Honoring all who served.

VETERAN’S DAY
Nov. 11

Minnesota Agriculture
a publication of Minnesota Farmers Union
November 2018

In this issue...
77th Annual MFU Convention
Farm Fresh Road Trip nominated for an Emmy Award
New Leader Academy Information
Member in Focus: Ferndale Market

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at Minnesota Farmers Union!

Photo taken at Ferndale Market, MFU members in Goodhue County
Four years ago, Minnesota Farmers Union joined Twin Cities PBS in creating a public television program named Farm Fresh Road Trip. This program has been nominated for four Upper Midwest Emmy Awards and has earned one Emmy Award from the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The Academy is a membership organization dedicated to excellence in video and television. The chapter represents media professionals in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Farm Fresh Road Trip grew out of the Minnesota Cooks program. It was developed and presented by Minnesota Farmers Union as an ongoing education and outreach program to demonstrate that locally grown food can be a viable economic option for some family farmers. In addition to the television program, Minnesota Farmers Union organizes a day long Minnesota Cooks stage show at the Minnesota State Fair and produces an annual calendar of original photography and recipes, along with stories of how these restaurants and farmers work together.

In 2018, photographer Katie Cannon and I attended the annual awards program with the Farm Fresh Road Trip production team from TPT/Twin Cities PBS. Unfortunately, the team did not bring home an award this year. Almost 950 nominations were entered in this year’s program, indicating that even being nominated is a significant honor and a recognition of the program’s excellence. Find information and past episodes at www.pbs.org/show/farm-fresh-road-trip.

Terry Gray and Mary Lahammer, TPT/Twin Cities PBS, Katie Cannon and Bruce Miller, Minnesota Farmers Union

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- Colombian Blend ($15)

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TO ORDER: Call (651) 639-1223. Order by 12/14/18 for Christmas delivery.
delegate in your district, especially if you’ve never done so before. As always, we support Minnesota farmers at convention by purchasing food directly from them to serve at meals.

During our Saturday evening banquet on Nov. 17, we’ll view the videos that were shown at the Farmers Union Coffee Shop at the Minnesota State Fair. You’ll see how our members told the story of Minnesota agriculture and why MFU is important to them, plus a sequence of historical footage of MFU.

More convention details are on pages 8-10. Details about policy resolutions are on page 5.

Trade agreements
The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), announced on Sept. 30, brought a sigh of relief to many farmers and agricultural organizations. We certainly share that relief, as any trade agreement is better than another round of tariffs. Though we hope this is a positive first step towards turning the United States back into a reliable trading partner, we must also remember that it’s not going to be an overnight solution. For one, Congress must approve the deal, and they won’t take it up until 2019, per Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). Secondly, it will likely take years to implement.

Agriculturalists have been most excited about the deal’s provision to open the Canadian market further to U.S.-produced dairy products. The deal eliminates Canada’s Class 7 pricing on ultra-filtered milk and opens 3.59 percent of the market for American dairy. Though it is a small step towards reducing the massive amount of milk flooding the market, it’s not likely to make as big of a dent in the oversupply as we really need. The president was not entirely accurate to say that the deal is “greatly opening markets to our farmers.” Overall, it did not change much from the North American Free Trade Agreement it’s supposed to replace.

To see any positive effects of USMCA, we also must resolve the remaining trade tensions the Trump administration has ignited – particularly with China. We still have the steel and aluminum tariffs in effect that started the trade war in the first place, which have driven up input costs for farmers in addition to provoking retaliatory tariffs. The administration recently announced it is entering trade negotiations with Japan, the European Union and United Kingdom, but it will take a while to see any sort of results from that. We will continue to advocate for fair trade agreements, negotiated respectfully with our global partners.

Farm Bill expires
The 2014 Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30 with no new one to follow it. The “Big Four” of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees – Rep. Michael Conaway (R-Texas), Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) – have not come to an agreement. Though the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program (SNAP) has been a hangup, it’s not the only issue. They’ve disagreed about conservation programs and how to issue payments to growers of different types of crops, as well. Peterson told Politico Morning Agriculture recently that he thinks pressure to get hurricane relief payments could also cause delays in passing a compromise. Congress went into recess to campaign for the 2018 midterm elections and will have a lot to face upon return, not limited to the Farm Bill. There has been no significant talk of trying to pass an extension of the 2014 bill. However, the “Big Four” continued to meet by phone during the campaign recess to try to get closer to an agreement.

