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Photo taken at the farm of Jason and Lucie Amundsen, MFU members in Carlton County
by Bruce Miller, Minnesota Cooks Director

Mark your calendars for the 16th annual Minnesota Cooks™ Day at the Minnesota State Fair, scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 26. Once again, MFU is organizing a Minnesota Cooks calendar, featuring Minnesota restaurants and their chefs, paired with Minnesota farmers. The 2019 calendar will debut at the Farmers Union Coffee Shop at the State Fair.

Matt Maier, from Thousand Hills Cattle Company, raises 100% grassed cattle in Clearwater

For the second year in a row, Minnesota Cooks hopes to have our program moderators return. They are Mary Lahammer of Twin Cities Public Television and Tracy Singleton, owner of Birchwood Cafe. We will also have our musical group, The Home Fires, return to entertain the audience between the six program segments.

We have restaurants and farmers from all across Minnesota participating this year, covering both the Metro area and Greater Minnesota. This presents a nice mixture, demonstrating that locally grown food can make a difference throughout the state. See the full program schedule below.

As always, if you know of any restaurants that are buying directly from farmers, or farmers who sell directly to restaurants, let me know! Email me at bruce@mfu.org.

MINNESOTA COOKS STATE FAIR SCHEDULE – Sunday, Aug. 26

10 a.m.
French Meadow & Larry Schultz Farms – Toffee Cornmeal Waffle
Truce Juice & Big River Farms via Shared Ground Cooperative – Pesto Zucchini Noodles

11 a.m.
At Sara’s Table Chester Creek Café & Yker Acres – Chorizo Biscuits and Gravy
Young Joni & Untiedt’s Vegetable Farm: Summer Vegetable and Herb Panzanella
Noon
River Rock Kitchen & Bakery & Ben Penner Farms – Ben’s Organic Brown Bread
Birchwood Cafe & Hmong American Farmers Association – Heirloom Tomato & Sweet Corn BLT

1 p.m.
A.T. The Black and White & Bakers’ Acres – Fall Harvest Salad with Pan Roasted Chicken
Four Daughters Vineyard & Winery and Driftless Fish – Pan Fried Trout with Lemon Beurre Blanc

2 p.m.
Tillie’s Farmhouse & Countryside Orchard – Hasselback Sweet Potato
Breaking Bread & Urban Ag – Collard Wraps with Garden Pesto

3 p.m.
Jules’ Bistro & Stony Creek Dairy – Jules’ Dill Pickle Soup
Bar Brigade & Thousand Hills Cattle Company – Beef Tartare with Creamy Horseradish Sauce

For additional information, please contact me at bruce@mfu.org.

Photo credit: Katie Cannon
Farmfest & primary elections
We look forward to seeing you at Farmfest in our hoop barn, Aug. 7-9. It’s going to be a big event this year, with the Minnesota primary elections following a few days later. Candidates for governor, the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate will each participate in forums, so you can hear their ideas about agriculture and rural policy. I’ll be asking questions of Senate candidates on Tuesday, Aug. 7, at 10:30 a.m. about the next Farm Bill, trade, energy and more. Additionally, MFU Government Relations Director Thom Petersen will participate in a forum on Minnesota’s water resources on Wednesday, Aug. 8, at 1:15 p.m. Once again, we’ll have Big River Pizza available at our hoop barn.

On page 4 you’ll find a list of all the local foods we’ll be serving this year, along with a list of the Minnesota farms and companies we are sourcing from. We’re glad to continue our partnership with Birchwood Cafe of Minneapolis in serving local food. We also look forward to showcasing local foods partnerships between farmers and restaurants on Minnesota Cooks Day, which will take place on Aug. 26 at the fair.

Trade war continues to harm family farmers
The Trump administration has pushed forward relentlessly with its tariffs on our international trading partners. We are now in a formal trade war with China, whose unfair trading practices prompted justified action from the Trump administration. The problem is that the administration has not only provoked retaliatory tariffs from China, it has alienated our allies such as Canada and the European Union by imposing tariffs on them. As National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson pointed out in a recent op-ed (which you’ll find re-printed on page 14), much of the rest of the world agrees that China’s actions have caused damage to international trade markets. We need our allies’ support to find a solution to this, as well as in renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Since June, soybean prices on average have decreased by $1.50 and corn by $0.50. This was on top of the major decrease in farm income that has occurred over the last three years. This trade war is not without market consequences and will potentially have long-term negative effects on family farmers. A more tactful approach is needed for solutions that benefit everyone, rather than a one-time aid package that merely puts a bandage on the problem.

Farm Bill in conference committee
As both the House and Senate have passed their respective Farm Bills, members of both chambers need to begin meeting in conference...
committees to reconcile the differences between the two in order to get it passed before the present bill expires on Sept. 30. At the time of this writing, the House has selected its conferees, which include Rep. Collin Peterson, the ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee and a DFLer from the seventh district, and Rep. Tim Walz, a DFLer from the first district who also serves on the House Agriculture Committee. We believe both will be excellent advocates for Minnesota family farmers in the conference committee and eagerly await the Senate’s conferee selections.

Conference committee may prove difficult given the major differences between the two bills, particularly in the nutrition title. The House bill would mandate more stringent work requirements for participants of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, while the Senate bill maintains the current employment stipulations. There are also significant differences in how the bills address conservation, the farm safety net and payment limitations. MFU supports the Senate version over the House version, as we believe it better addresses the current needs of family farmers and rural residents. As the conference committee comes together, be sure to reach out to your elected officials so they hear directly from farmers about what needs to be in the bill. If you would like guidance on how to talk to them, read our resources page at 2018farmbill.org. You may contact us about it as well. See the chart on page 5 listing differences between the House and Senate bills.

