given that the 76th annual convention of the Minnesota Farmers Union will begin on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2017 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, election of MFU President and Vice President 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 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 units 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
### 76th Annual Convention

#### Friday, Nov. 17

6:30 p.m. Minnesota Farmers Union & Farmers Union Insurance Agency Joint Reception

#### Saturday, Nov. 18

6:30 a.m. Free farm-fresh breakfast for MFU members (ends at 8 a.m.)
8 a.m. Registration opens
8:30 a.m. Parliamentary procedure refresher course
8:45 a.m. Door prizes

Convention convenes
Prayer
Pledge of Allegiance
Present and adopt proposed convention rules and bylaws
Adopt minutes of 2016 convention

9:15 a.m. Gary Wertish, MFU President – welcome
Brita Moore, MFU Public Relations Director – social media
Thom Petersen, MFU Government Relations Director – policy
Rodney Allebach, Farmers Union Insurance Agency President

10 a.m. Roger Johnson, National Farmers Union President

10:30 a.m. Policy discussion
11:30 a.m. Lunch break with Minnesota grown food
12 p.m. Gubernatorial candidates
1 p.m. Reconvene
Bryan Klabunde, MFU Vice President

1:30 p.m. Policy discussion
3:25 p.m. Credentials report
3:30 p.m. President and Vice President nominations

**3:30 p.m. Registration closes; opens Sunday 8:30-9:30 a.m.**

3:45 p.m. Torchbearer’s ceremony
4 p.m. NFU Convention delegate election caucusing (time certain)
4:30 p.m. MNFARMPAC reception
6 p.m. Banquet
8:30 p.m. MFU fundraiser auction

#### Sunday, Nov. 19

6:30 a.m. Free omelet breakfast for MFU members (ends at 8 a.m.)
7:30 a.m. Informational breakout sessions (Farmers Legal Action Group, Food Safety and Modernization Act, Energy, Dairy, Health care)
8:30 a.m. Registration
Door prizes
Interactive survey – Young Farmers Advocacy Council
Call to order

8:45 a.m. Membership & Education Committee report
Kirsten VanDerPol and Hunter Cardinal – National Youth Advisory Council report
Aaron and Jill Chervestad – FUE Leadership Couple report
Bruce Miller, MFU Membership and Outreach Director – Membership and Outreach report
Dave Frederickson, Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner

**9:30 a.m. Registration closes – time certain**

9:55 a.m. President and Vice President elections
Policy discussion
Credentials Committee report (final count of registered delegates)
Introduction of NFU Convention delegate nominees
Election of delegates to NFU Convention (time certain)
Lunch
Reconvene
Ron Hennen – 2016 audit and financial report

12 p.m. Reconvene
12:30 p.m. Policy discussion
Special orders
Election results
Old business
New business
Announcements
Door prizes
Grand door prize drawing for a drone
Adjournment

For further information, contact us at (651) 639-1223 or visit: www.mfu.org
UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Growing for the Future

Join us for our second annual Growing for the Future, a FREE online, interactive virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Featuring Speakers From:
- Farmer Veteran Coalition
- National Young Farmers Coalition
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Female Farmer Project
- And more!

Topics Include:
- Mentorship
- Business Planning
- USDA Programs
- Women & Veterans in Farming
- Conservation

The four-day event includes farmer-to-farmer webinars, live Q&A sessions, a discussion board, a resource center and giveaways and prizes!

For more information, visit nfu.org/growing-for-the-future.

Registration open for National Farmers Union Women’s Conference

The National Farmers Union (NFU) Women’s Conference will be held Jan. 14-18, 2018 in San Diego, Calif. The theme will be “Women in Leadership.” Women have been leading in agriculture for many years, and NFU hopes to build on this idea throughout the conference.

The conference will prepare attendees and their operations for their own future in many areas, including: business planning, succession planning, running for local office, networking, telling their own stories, innovative marketing and much, much more. NFU hopes to provide attendees with a network of female producers that they can reach out to throughout the year, as well as provide attendees with important tools that will help set their operations up for a future of success.

Speakers will include:
- Lisa Kivirist of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
- Kriss Marion of Wisconsin Farmers Union
- Bridget Holcomb of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network
- Madeline Schultz of Iowa State University
- Poppy Davis, agriculture policy advisor
- Sarah Lloyd of Wisconsin Farmers Union

Check out last year’s agenda at https://nfu.org/wc-agenda/.

Register at https://nfu.org/education/womens-conference/.

Contact the MFU State Office at (651) 639-1223 about scholarship opportunities for attending the conference.
Is your doctor, clinic or local pharmacy covered by your health insurance plan? Do you have ongoing medical needs? Do you have an HSA (health savings account)?

We know health insurance can be really complex. Our friendly, knowledgeable and local Agents can help you navigate networks and plans available in your area so you can make the most affordable choice for you and your family.

We can help you navigate Medicare and Part D plans, too. We are here to help.