Without a Farm Bill in effect, many programs that Farmers Union supports lack funding, including Value-Added Producer Grants and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Fortunately crop insurance is permanently authorized, so that will not be lost. Conservation Reserve Program enrollments are in a holding pattern, though contracts approved before Sept. 28 will continue to pay annual rental, cost-share and incentive payments. The same is true for the Conservation Stewardship Program.
Meanwhile, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program is funded through 2019 by the March budget agreement, but the Natural Resources Conservation Service is uncertain about the potential funding changes in the next Farm Bill and has restricted new enrollments.

While we are disappointed that a new Farm Bill was not passed on time, we are glad the conference committee is still working hard to agree on a bill that will benefit real family farmers.

**Trump announces summer E15; no action on RFS waivers**

Just over a week after USMCA was finalized, President Trump announced another move that pleased many in the agriculture community: that the administration intended to allow sales of E15 gasoline during the summer months and bring greater transparency to Renewable Identification Numbers. We appreciate any action to expand the market for renewable fuels, but unfortunately, it’s too late to make any difference this year. Though the administration hinted at implementing summer E15 earlier in the year, it did not formally enact it.

Additionally, the move does not address the ethanol demand that has been lost because of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Renewable Fuels Standard “hardship waiver” handouts to large oil refineries. Many of these refineries had net profits in the billions and have no economic hardship that merits issuing such a waiver. In addition, the waivers were issued in a secretive manner – the EPA refused to provide information in response to Freedom of Information Act requests. Even with summer E15, farmers are at a net loss for biofuel demand over the last two years. That’s contributed to lowering prices on the farm. Summer E15 is a good first step towards growing the market for homegrown, renewable fuels. To truly fulfill his promises to family farmers on biofuels, the president must have his administration further increase the use of them and act to compensate farmers for the losses from the RFS waiver handouts. The administration must also stop issuing unnecessary, secretive RFS waivers to large refineries who have no economic hardship.
The Policy Committee for Minnesota Farmers Union and our staff are busy sorting through the resolutions sent in this year by county conventions for delegates to consider at the 77th Annual MFU Convention, Nov. 16-18. Not surprisingly, this year MFU has seen many resolutions about the Farm Bill, trade and health care as well as other issues. Serving on the MFU Policy Committee this year will be:

- Nancy Dahlin-Teich, Chisago County
- Laurie Driessen, Yellow Medicine County
- Frank Grimm, Sibley County
- Erik Hatlestad, Kandiyohi County
- Bob Hoefert, Mille Lacs County
- Krista Osendorf, Stearns County
- Dale Ritter, Stephens County
- Eric Sannerud, Benton County
- Kirsten Vanderpol, Chippewa County

MFU Vice President Bryan Klabunde and Outreach Representative Diana Rico will also serve with the committee.

The Policy Committee will categorize, edit and filter resolutions and prepare them for delegates to consider and act on.

Here are some examples of resolutions that have been submitted for consideration:

- Support for allowing dairy farmers and retailers to advertise whole milk as being fat-free. (Dodge & Olmsted counties)
- Support for MFU to call for labeling laboratory-produced meat as artificial meat. (multiple counties)
- Support for legislation that prohibits chemical companies and/or their affiliates from subsidizing research conducted at any taxpayer-funded university. (Brown County)
- Support for consideration of eliminating the “hardship waiver” from the Renewable Fuels Standard. There were many waivers given that were not in/for small refineries or refineries having financial difficulty. This took away ethanol demand needed as a market for family farmers. (Pope County)
- Support for a ban on glyphosate. (Brown County)
- Support for increasing the amount of funding for the MN Farm Advocate Program and farm mental health programs. (Nobles & Redwood counties)
- Support for the administration to not levy tariffs without congressional approval. (Nicollet, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Pope counties)
- Support for reworking of policy from “no net loss of land” to “no net loss of tax revenue” when reviewing the sale of property to tax exempt entities. (Pope)
- Support for extending the provider tax which expires in 2019 that funds the MinnesotaCare program. (Pine, Redwood, Sibley counties)
- Support for allowing a public health care option such as a “buy-in” to MinnesotaCare. (multiple counties)
- Opposition to the use and building of “J” turns on state highways. (Jackson County)
- Support for saying that farm liability for implements of husbandry occurring on farm and public roads shall be considered regular liability and not no-fault liability. (Kandiyohi County)
- Support for a Right to Repair law that allows farmers and independent mechanics to own and apply the use of special diagnostic equipment and use aftermarket parts to make repairs affordable for farmers. (Houston County)
- Support for farmers to receive compensation for the loss of productive land when planting buffers to comply with the state of Minnesota law. (Yellow Medicine County)
- Support for the legislature to follow the single subject mandate in state constitution when passing end of the year omnibus bills. (Pine County)

These are just a sampling of what will be more than 50 changes for the delegates to the state convention to consider. MFU has a great grassroots debate and opportunities for members to make their voices heard on these and other issues. Members who have any questions about policy are encouraged to contact me at thom@mfu.org or (651) 288-4067.