Another year of camp complete
By the time you’re receiving this issue, we’ll have just concluded our summer leadership camp sessions. Thanks to all who attended camp this year – it was great to have you and we hope you’ll keep coming back. For many of our members, camp was their first introduction to our organization and led them to become lifelong supporters. Our campers have lots of fun outside, but they also spend time with our excellent camp staff learning about our MFU principles.

A special congratulations to Jade Person of Oklee, who will be on the NFU National Youth Advisory Council representing Minnesota for 2018-19. She was selected during NFU All-Stars Camp at the end of June. She’ll be a great voice for Minnesota on the council. Thank you also to Hunter Cardinal and Kirsten VanDerPol, who served on NYAC in 2017-18 and recently wrapped up their terms.

New at the State Fair!
Since the 1950s, Minnesota Farmers Union has had a strong presence at the Minnesota State Fair, with a building on the corner of Dan Patch Ave. and Cosgrove St. It became the Farmers Union Coffee Shop in 2003 and has remained a popular source for fairgoers to learn about Minnesota’s family farmers and MFU.

This year, we’re making the shop even better. We’re making a significant redesign, aiming to increase our educational reach with interactive content and locally grown food. “We are excited for our building to better serve fairgoers and connect them with those who grow their food,” said MFU President Gary Wertish. “Part of the fair’s mission is to celebrate Minnesota agriculture, and we are doing our part to carry out that mission.”

As part of the redesign, we will include more content describing its mission to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities. There will be video footage showcasing our members.

The redesign will also include more efficient customer service, with food being prepared in a food truck operated by Minneapolis’s Birchwood Cafe. It will still be a full-service coffee shop, with the Farmers Choice Coffee you’ve come to love that’s roasted by St. Paul’s J&S Bean Factory (including the popular nitro cold press) and frappes.

The shop will also offer ice cream bars from St. Paul’s Grand Ole Creamery. New food options made by Birchwood will include Blueberry Rhubarb Cobbler, an Heirloom Tomato BLT and Strawberry Basil Lemonade, made with ingredients sourced from Minnesota farmers.

Where we’re sourcing from:
- Bakersfield (flour, kernza)
- Blue Fruit Farm (blueberries)
- Featherstone Farms (tomatoes)
- Happy Fish Aquaponics (lettuce)
- Heart Beet Farm (strawberries)
- Hidden Stream Farm (bacon, rhubarb)
- Hmong American Farmers Association (rhubarb)
- Riverbend Farm (tomatoes)
- Smude’s Sunflower Oil (sunflower oil for pesto mayonnaise)
- SnoPac (blueberries, strawberries, corn)
- Twin Organics (tomatoes)
- Whole Grain Milling (cornmeal)
- York Farm (strawberries, rhubarb)

Blueberry Rhubarb Cobbler

Strawberry Basil Lemonade

Heirloom Tomato BLT

Photo credit: Keelie Ritter
## 2018 Farm Bill Proposals

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<tr>
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<th>House Bill</th>
<th>Senate Bill</th>
<th>Farmers Union’s Ideal Farm Bill</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farm Safety Net</strong></td>
<td>Price Loss Coverage (PLC) reference prices remain the same, includes price</td>
<td>No changes to PLC reference prices from current bill</td>
<td>Increases reference prices for PLC to account for the cost of production</td>
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<td>escalator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) payment rates based on location of acres</td>
<td>ARC payment rates based on location of acres</td>
<td>Makes technical corrections to ARC</td>
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<td>Calculates irrigated and nonirrigated commodities separately, bases updates</td>
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<td>in drought areas</td>
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<td>Allows dairy producers to participate in both Title I and Title XI</td>
<td>Does not allow producers to simultaneously enroll in Title I and Title XI</td>
<td>Expands insurance options for livestock producers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>insurance programs</td>
<td>programs</td>
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<td>Increases Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) margins from $9 and lowers</td>
<td>Increases MPP margins to $9, keeps premiums largely the same</td>
<td>Changes MPP so it provides meaningful supports to dairy producers</td>
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<td>premiums</td>
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<td>Creates an incentives-based inventory management program to oversee milk</td>
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<td>production</td>
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<td><strong>Conservation</strong></td>
<td>Cuts $800M from conservation programs over 10 years</td>
<td>Maintains overall funding for conservation programs</td>
<td>Maintains overall funding for conservation programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increases Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage to 29M acres by 2023</td>
<td>Increases CRP acreage to 25M acres</td>
<td>Increases acreage under CRP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eliminates the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</td>
<td>Makes positive reforms to CSP</td>
<td>Renews and fully funds programs that promote stewardship and locally led</td>
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<td>Cuts working lands programs' funding by $4.9B over 10 years</td>
<td>Cuts working lands programs' funding by $2.5B over 10 years</td>
<td>conservation activities</td>
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<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td>Increases work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</td>
<td>Maintains work requirements from the current Farm Bill</td>
<td>Doesn’t cut funding from programs that help feed hungry Americans</td>
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<td>(SNAP)</td>
<td>Provides tools to combat fraud</td>
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<td>Eliminates mandatory funding for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion</td>
<td>Merges the authorities for VAPG and FMLFPP and provides mandatory funding for</td>
<td>Reauthorizes and increases mandatory funding for programs that promote the</td>
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<td>Program (FMLFPP)</td>
<td>$60M for each fiscal year</td>
<td>development of new markets and support existing diverse markets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provides no new mandatory funding for Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG)</td>
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<td>Does not reauthorize the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program</td>
<td>Maintains NOCCSP’s mandatory funding level at $11.5M per fiscal year</td>
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<td>(NOCCSP)</td>
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<td><strong>Beginning Farmers</strong></td>
<td>Reduces Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan experience requirements from 3 to 2</td>
<td>Reduces loan experience requirements from 3 to 2 years</td>
<td>Ensures beginning farmer set-asides in the FSA’s loan portfolio is met</td>
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<td>Provides crop insurance discounts for 10 years under Whole Farm Revenue</td>
<td>Provides bonus payments to agents to write WFRP to beginning farmers</td>
<td>Expands crop insurance options for producers of all operation types and sizes</td>
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<td>Protection (WFRP) plans</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Credit</strong></td>
<td>FSA lending authorization remains the same</td>
<td>Provides higher authorizations for FSA lending</td>
<td>Increased lending authority for FSA loans</td>
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<td>Increases guaranteed loans limits from $1.39M to $1.75M</td>
<td>Increases guaranteed loans limits from $1.39M to $1.75M</td>
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<td>Maintains direct lending at $300,000</td>
<td>Increases direct lending from $300,000 to $450,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farm Stress</strong></td>
<td>Reauthorizes the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)</td>
<td>Reauthorizes FRSAN and authorizes $10M per year in appropriations</td>
<td>Reauthorizes FRSAN and provides adequate funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment Limitations</strong></td>
<td>Allows multiple farm managers under the same entity to be eligible for farm payments</td>
<td>Limits subsidy payments to $125,000 per farmer, or $250,000 for married couples</td>
<td>Prevents excessive farm subsidy payments and safety net program abuse</td>
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<td>Removes payment limits for several Title I programs</td>
<td>Lowers eligibility for Title I programs to producers with an average adjusted gross income of $700,000 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td>Eliminates the Energy Title and cuts all mandatory funding for energy</td>
<td>Restores funding for the Energy Title programs to 2014 Farm Bill levels</td>
<td>Maintains funding for programs that promote on-farm energy development and efficiency</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
of family farmers and consumers who have paid membership dues, as well as spouses of paid members. Members’ unmarried children between the ages of 16 and 21 are also eligible to vote at any Farmers Union meeting.

Each year, Farmers Union counties hold their annual county conventions, which are gatherings of Farmers Union members in respective counties. At the conventions, there are often speakers from the MFU State Office who address critical issues for family farming. Some conventions are during the day, some at night. Some conventions include meals, either on your own or paid for by the county, and last about an hour and a half.

Before the conventions, members should take the time and think of ideas they’d like to present as resolutions. Members in attendance discuss and vote on these resolutions that could become Farmers Union policy. All MFU policy starts at the local level with the county conventions; moves to the state level for debate at the state convention in November; and then to the national level at the National Farmers Union Convention in March. Farmers Union leaders advocated for this policy in the United States Congress and the Minnesota Legislature.

County conventions are also the times to elect delegates who are interested in representing the county at the MFU 77th Annual Convention, elect or re-elect a county president who serves on the MFU Full Board of Directors and elect any other officers, such as county Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or any position available in your county. We encourage you to consider running to become a county leader if you have strong interest in rural issues.

Farmers Union conventions are fairly informal, usually held at farms or small restaurants. You can catch up with your neighbors, meet new people and talk about issues in your area. These are family-friendly events and provide interesting opportunities to hear what others are thinking about agriculture.

MFU members receive postcard notifications with information about when and where conventions will be held. If it’s been a while since you attended a Farmers Union county convention, why not give it a try in 2018? Bring your family, friends and neighbors, and make the most of your MFU membership.

In answer to the most unasked question: If I go, will I get elected as a delegate or officer? The answer is pretty simple: No, 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. If you have questions about county conventions, don’t hesitate to contact me.
Topics for county convention discussion

While you’re welcome to talk about any issues you’d like to at your county conventions, here are some ideas we’ve heard about more often. We strongly encourage you to bring resolutions to your convention, or if you’d like to know more about an issue, your questions.

- **Trade:** Support or opposition to current state of trade disputes with countries like China. Does your county support withdrawing from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), or should we stay in it?
- **Farm Bill:** What does your county support or oppose about current versions of the proposed Farm Bill? The Farm bill expires Sept. 30, 2018 and MFU needs input now on safety net programs and conservation programs especially. Payment limitations are another big topic. Does your county support payment limitations? if so how much? Does your county support increasing CRP acreage?
- **Renewable energy:** Does your county have thoughts on either biofuel production or wind and solar development issues? RFS Waivers? Siting issues?
- **Buffers:** The current issue is would your county support using Clean Water (Sales Tax) dollars to compensate landowners for buffers? Or should it come from another fund?
- **Health Care:** What ideas do members have regarding this topic? Support for a public option such as Minnesota Care Buy-in? Support for extending the provider tax that funds Minnesota Care that will expire in 2019? Anything else?
- **Ditch mowing:** The Legislature extended the current moratorium on enforcing permits on roadside mowing and haying on state highways until April 30, 2019. The next Legislature will have to deal with this issue, does your county have ideas on this topic?
- **Artificial meat:** Does your county have a position on newly created imitation meat products? Ideas on how to label those products?
- **Local foods:** As more and more MFU members are selling farm products directly to consumers, what are barriers that need to be addressed through resolutions? Regulations? Promotion? Supply? Processing?
- **Rural broadband:** What ideas does your county have for increased broadband capability? More funding? Some kind of mandate?

Again, these are just a few issues to think about at county conventions. MFU is grateful for the hundreds of resolutions received from members every year that help guide our policy.

If you need help crafting resolutions, contact me at thom@mfu.org or (651) 288-4067.