Crow Wing County Meeting
Crow Wing County Farmers Union will meet on Monday, Nov.19 at 12 noon at the Saw Mill Restaurant. Review of the State Convention will be given by President Steven Koering.
Farm Loans for Veterans, Beginning and Underserved Farmers

The 2014 Farm Bill brought about numerous modifications to Farm Loan Programs (FLP). These changes have benefited producers and provided additional support for beginning farmers and veterans. FSA continues to develop innovative loan products and initiatives to improve its ability to serve traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers, such as with the Operating and Farm Ownership Microloan Programs and the expansion of the Youth Loan program into urban areas. During the first full year of operation, more than 80 percent of microloans went to beginning farmers, underserved farmers and military veterans.

Changes that have been implemented include:

- Elimination of Guaranteed Operating Loan term limits.
- Definition of Beginning Farmer modified to use the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate is modified to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was 5 percent.
- Direct Farm Ownership down payment program maximum loan amount increased from $250,000 to $300,000.
- Rural residency requirement for Youth Loans was eliminated, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness for Youth Loans because of circumstances beyond the borrower’s control will not prevent a borrower from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Delinquency on or debt forgiveness for Youth Loans will not prevent the borrower from receiving federal student loans.
- Guarantee amount on Conservation Loans increased from 75 to 80 percent (90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers).
- Microloans made to a beginning or veteran farmer will not count toward direct operating term limits.

Consider FSA for assistance if you are considering farming as a potential career. For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

Market Facilitation Program

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers can visit their local FSA office to gain more information about MFP for certain commodities or to sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

The sign-up period for MFP is now open and runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. Producers then have until May 1, 2019 to report production numbers in which payment is based upon. MFP provides payments to corn, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean and wheat producers who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer’s total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA. A recent change of importance just announced for hog producers is the inventory dates are now July 15-Aug. 15, 2018. Producers can pick an inventory date during that timeframe.

### Market Facilitation Program Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Estimated Initial Payment (in $1,000s)</th>
<th>Initial Payment Rate* (in $1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>$276,900</td>
<td>$0.06 / lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$96,000</td>
<td>$0.01 / bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy (milk)</td>
<td>$127,400</td>
<td>$0.12 / cwt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork (hogs)</td>
<td>$290,300</td>
<td>$8.00 / head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>$3,629,700</td>
<td>$1.65 / bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>$156,800</td>
<td>$0.86 / bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>$119,200</td>
<td>$0.14 / bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,696,300</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Initial payment rate on 50 percent of production

MFP payments are limited to a combined $125,000 for corn, sorghum, soybeans and wheat capped per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined $125,000 for dairy and hog producers. Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015 and 2016 of less than $900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

For more further information or to locate and contact local FSA offices, interested producers can visit www.farmers.gov.
MDA grants for crop research

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) anticipates awarding up to $2 million through the competitively awarded AGRI Crop Research Grant. Grant funds are available for applied crop research that will improve agricultural product quality, quantity or value. Funding for the grants was established through the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) Program to advance Minnesota’s agricultural and renewable energy industries.

The primary goal of the AGRI Crop Research Grant is to promote economic growth as well as to innovative environmentally friendly practices in Minnesota’s $10 billion crop production industry.

“I encourage our hard-working ag researchers to apply for the AGRI Crop Research Grant.” Minnesota-based organizations with agricultural research capabilities may apply for funding to improve crops grown in the state. The MDA also aims to support research that addresses the crop production needs of underserved Ag producers. Funding under this round will have a maximum of $250,000 per project.

Applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 28. The online application is available at the AGRI Crop Research Grant website. For more information about the AGRI Crop Research Grant visit www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/agri or contact Michael Greene at Michael.Greene@state.mn.us.

MDA grants available for livestock investment

Funds available for construction, physical improvements

The AGRI Livestock Investment Grant program is now accepting applications. The grant encourages long-term industry development for Minnesota livestock farmers and ranchers by helping them improve, update and modernize their livestock operation’s infrastructure and equipment. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) anticipates up to $2 million in competitively awarded grant awards. Funding for the grants was established through the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) Program to advance Minnesota’s agricultural and renewable energy industries.