Zero interest loans available for farmers affected by flooding

**Loans available to farmers in 36 Minnesota counties and one tribal nation**

Farmers affected by the recent flooding can take advantage of a zero-percent Disaster Loan Program offered by the Minnesota Rural Finance Authority (RFA). The program helps farmers cover flood clean-up, repair and replacement costs not covered by insurance.

The severe summer storms, which began on June 9, 2018, have caused significant flooding and damage to farm property in the Red Lake Nation and 36 counties including Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Blue Earth, Brown, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Cottonwood, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Jackson, Kittson, Lake, Lyon, Mahnomen, Martin, Mille Lacs, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pine, Pipestone, Polk, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Stearns, Stevens, St. Louis, Waseca and Watonwan.

The loans can be used to help clean up farm operations, repair or replace farm structures and replace seed, other crop inputs, feed and livestock. The loan may also be used to repair and restore farm real estate that was damaged by flooding.

As with other RFA loans, the Disaster Loan program will be available for farmers through their existing agricultural lenders for financing for these repairs. The RFA participation is limited to 45 percent of the principal amount up to a maximum of $200,000.

Interested borrowers should contact their lender or call RFA at (651) 201-6004. More information is available on the RFA website at www.mda.state.mn.us/afinance.
Minnesota Senate Vote Descriptions

SF 3569 – 2018 Ditch Mowing: MFU supported SF 3569 which passed the Senate 53-13. The bill extended the 2017 moratorium on enforcing ditch mowing permits on state highways for one year until April 30, 2019. A “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

SF 3596 – Biodiesel: MFU supported this legislation which passed the Senate on a vote of 67-0 and made clarifying changes paving the way for Minnesota to complete move to B20. A “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

HF 4425 – 2018 Bonding bill: MFU supported HF 4425 that was the 2018 bonding bill that included $35 million dollars for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA), which was slated to run out of money by June of 2018. The bill passed 42-25; a “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

HF 3182 – Fugitive Dust: MFU supported this legislation that addressed how dust from grain piles such as corn piles at elevators were treated. The bill passed 65-0; a “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

SF 218 – 2017 Ditch Mowing: MFU supported this bill that placed a one-year moratorium on the enforcement of permits for mowing and haying on state highways. The bill passed 46-17. A “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

HF 14 – 2017 RFA Funding: MFU supported this bill that passed in 2017 that made $35 million dollars available for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) The bill passed 62-0; a “yes” vote is a favorable vote for MFU.

HF 4133 – 2018 Omnibus Ag Policy bill: MFU supported the 2018 omnibus agriculture policy bill that made minor changes to the RFA, beginning farmer credit, advanced biofuel and other programs. The bill passed 49-13; a “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

SF 3656 – Snaring amendment: MFU opposed an amendment to SF 3656 that would have banned using snares which have been used to trap wolves. MFU opposed the amendment and it failed on a 29-38 vote; a “no” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

HF 1717 – 2017 Omnibus Ag Policy Bill: MFU supported this bill which was the 2017 omnibus agriculture policy bill that contained provisions that extended the Farmer-Lender Mediation Act, made changes to the RFA and dairy programs the MN Dept. of Agriculture. The bill passed 42-25 and a “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

SF 1672 – Wind Easements: MFU supported this bill that would have extended the law that at that time limited wind easements on farms to 7 years if commercial operation has not begun. The bill passed 62-0. A “yes” vote is considered a favorable vote for MFU.

Minnesota Senate Vote Score

Every two years, Minnesota Farmers Union publishes vote records important to us. In the table, + indicates a positive vote for the MFU position and - indicates a vote in disagreement with MFU. NV indicates that the member did not vote on that measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018 Ditch Mowing</th>
<th>Biodiesel</th>
<th>2018 Bonding</th>
<th>Fugitive Dust</th>
<th>2017 Ditch Mowing</th>
<th>2017 RFA Funding</th>
<th>2018 Omnibus Ag Policy</th>
<th>Wolf Trapping</th>
<th>2017 Omnibus Ag Policy</th>
<th>Wind Easements</th>
<th>% of votes positive for MFU</th>
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<tr>
<td>SF 3569</td>
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Notice is hereby given that the 77th annual convention of the Minnesota Farmers Union will begin with registration at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018 at the Ramada Plaza Minneapolis and continue through Sunday, Nov. 18, 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 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
President

Anne Schwagerl
Secretary
FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks. The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Producers considering an FSFL to store 2018 crop need to start the inquiry process soon as the entire process can take anywhere from 45 to 60 days. FSA is required to meet certain environmental quality regulations based on site inspections of where FSFLs are being constructed.

Loans up to $50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans between $50,000 and $100,000 may require additional security. Loans exceeding $100,000 require additional security. Typically, real estate is pledged as additional security and FSA requires a first mortgage on the real estate pledged.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products and under-served producers.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office.

To find your local FSA county office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

**Offers for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) being taken**

A reminder that FSA is accepting applications for enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Eligible farmers, ranchers and private landowners can sign up at their local FSA office on or before Aug. 17.

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the CRP continuous signup – excluding applications for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP grasslands. This pause allowed USDA to review available acres and avoid exceeding the 24 million-acre CRP cap set by the 2014 Farm Bill.

For this year’s signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. They include grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others.

FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments reflecting current values. It will not offer incentive payments as part of the new signup.

USDA will not open a general signup this year; however, a one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less. Producers eligible for an extension will receive a letter with more information.

In return for enrolling land in CRP, USDA, through FSA on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays producers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

Producers wanting to apply for the CRP continuous signup should contact their USDA service center. To locate your service center, visit www.farmers.gov.

More information on CRP can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

By now, the 2018 acreage reporting season is behind us. A very big thank you for your patience and cooperation during this past acreage reporting season. We truly appreciate everyone who called for appointments, showed up prepared and hung in there when things may not have went as smoothly as one would like.

**Do you have enough on-farm storage? Consider a Farm Storage Facility Loan**

The potential for a bumper harvest is there and inquiries are being made about FSA’s Farm Storage Facility Loan Program. Do you have enough on-farm storage for this upcoming crop?
In July, we held five Renewable Energy Working Sessions. It was a whirlwind tour around the state as we hosted meetings in Plainview, Murdock, Windom, Royalton and Waubun. The sessions are meant to be educational forums for farmers and rural residents to learn more about renewable energy and energy efficiency from experts. This year we partnered with incredible experts, including the following: David Harrington, Common Sense Energy; Liz Lucente, Minnesota Solar Energy Industry Association; Carmen Carruthers, Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota; Virginia Rutter, Solar United Neighbors; Lissa Pavlish, Clean Energy Resource Teams; Cheryl Glaeser, Wind on the Wires; Fritz Ebinger, Clean Energy Resource Teams; Sarah Whебbe, All Energy Solar; Annette Fiedler, Clean Energy Resource Teams; Jaci Friedley, APEX Clean Energy; Erica Bjelland, Real Renewable Energy Alliance; Travis Hinck, GDS Associates; Lily Osborne, Clean Energy Economy Minnesota; Joel Anastasio, Clean Energy Resource Teams; and Mike Triplett and Michael Neusser, White Earth Nation.

At the end of each session we toured a solar and/or wind installation on farms. Thank you to the Stolp Farm in Oronoco, Falk’s Seed Farm in Murdock, Kroecker Farm in Bingham Lake, Popp Farm in Royalton and Behrens in Lake Park for opening your farms and homes so we could learn first-hand about your systems and experiences with them. It was interesting to see each system, how it was set up, what the payback was and how technology differed from site to site.

Policy was also discussed at length. Here is a list of some of the topics covered: energy storage, batteries, financing, the Rural Energy for America Program, energy audits, energy efficiency, grid access fees, using solar or wind to reduce farm costs or diversify income, solar gardens, siting of solar/wind projects, how to read your energy bill, wind turbine concerns, land rental, transfer of wealth from rural areas to cities, tax implications, tariffs, fixed meter charge, Public Utilities Commission, decommissioning and restoration, decarbonization, benefits of clean energy on grid, cooperative values, local control, solar or wind on CREP land, transmission lines, time of use, state and federal incentives, biomass, biodigestors, Property Assessed Clean Energy, environmental justice, net metering, natural gas, coal, insurance, zoning and permitting.

These meetings help me understand the needs of our members and where MFU can help educate rural residents and farmers on renewable energy. Thank you to everyone who participated. We had more than 100 people attend over the five meetings. MFU has also partnered with the Farmers’ Legal Action Group to create Farmers’ Guide to Wind and Solar. This guide will help farmers navigate their own projects as well as projects that are looking to lease their farmland. The guide should be done by early fall and we look forward to sharing this resource with you.

Be sure to attend your county conventions to submit your policy resolutions to be debated at the state convention. Your resolutions keep our policy evolving and let us know what you want us to focus on at the Capitol.

I’m also a member of American Legion Post #38, Disabled American Veterans #15 and Veterans of Foreign Wars #8459, and enjoy assisting in our local community festival – Catfish Derby Days.

Please tell us a little bit about your family life. I’ve been married 24 years to my lovely wife, Linda, and together we have four children (Brooke, Dakotah, Blake and Isabella), one grandchild, Parker, and another grandchild on the way!

What is your #1 concern when reviewing and selling farm insurance? Oftentimes a farm policy has been purchased and not updated or reviewed often or completely enough. This is of great concern as changes are always happening in these operations and sometimes the insurance ramifications are overlooked. With the thorough training provided through FUJA and CIC (Certified Insurance Counselor Program), as well as the experience of working with many farm insurance companies, has allowed us to be very knowledgeable on the coverages available and how they apply to a farm operation. We also communicate with the adjusters of these companies on what claims are occurring and how they are covered so we may stay ahead of possible situations.

Joel has been an Agent in Franklin since 2000, and has been awarded multiple production awards during his tenure, especially in Farm. Joel is an active participant at the MFU/FUIA booth during FarmFest August 7-9 at the Gilfillan Estate outside Redwood Falls. Connect with Joel via the Agency website – www.mnfuia.com – or on his Agency Facebook page.

Why is working with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and MFU important to you? FUJA has been an awesome company to be part of. Our organizations are respected and recognized by the customers as well as being seen as a great partner by the insurance companies. We have a great business model! Like our Agency logo states, we truly are “Trusted, Local, Committed.”

What community organizations are you passionate about? I am involved in my community as a member of the Franklin Fire Department, Franklin Industries Inc. Board, Franklin Development Corporation and the Renville County EDA/HRA Board. I’m active in our Catholic church in the choir, as a lector and usher as well as involved in the Knights of Columbus.
Amundsen Family, Locally Laid Egg Company and Farm LoLa, Carlton Co.

Backyard chickens are a growing trend among people who want to raise their own food. But it’s not many who turn a small hobby into a lifestyle.

Jason and Lucie Amundsen of Wrenshall did just that. In 2012, they took the plunge and started Locally Laid Egg Company – with no previous agricultural experience. That’s no small task, going from five backyard hens to 2,000 on an 80-acre patch of land. Not to mention that all of the hens are named Lola.

As Lucie detailed in her 2016 farm memoir, also titled Locally Laid, keeping a sense of humor helped keep them going.