The grant is intended to promote economic growth as well as environmentally sound practices in Minnesota’s $7 billion livestock industry. The program encourages new farmers and generational transitions in order to sustain the livestock industry in the state.

“The Livestock Investment Grant will benefit farmers and ranchers all over the state,” said MDA Assistant Commissioner Whitney Place. “Minnesota livestock producers are some of the most innovative in the country. The goal of these grants is to invest in that innovation by improving production facilities that can help sustain profitability of the next generation of livestock producers.”

Livestock farmers with operations in Minnesota may apply for funding. Funding under this round will have a maximum of $25,000 per project. Applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 15. The online application is available at the AGRI Livestock Investment website: www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/agri-livestock-investment-grant. For more information about the grant, visit the AGRI Livestock Investment Grant webpage or contact Michael Greene at Michael.Greene@state.mn.us.
**ARTICLE VII: STATE CONVENTION**

**Section 5**

**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."

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

**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."

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**77th Annual Minnesota Farmers Union Convention**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 77th Annual MFU Convention on Friday, Nov. 16 through Sunday, Nov. 18 at Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast, at 1330 Industrial Blvd. NE, in Minneapolis.

Our annual convention offers an opportunity for members to set our policy and network with other members and participate in lively discussions. Highlights include the policy debate; breakouts on energy, health care and food safety; and the fundraiser live auction.

For the full convention agenda, see page 10.

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

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**Minneapolis Grown Meals:** MFU works with members and local farmers 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, media and the public. RSVP requested.
You may pay for meals at the door if you like.

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**Accommodations at Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast**

To reserve a hotel room, contact Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast directly at (612) 331-1900, ext. 3 (the front desk).

A credit card is required to book your reservation.

Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis NE is located at 1330 Industrial Blvd. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

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**To register:** (651) 639-1223, info@mfu.org, or Eventbrite at https://77thmfuconvention.eventbrite.com.

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**Minnesota Farmers Union**
Standing for Agriculture, Working for Farmers
**Child Care**

Child care at the Convention is open to all MFU members.

Ages for child care are 4 years of age and older.

You must register in advance by Friday, Nov. 9.

Contact Education Director Glen Schmidt at glen@mfu.org or (651) 288-4066.

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**MFUPAC Reception**

Saturday, Nov. 17 • 4:30 p.m. • St. Paul Ballroom

Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis NE

Suggested donation: $25

For more information please contact MFU Government Relations Director Thom Petersen at (651) 288-4067 or thom@mfu.org.

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**OFFICIAL CONVENTION CALL**

**77th Annual Convention**

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 Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast 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 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
**Friday, Nov. 16**

4:30 p.m. County Officer Training (St. Paul Ballroom)  
*(see page 4 for details)*

6:30 p.m. Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) & Farmers Union Insurance Agency (FUIA) Joint Reception (Minneapolis Ballroom)

**Saturday, Nov. 17**

6:30 a.m. Free farm-fresh breakfast for MFU members (ends at 8 a.m.) (St. Paul Ballroom)

8 a.m. Registration opens (Foyer)

Auction item check-in begins (Lake Mille Lacs Room)

8:45 a.m. Door prizes (Minneapolis Ballroom)

Convention convenes (Minneapolis Ballroom)

Prayer – Gene Paul, MFU member

Pledge of Allegiance – Andy Norgaard, veteran and Farmers Union Insurance Agent

Present and adopt convention rules – Markell Vogt, Rules & Bylaws Committee Chair

Present and adopt proposed new bylaws – Markell Vogt

Present & adopt minutes of 2017 convention – Anne Schwagerl, MFU Secretary

9:15 a.m. Welcome – Gary Wertish, MFU President

Greeting – Eunice Biel, MFU Executive Committee Chair

Social media – Brita Moore, MFU Public Relations & Communications Director

Policy – Thom Petersen, MFU Government Relations Director

Insurance update – Rodney Allebach, FUIA President & General Manager

10 a.m. Farm Service Agency report – Joe Martin, USDA FSA Director for Minnesota

10:30 a.m. Policy discussion

11:30 a.m. Lunch break with Minnesota grown food (Buffet in Foyer, eat in Minneapolis Ballroom)

12 p.m. Federal policy report – Roger Johnson, National Farmers Union (NFU) President

1 p.m. Reconvene (Minneapolis Ballroom)

Life on the Farm – Bryan Klabunde, MFU Vice President

1:30 p.m. Policy discussion

2:30 p.m. Health care cooperatives – Char Vrieze, 40 Square Cooperative Solutions

2:40 p.m. Rural mental health resources – Meg Moynihan, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