“In hard times, mostly, we laugh at ourselves, do yoga, meditate and drink really cheap beer,” she said.

Their determination has led to success, as they now occupy a niche in agriculture, which they call Middle Agriculture. Their current count of 23,000 hens, combined between eight farms (including their own), makes them a medium-sized egg operation. They also have seven employees.

Their brand standard is such: The hens must be pastured, foraging out on green fields. In the winter, the hens are housed with amenities such as dust baths “to honor their instinctive behaviors.” The Amundsens refer to their pastured birds as “poultry athletes.”

“These eggs are sold in groceries and wholesale to restaurants within the region of where they were laid,” Lucie said.

This initiative earned the Amundsens a spot in the 2014 Minnesota Cooks Day at the Minnesota State Fair and the 2015 Minnesota Cooks calendar (they’re in the month of February if you still have it!). You can also find their eggs at food co-ops and other grocery stores in the Twin Cities and Duluth.

Eggs aren’t all this innovative couple does.

“If that wasn’t quite enough, there’s also a berry wing of Locally Laid called Farm LoLa,” Lucie said. “There we’ve planted 15 acres of honeyberries, blueberries and raspberries run primarily as a Pick-Your-Own operation.”

Farm LoLa opened in 2016. As you can probably imagine, running a Pick-Your-Own berry farm keeps Jason and Lucie on their toes during the summer. They do enjoy opening up their farm and interacting with community members. The honeyberries have already gotten picked out for 2018, though they do still have raspberries available. The blueberry crop is expected to bear fruit in 2019.

Why did LoLa expand into fruit?

“Diversification is good for the land and smart business for a farm,” Jason said. He’s worked with his brother Brian and other employees at LoLa to plant the crops. It works well for them to use their chicken manure to fertilize the crops, along with sea minerals, while managing the challenges of farming in Northeast Minnesota.

“Being by Lake Superior makes for harder-to-predict weather, challengingly late springs and a short growing season,” Lucie said.

The Amundsens as American Gothic

The hens

The Amundsens have been members of Minnesota Farmers Union since 2015, joining because of the “need to represent our collective issues in the Legislature and beyond.” Health care access is a policy concern to them, as we’ve heard from many members.

“While Jason has care through the VA, I have a health insurance card, but with a deductible that precludes actual health care,” Lucie said. They’re also concerned with access to capital for expansion.

There’s no question that this young farm is becoming a strong part of the Minnesota agricultural landscape and a voice in MFU. They’ve brought together the unlikely combination of eggs and berries and are surrounded by happy chickens. We look forward to seeing what Locally Laid becomes!
Summarizing the key points from the document:

- The Minnesota Farmers Union has created a New Leader Academy to help individuals become active leaders in their community.
- This program is open to anyone looking to get more involved in MFU, with no age limit for participation; however, participants must be 21 years or older to apply and be selected.
- The application deadline is Oct. 1.
- The program emphasizes the history and role of MFU, with representatives of their peers, learning about the legislative process and lobbying.
- The program will include three other sessions over the course of the year, with opportunities to compare and address local urban and rural issues, and effectively create and sustain vibrant communities.
- The inaugural leadership class will include approximately a dozen selected individuals from Minnesota.

New Leader Academy

Minnesota Farmers Union is dedicated to providing resources and educational opportunities to members. In this tradition, a new program is available to MFU members: the MFU New Leader Academy. This program seeks to identify leaders within MFU and give them the resources and training needed to become active leaders in their community and in MFU. We want to ensure that rural and urban communities, farmers and consumers have leaders who understand the agricultural landscape.

The New Leader Academy will kick off at the 77th Annual MFU Convention in November and end September 2019 with a trip to Washington D.C. for the National Farmers Union Legislative Fly-in. Between those two events, the program will include three other sessions over the course of the year. Most sessions will take place over a weekend and cover the three sides of Farmers Union triangle: Education, Cooperation and Legislation. Sessions will be held at different locations, urban and rural, so that participants can experience the diversity of our state.

We’ve created this program to help individuals develop and polish the skills they need to effectively create and sustain vibrant communities. It offers opportunities to compare and address local urban and rural issues, and lessons in advocacy that will help participants understand how the various levels of government form a community.

MFU will cover participants’ costs for lodging, materials, most meals and airfare to Washington. We believe the investment we make in our emerging leaders will pay back tenfold in the future, with participants engaging in food issues, leading communities and helping sustain our local economies.

How to apply for the New Leader Academy

Interested in applying? Great! You can apply right on our website at www.mfu.org/new-leader-academy. The application deadline is Oct. 1.

Application Guidelines

- There is no age limit for participation; however, participants must be 21 years or older to apply and be selected.

- Applicants should be interested in pursuing leadership roles within Minnesota Farmers Union.
- Spouses are encouraged to participate but must apply separately.
- Babies and children may not attend any New Leader Academy activities.

Interested or have questions? Contact MFU Education Director Glen Schmidt at glen@mfu.org or (651) 288-4066.
A CALL TO END THE TRADE WAR

Op-ed by National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson

As the world’s two largest economic powerhouses entered a formal trade war last week, the United States stood alone in its dispute with China, lacking the support of our traditional allies. What’s alarming is it’s not the policy proposals that are keeping our friends on the sideline—much of the world is harmed by China’s anticompetitive practices and theft—but rather the alienation of these countries by the White House. The president must work towards renewing our essential relationships during this week’s European visit. Winning a trade war with China depends on it.

President Trump correctly diagnosed the systemic issues with our nation’s free trade agenda. He recognized the plight of farmers and rural residents who have endured decades of increasing financial difficulty, lost jobs and lowered wages due to flawed trade policies that favor corporations over individuals, particularly ones who do not live in large cities. And he identified the chief culprits for these issues: our massive trade deficit, our forfeited sovereignty and our appeasement of China’s long history of manipulative and illegal trade practices. The U.S. elected this president because he would be willing to address these issues.

Much of the world stands united with the U.S. against China’s unfair trading practices because they too are disadvantaged by such anti-competitive behavior. China’s currency manipulations send reverberations through international markets and make all of our goods more expensive to sell in the Chinese market. China arbitrarily restricts agricultural goods. They steal company information and trade secrets, they counterfeit our brands and they force outside companies to share technology in order to gain access to the Chinese market. Most importantly, China does not have a market-based economy. Its government operates as an authoritarian regime that directly influences its domestic market and props up Chinese businesses to unfairly compete on the world stage.

Yet despite our partners’ support for taking China to task, President Trump has isolated the United States in a go-it-alone approach. He has aimed harmful rhetoric towards friends, yet praised our adversaries. He has slapped tariffs on the entire world without the focus required to address true offenders. And he has abdicated influence on many matters of importance. Seemingly, the president is resolved to blow up the entire system rather than to lead it.

This approach has left family farmers bearing the brunt of retaliation from not only China, but also Canada, Mexico and the European Union. And that retaliation is coming on top of an already very poor farm economy, which has declined 52 percent over the past five years. Since the start of June, soybean prices dropped by more than $1.50, corn by $0.50 and wheat by $0.30. American corn, soybean and wheat farmers have already lost a collective $13 billion as a result of our current trade war with the world. And while the tariffs can end tomorrow, the effects of this trade war will continue for years.

It’s time the president adopts a new approach—one with more tact and a recognition of the dire consequences staring down both farmers and all Americans. This requires negotiating at the table rather than shouting from a distance. And it requires a coordinated approach with our allies, which can begin as soon as the president begins to treat them like the strong partners they are. We can win this trade war with China—and it is one worth winning—with our friends by our side, not on the sidelines.

Shakshuka

Recipe from Foxy Falafel

Yields: 4 servings

Ingredients:
1 t ground cumin
1 T olive oil or vegetable oil
2 large onions, peeled and diced
2 red or yellow peppers, cored and diced
7 ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
¼ t saffron strands
1 t red pepper flakes
2 bay leaves
6 sprigs thyme, picked and chopped
2 T flat-leaf parsley, chopped
2 T cilantro, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
4 free-range duck eggs (or 8 chicken eggs)
1 T feta or goat cheese
1 T chives, chopped
sourdough bread

Preparation:

Preheat oven 350°F.

In a large saucepan, add the cumin, olive oil, and onions. Sauté for 2 minutes. Add peppers and cook on medium heat for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, saffron, red pepper flakes, bay leaves, thyme, parsley, cilantro, salt and pepper. Cook on low heat for 20 minutes until you get a sauce-like consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning. You can prepare the sauce in advance.

Divide the sauce among 4 large baking ramekins (10 oz). Break one duck egg or two chicken eggs into each ramekin. Sprinkle with salt, cover and bake 15-25 minutes, until the egg just sets. Sprinkle with cheese and chives. Serve with slice of toasted sourdough bread.

minnesota cooks™

Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sun., Aug. 5 • 11:30 a.m. • Todd County Farmers Union Picnic • Clarissa Park, Clarissa • FFI: Al Perish, (320) 760-2516**

**Aug. 7-9 • Minnesota Farmfest • Gilfillan Estate, Morgan • Look for MFU in a blue and white hoop barn along with Farmers Union Insurance Agency**

**Sun., Aug. 12 • 6 p.m. • Tri County Potluck Picnic • Smith Park, Montevideo • Speaker TBD**

**Insurance Agency**

**Sun., Aug. 19 • 1 p.m. • COACT Farm Picnic • Falcon Heights**

**Thu., Aug. 23-Sept. 3 • Minnesota State Fair**

**Thu., Aug. 26 • Minnesota Cooks Day at the Minnesota State Fair • Falcon Heights**

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**Agritourism Signs**

Thinking of inviting the public onto your farm for a farm tour, breakfast, U-pick, etc.? The Limited Liability Law requires that providers of any 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. Additional signs for members can be purchased for $7. Signs for non-members cost $10.

To get your sign, contact MFU Operations Director Laura Sherar at laura@mfu.org or (651) 639-1223.

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**County Conventions**

**Wed., Aug. 8 • 4 p.m. • Redwood & Cottonwood County Convention • Gilfillan Estate Picnic Area, Morgan • Speaker: MFU President Gary Wertish • FFI: Redwood Co., Ted Suss, (507) 828-3377 or Cottonwood Co., Brent Imker, (507) 752-7697**

**Thu., Aug. 9 • 9 a.m. • Dakota County Convention • Dakota County Extension Office, 4100 220th St. W, Farmington • Speaker: MFU Education Director Glen Schmidt • FFI: Linda Larson, (612) 554-9963**

**Thu., Aug. 9 • 5 p.m. • Waseca County Convention • Pizza Ranch, 212 17th Ave. NE, Waseca • Speaker: MFU President Gary Wertish • FFI: Roger Rucker, (507) 469-1523**

**Mon., Aug. 13 • 7 p.m. • Goodhue County Convention • Area 57 Café, 125 Main St., Wanamingo • FFI: Deborah Mills, (651) 764-0006**