2:50 p.m. Policy discussion

3:25 p.m. Credentials report – Lisa Severson, Credentials Committee Chair

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

3:45 p.m. Torchbearers ceremony

4 p.m. NFU Convention delegate election caucusing *(time certain)* (Minneapolis Ballroom)

**Sunday, Nov. 18**

6:30 a.m. Free omelet breakfast for MFU members (ends at 8 a.m.) (St. Paul Ballroom)

7:30 a.m. Informational breakout sessions: Renewable energy, Food Safety Modernization Act, health care (rooms TBD)

8:30 a.m. Registration (Foyer)

Door prizes (Minneapolis Ballroom)

Call to order (Ballroom)

8:45 a.m. Green View report – Don Knutson, Green View Executive Director

Farmers Union Industries (FUI) report – Dan Hildebrandt, FUI CEO

Membership Education report – Jan Lundebrek, Membership Education Committee Chair

Youth activities report – Jade Person, National Youth Advisory Council

Introduction of New Leader Academy – Glen Schmidt, MFU Education Director

Farmers Union Enterprises (FUE) Leadership Couple report – Tracie and Bob Berg

Membership & Outreach report – Bruce Miller, MFU Membership, Outreach and Minnesota Cooks Director

9:10 a.m. **Registration closes (time certain)**

10 a.m. Policy discussion

11:10 a.m. Credentials report (final count of registered delegates) – Lisa Severson

11:15 a.m. Introduction of NFU convention delegate nominees

11:45 a.m. Election of delegates to NFU convention *(time certain)* (Minneapolis Ballroom)

12 p.m. Lunch (Buffet in Foyer, eat in Minneapolis Ballroom)

12:30 p.m. Reconvene (Minneapolis Ballroom)

2017 audit and financial report – Russ Barnhardt

12:45 p.m. Policy discussion

Special orders

Old business

New business

Announcements

Door prizes

Grand door prize drawing for a drone

Adjournment

**Most agenda times are subject to change.**

For further information, contact us at (651) 639-1223 or visit: www.mfu.org
I am happy to announce that the selections have been made for the inaugural class of the Minnesota Farmers Union New Leader Academy. After much deliberation, 12 individuals were selected from all of the excellent applications we received.

They come from various backgrounds and locations. This NLA class includes farmers, health care specialists, local food and urban food advocates and entrepreneurs. They are:

- Cynthia VanDerPol of Kerkhoven
- James Kanten of Milan
- Marcus Irrthum of Wanamingo
- John Beaton of Saginaw
- Eric Monson of Eagle Bend
- Eric Sannerud of Milaca
- Theresa Bentz of Northfield
- Sarah Hill of Waubun
- Amy Liddell of Ada
- John Hest of Dilworth
- Melissa Roach of Cook
- Jessica Keddy of Sebeka

The program will include four sessions over the course of the next year. Most sessions will take place over a weekend. The September 2019 session will be a trip to Washington, D.C. The sessions will be held at different locations, urban and rural, to offer direct experience of the diversity of the region.

The first session takes place in conjunction with the state convention and I invite you to seek out these new leaders and introduce yourself. The NLA participants will be wearing teal name badges.

### New Leader Academy Program Agenda

#### Friday, Nov. 16

- **3 p.m.** You may check into the hotel any time after 3 p.m. Reservations will be under your names.
- **4 p.m.** Introduction to New Leader Academy, welcome by Gary Wertish, MFU President
- **4:15 p.m.** Hand out materials and review agenda
- **4:45 p.m.** How policy gets made (Speaker: Thom Petersen, MFU Government Relations Director)
- **6:30 p.m.** Minnesota Farmers Union & Farmers Union Insurance Agency Reception (Minneapolis Ballroom)
- **7:30 p.m.** New and young member mixer (location TBD)

#### Saturday, Nov. 17

Feel free to enjoy meals with other convention participants and observe convention proceedings on your own.

- **6:30 a.m.** Free farm-fresh breakfast (ends at 8 a.m.) (St. Paul Ballroom)
- **9:15 a.m.** Observe policy debate and convention proceedings (Minneapolis Ballroom)
- **11:30 a.m.** Lunch break with Minnesota grown food (Buffet in Foyer, eat in Minneapolis Ballroom)
- **1:10 p.m.** Speaker: Roger Johnson, National Farmers Union President
- **1:30 p.m.** Observe policy debate and convention proceedings (Minneapolis Ballroom)

#### Sunday, Nov. 18

- **6:30 a.m.** Free omelet breakfast (ends at 8 a.m.) (St. Paul Ballroom)
- **8 a.m.** Observe policy debate and convention proceedings (Minneapolis Ballroom)
- **8:45 a.m.** NLA Class introduced to convention floor (Minneapolis Ballroom)
- **10 a.m.** Group photo and headshots (What is Minnesota Farmers Union? Speaker: Bruce Miller, MFU Membership & Outreach Director)
- **11 a.m.** Speaker: Thom Petersen
- **11:30 a.m.** Wrap-up & evaluations
- **Noon** Lunch (Buffet in foyer, eat in Minneapolis Ballroom)

Room TBD for speaker sessions.