**Sun., Aug. 19 • 12:30 p.m. • Mille Lacs & Kanabec County Convention • Borgholm Town Hall, 16041 70th Ave., Milaca (one mile south of Bock on County 1) • Speaker: MFU President Gary Wertish • FFI: Mille Lacs Co., Robert Hoeftert, (320) 676-3177 or Kanabec Co., Bevan Beck, (320) 272-4787**

**Tue., Aug. 21 • 7:30 p.m. • Stearns County Convention • Charlie’s Cafe, 115 Main St. E, Freeport • Speaker: MFU Membership & Outreach Director Bruce Miller • FFI: Mike Orbeck, (320) 987-3421**

**Wed., Sept. 5 • 6 p.m. • Olmsted & Dodge County Convention • Frank ’N Stein Restaurant & Lounge, 15 Frontage Rd. NW, Byron • FFI: John Larsen, (507) 273-1451 or Glenn Hahn (507) 251-9432**

**Bylaw Changes as made by the Bylaws Committee at its July 11, 2018 meeting**

**ARTICLE VII: STATE CONVENTION**

**Section 6**

**Strike language:** “No County shall be entitled to a nominee if the county was represented by a delegate at the previous National Committee."

**Add language:** “No individual shall be entitled to be a delegate to the National Convention for two years in a row.”

**New Bylaw:**

To amend Article VI by adding a new Section 6.

**ARTICLE VI: STATE UNION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

“The Minnesota Farmers Union is committed to establishing and maintaining 1) a healthy and safe work environment and 2) ensuring that all persons in governance, at any level, are compliant with a code of ethics and conflict of interest reporting.

To this end, the President shall prepare and from time to time review administrative manual policies addressing, among other things, a zero tolerance for any form of harassment or bullying within the MFU. The President shall prepare and from time to time review both the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Code of Ethics.

Once prepared the President shall submit these policies to the Board of Directors for review and approval. Such policies shall include an obligation for every person in governance to read, comply with and sign these policies. Further, these policies shall also establish a set of remedies related to the failure to comply with these Policies.”
Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers

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Come see us at the Minnesota State Fair August 23 – September 3rd! The Farmers Union Coffee Shop is located at the corner of Dan Patch and Cooper Street. Get a great cup of coffee and a treat and meet some of our Agents and Staff. Don’t forget Minnesota Cooks Day on Sunday, August 26th!

Upcoming Agency Events in August

Visit MFU Staff and Farmers Union Insurance Agents at FarmFest August 7-9 at the Giffilnan Estate, Morgan, MN. Look for us in the blue and white hoop barn, and stop by to grab a free slice of pizza from Big River Pizza!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Rodney Mathsen</td>
<td>(218) 784-4813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDRIA</td>
<td>Daylon Faber</td>
<td>(320) 763-9455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENSON</td>
<td>Tom Hollingsworth</td>
<td>(320) 843-2422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANBY</td>
<td>Mike Panka</td>
<td>(507) 223-5527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROOKSTON</td>
<td>Chris Swanson</td>
<td>(218) 281-6724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAWSON</td>
<td>Deborah Breberg</td>
<td>(320) 769-2088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETROIT LAKES</td>
<td>Joe McCollum</td>
<td>(218) 844-5970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DULUTH</td>
<td>Brad Anderson</td>
<td>(218) 481-0812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELK RIVER</td>
<td>Rob Pampusch</td>
<td>(763) 441-4250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARIBAULT</td>
<td>Angela Francis</td>
<td>(507) 209-7598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARMINGTON</td>
<td>Jerry Theisen</td>
<td>(651) 463-7667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERGUS FALLS</td>
<td>Grant Davenport</td>
<td>(218) 736-597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOSTON</td>
<td>Barb Sweep</td>
<td>(218) 435-2063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANKLIN</td>
<td>Joel Harmoning</td>
<td>(507) 557-7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOODHUE</td>
<td>Dan Hedeen</td>
<td>(651) 923-4433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLSTATION</td>
<td>Jay Swanson</td>
<td>(218) 853-2468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVANHOE</td>
<td>Mike Panka</td>
<td>(507) 694-1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKE CRYSTAL</td>
<td>Matt Peterson</td>
<td>(507) 726-2961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENAHGA</td>
<td>Kim Rasmussen</td>
<td>(218) 564-5300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENAHGA</td>
<td>Jake Lund</td>
<td>(218) 564-5300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINNEAPOLIS</td>
<td>Matt Peterson</td>
<td>(507) 726-2961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOORHEAD</td>
<td>Dennis Fjeld</td>
<td>(218) 236-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOSE LAKE</td>
<td>Mark Sagvold</td>
<td>(218) 485-8144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW! GOODEHUE</td>
<td>Alison Peters</td>
<td>(651) 923-4433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW! LYDON</td>
<td>Dennis Klocow, Jr.</td>
<td>(507) 532-0418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW! MENAHGA</td>
<td>Lisa Valiant</td>
<td>(952) 467-2922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEWMAN</td>
<td>Lisa Preuss</td>
<td>(218) 385-3344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORWOOD</td>
<td>Lisa Valiant</td>
<td>(952) 467-2922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORTHOCARD</td>
<td>Debbie Anderson</td>
<td>(320) 589-3245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLIVIA</td>
<td>Paul Johannes</td>
<td>(320) 523-1150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT PAUL</td>
<td>Brandon Hummel</td>
<td>(651) 288-4076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT PAUL</td>
<td>Cary Sundlof</td>
<td>(651) 288-4069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIEF RIVER</td>
<td>Jay Swanson</td>
<td>(218) 681-6443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINDOM</td>
<td>Ted Winter</td>
<td>(507) 831-3541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINDOM</td>
<td>Paul Johannes</td>
<td>(320) 235-2540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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