All agenda times are subject to change.
Join us Dec. 3-6 for NFU’s third annual **Growing for the Future**, a FREE online, interactive virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers.

**Featuring speakers from:**
- USDA Rural Development
- CHS Foundation
- Farm Credit
- Cooperative Network
- Farmer Veteran Coalition

**Topics include:**
- Cooperatives
- Diverse Markets
- Socially disadvantaged farmers
- Data and technology
- Climate change

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. 13-17, 2019 in San Diego, Calif. The theme will be “Farming in Community.”

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.

**Featuring speakers from:**
- Farmer Veteran Coalition
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- VoteRunLead
- Annie’s Project
- Rural Women’s Project
- SAGE

Visit NFU.org/Education/WomensConference for more information and to register.

MFU is pleased to offer five $1,000 scholarships to members who want to attend the NFU Women’s Conference. The application is available at www.mfu.org/scholarships and is due by Dec. 1.
This fall and winter, MFU is partnering with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension, Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (MFVGA), Minnesota Farmers Market Association (MFMA) and other partners to host 14 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule trainings around the state for produce farmers.

The Produce Safety Rule is one of seven parts of FSMA, which is a new federal food safety regulation. The Produce Safety Rule applies to produce growers who sell more than $25,000 in produce per year (adjusted for inflation). Some farms covered by the rule may also qualify for an exemption based on sales, crops grown or the intended use of the produce. To comply with this rule, fruit and vegetable farms that grow, pack, harvest and/or hold produce and that do not qualify for an exemption or exclusion need to attend this training that uses the FDA-approved curriculum. To learn if your farm is fully covered by the rule, view the FDA’s Coverage Exclusions Chart at www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/UCM472499.pdf or see this fact sheet by UMN at extension.umn.edu/growing-safe-food/fsma-and-produce-safety-rule-does-rule-apply-me.

However, all growers interested in learning about produce safety, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and the FSMA Produce Safety Rule are encouraged to attend. Learning about and implementing good agricultural practices protects your farm and business, can help you get a GAP audit if needed and keeps our local foods safe and healthy. These courses will be co-led by trained fruit and vegetable farmers and staff from UMN Extension and MDA.

Register: www.psp.tix.com. Deadline is 10 days before each class or until full. Producers are encouraged to register early, as last year 4 of 5 courses were sold out with wait lists.

Cost: $25 (this cost is subsidized and will likely rise in the coming years). Registration includes training materials, lunch, refreshments and a certificate of attendance issued by the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). Certificate of attendance is good for life.

Schedule: Check-in is at 8:30 a.m. Training runs from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Class Size: Limited to 40 participants on a first-come, first-served basis. No walk-ins accepted.

For more information: Contact the MDA Produce Safety Program at (651) 539-3648 or www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/fsma-produce-safety-rule-grower-training-courses.

Visit UMN Extension On-Farm GAPs Education Program for more information on Good Agricultural Practices and the FSMA Produce Safety Rule at extension.umn.edu/safety/growing-safe-food.

Learn about FSMA: www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm334114.htm.

Learn about the Produce Safety Alliance: producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/.

Dates and Locations

Nov. 9 Bemidji
Nov. 14 Windom
Nov. 28 Morris
Dec. 5 Hutchinson
Dec. 12 Brooklyn Park
Dec. 17 St. Paul
Jan. 9 St. Cloud (day before Minnesota Organic Conference)
Jan. 16 St. Cloud (day before MFVGA/MFMA conference)
Jan. 23 Mankato
Jan. 25 Cloquet
Feb. 6 St. Charles
Feb. 20 Andover
Mar. 13 Moorhead
Mar. 20 Farmington

FUUIA AGENT HIGHLIGHT:

Ben Flemke
(507) 497-1010
benf@mnfuiia.com
32 4th St NW, Faribault, MN

(Please note new Agency location & phone #)

Why is working with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and MFU important to you? I am really looking forward to the opportunity to work with other business owners to ensure that they have adequate protection for our ever-changing environment. I’m also excited to be working in an Independent Agency, because I feel that gives our insureds more options for competitive quoting and coverages. This really gives our clients an advantage over our competitors.

What community organizations are you passionate about? I am a Faribault Chamber of Commerce Ambassador, a member of the Better Business Builders branch of BNI (Business Networking International), and a Blandin Community Leadership graduate. I have also served as an Owatonna Parks and Recreation Board Member, and as the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee Board Chair.

Please tell us a little bit about your family life. I am married to Nicole Flemke who is a labor and delivery nurse at the Owatonna Hospital. I have a 12 year old daughter named Ava who is in 7th grade and dances at Just For Kix, is on the OMS volleyball team, and is going to be playing JV volleyball soon. I also have a son named Max who is 10 years old and just finished his 5th grade season of football and will be starting wrestling very soon. My kids are my pride and joy! I also have an 11 year old lab mix named Sophie and a 6 month old lab named Tilly. My family enjoys going to Park Rapids throughout the summer and fall and then returning to the area for deer hunting. We would love to some day have a year-round cabin in the area.

What is your #1 concern when reviewing and selling farm insurance? When reviewing farm policies, I notice over and over again that not one farm is the same so it is even more important to have a working agent-farmer relationship so we can ensure that things are covered correctly in the event of a loss. Claim time is our time to shine!

Ben took over the Faribault Agency October 1st. Prior to serving his community as an Agent, Ben owned a glass and door company in Owatonna and managed a glass center in Faribault. Visit our website at www.mnfuiia.com to connect with an Agent in your area, and follow our Agency on social media under “MNFUIIA.”
Fried Green Tomatoes with Skillet Sweet Corn

Turn heat up under oil to medium-high and wait 3 minutes (oil temp should be 350°F). Start frying 3-4 triple coated slices of tomato at a time (be careful adding tomato slices to oil; “slip them into the oil” so you don’t splash hot oil). Fry until golden brown, 3-5 minutes. Remove to a paper lined baking pan. Repeat with remaining triple coated tomato slices. Serve immediately or reheat in the oven before serving. Best served with fresh greens and Skillet Sweet Corn – Bacon Vinaigrette.

For Skillet Sweet Corn – Bacon Herb Vinaigrette:
1/2 lb (5-6 slices) bacon, cooked & rough chopped
2 T bacon fat, reserved from cooking bacon
2 c onion, diced
2 c sweet corn, fresh off the cob (or frozen)
1 c cider vinegar
1 c sunflower oil
1 c extra virgin olive oil
1 T seeded mustard
1/8 c honey
1 c mixed herbs, rough chopped: chives, basil, tarragon

1 T salt
2 t fresh pepper, ground

Cook bacon in a large skillet until crispy. Remove bacon to paper lined plate. Pour off all but 2 T of bacon fat (reserve remaining fat for cooking scrambled eggs or potatoes). Heat pan with reserved bacon fat over medium heat. Add onion and cook 3-5 minutes until onion softens a bit. Remove pan from heat and stir in remaining ingredients. Serve warm spooned over salad greens or fried green tomatoes.
Ferndale Market, Goodhue County

The tornadoes that swept through Minnesota this past September left their mark on many farms. Ferndale Market, a turkey farm and local foods store in Cannon Falls, was one of those.

“We were without power for a couple days,” said farmer John Peterson, the third generation to raise pastured turkeys on the Ferndale land. “It was a challenge trying to keep our turkeys fed and watered and to keep all of our inventory refrigerated.”

The Peterson family, like most farm families, knows what it’s like to face the myriad of unpredictabilities of agriculture. But they’ve also experienced the best of their community.

“As soon as the tornado hit, (my wife) Erica and I came up from our basement to see if there was any damage, and within ten minutes, all of our farm employees were here,” John said. “Nobody called them. They just showed up.”

This supportive atmosphere has been part of the Peterson farm since it began in 1937. Family bonds and dedicated employees have made Ferndale Market a local food destination.

Why turkeys?
The farm’s founder, Dale Peterson, grew up on a farm in North Dakota, though not a turkey farm. He studied poultry science at North Dakota State University. This was before Minnesota had become the turkey-producing powerhouse it is today.

“He knew he wanted to grow turkeys, which was at the very beginning of when people thought they could make a living growing turkeys as a commercial venture, rather than just a small part of their farm,” said Dick Peterson, Dale’s son and John’s father. “I never got to ask him why that was his passion, whether it was before he went to school or developed it while in school.”

Dale started out his farm venture in nearby Northfield with a friend of his, who later married the sister of the woman Dale married. Two years later, Dale began farming on his own on the land Ferndale resides on today. According to Dick, he had a good sense of what land would work best for turkeys.

“The reason he chose this land is that it’s terrible crop land,” Dick said. “It’s sandy. But it’s well-drained to grow turkeys outside. The water doesn’t stand, a lot of turkey disease bacteria grows in moisture and heat.”

Ever since then, the Petersons have raised their turkeys outdoors on range land and chosen not to use antibiotics. Dale started the farm out as a hatchery, with his and his wife Fern’s first house being part house, part hatchery. He sold day-old poults to other farmers.

The Petersons saw the hatchery business change greatly during their time running one. “I remember in the early 1960’s reading that there were 60 turkey hatcheries in Minnesota,” Dick said.

But now there are only a few. The Petersons ran theirs until 2007. Their business model had changed over time to where they were hatching turkeys they would raise for market themselves. Then, when John got involved, they started direct-marketing their turkeys. Peterson’s Turkey Hatchery became Ferndale Market.

Community over consolidation
The Petersons witnessed consolidation in not only the hatching business, but the poultry processing business. They decided to make themselves stand out.

“We saw an opportunity to be able to brand our own turkeys because we were using different practices (than a lot of the turkey business was),” John said.

John and Erica moved to the farm in 2008 and built the direct-marketing business alongside Dick and his wife, John’s mother Jane. It’s named Ferndale after the original farmers: Fern and Dale.

Today you can buy Ferndale turkey at the market or pre-order it online to pick up there. You can also find Ferndale turkeys at food cooperatives, meat shops and grocery stores across the Upper Midwest, as well as at restaurants and food service accounts at local colleges, including nearby St. Olaf College and Carleton College. They were featured in the 2015 Minnesota Cooks calendar at the 2014 Minnesota Cooks Day program at the State Fair. And they work with school districts to get nutritious turkey to K-12 students.

“I know MFU has been a real advocate for (farm to school programs), working at the Legislature to help schools get the resources they need to get a farm to school program,” John said.

Ferndale products such as turkey burgers and turkey hot dogs have found their way onto lunch trays in Cannon Falls, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Eden Prairie, Orono, Northfield, Owatonna, Faribault and Rochester, to name a few.

“I get a text every couple of months from friends of ours somewhere of a picture of the school menu when it has Ferndale products,” Erica said. “It’s fun for parents to see that schools value nutritious choices.”

It’s not just through selling turkey that the Petersons connect with the local community. They’ve built a store on the spot where a hatchery once stood that sells products from all sorts of local farmers, from cheese to cookies to jam. With the launch of the store came new challenges for the four Petersons, who managed the store themselves with just a few part-time employees, until John and Erica’s son Finn was born in 2011. Then they hired more and now have about 20 employees, a mix of part-time and full-time, working in the farm and the store.

“One of the joys of being in a small business is that we all get to do a little bit of everything,” John said. “Some of our farm employees are also truck drivers, one day working out with turkeys and the next day at a co-op in the Twin Cities.”

Ferndale’s reputation has given them many loyal customers. They’re rewarded with several events at the farm each year, most recently an open house for the market’s tenth anniversary.

“The big one is coming up, Turkey Fest,” Jane said. “It’s the weekend before Thanksgiving. It’s a celebration of fresh turkey, live music, some of our vendors are here with samples of holiday items.”

Jane, a piano teacher, is responsible for the market’s social media accounts, making sure their events are well-shared. Erica teaches English at Dakota County Technical College and contributes to farm life as much as she can.

As the Petersons are gearing up for another Thanksgiving turkey rush, they remind us that family and community bonds make all the difference in agriculture.

“I don’t know how we would do any of this without such a good team around us,” John said.

“The hard times are still hard, but I can’t imagine what it would be like to be really alone.”

Look for Ferndale Market turkey at the 77th Annual MFU Convention, Nov. 16-18. ▲
Open Enrollment has begun for Medicare, Part D and Individual and Family Health Plans!

**MEDICARE** Open Enrollment is October 15 through December 7, 2018 for supplemental Medicare plans and Part D prescription drug plans.

Open Enrollment for **Individual and Family Health plans** is November 1 through December 15, 2018 for plans that are in effect on January 1, 2019.

For a 2019 **MNSure** plans, Open Enrollment is extended this year, from November 1 through January 13, 2019, a full month longer.

*Confused? Understandable!* Talk to one of our Agents to discuss your options and find the best fit for you.

Please join Farmers Union Insurance Agency at the 77th Annual Minnesota Farmers Union Convention Reception on Friday, November 16th from 6:30 - 9 p.m. at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Ballroom!