In this issue...

MFU County Conventions
Members in Focus: Thell Family
Dairy Revenue Protection
Women’s Conference Report
Meet the 2019 Camp Staff
Mark your calendars for the 17th annual Minnesota Cooks™ Day at the Minnesota State Fair, scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 25, at Dan Patch Park. This is the premier event of MFU’s local foods education and outreach program. MFU is organizing another edition of the Minnesota Cooks calendar, featuring Minnesota family farmers working in partnership with chefs and restaurants. The calendar will debut at the Farmers Union Coffee Shop at the State Fair. These featured farmers and chefs in the calendar are also featured on Minnesota Cooks Day. This program demonstrates the economic value-added agriculture that benefits some farmers who produce locally grown food. It also brings celebrity tasters on stage to interact with the farmers and chefs, as they discuss the importance of food and agriculture to all Minnesotans. There are delicious samples available for the audience of each dish made.

We will have local musical group The Home Fires return to entertain the audience between the six program segments.

We have restaurants and farmers from 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.

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.

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Roasted Eggplant Roulades with Goat Cheese, Greens and Heirloom Tomato Sauce

*From Farm to Fork*

Yield: 4 servings

For eggplant:
- 2 large eggplant (globe or Italian heirloom)
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- salt

Preheat oven to 325º, or heat up your grill (eggplant are great grilled!).

Using a vegetable peeler, partially peel eggplant lengthwise to create zebra stripes, then slice 3/4” thick lengthwise. Brush eggplant slices with extra virgin olive oil, and salt to taste. Place on a sheet tray lined with parchment paper, and bake for 20 minutes, turning over halfway. Make sure they are soft but not falling apart.

If you are grilling the eggplant, have a hot grill ready. Place tin foil over 1/2 of the grill, brush with oil and cook eggplant until soft. Set aside.

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For goat cheese filling:
- Yield: 2 cups
  - 1 bunch greens (kale, chard, spinach), washed and chopped
  - 1-1/2 cups goat cheese
  - 1/2 cup fresh herbs, chopped (basil, mint, parsley)
  - 4 green onions, minced
  - salt and pepper

In a pan over medium heat, lightly sauté greens in 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil. Mix all filling ingredients in a bowl until well combined. Add salt and pepper to taste. Place 2 Tbsp. filling onto each eggplant slice and roll up. Place into a baking dish or platter. Top with fresh tomato sauce (recipe follows) and herbs. Can also be baked, covered and served warm.

For fresh tomato sauce:
- Yield: 2 cups
  - 3-4 large tomatoes, diced
  - 1 clove garlic, crushed
  - 2 Tbsp. olive oil
  - 6 big, fresh basil leaves, torn
  - salt and pepper

Add all ingredients to a food processor and pulse until chunky. Serve on top of grilled eggplant roulades. Sauce will last in fridge for 2 days.

*Note: This dish can be made ahead. Store eggplant roulades and sauce separately.
State Fair New Foods announced!
I’m pleased to share that the Farmers Union Coffee Shop is again a featured venue in the Minnesota State Fair’s official New Foods list. Our partnership with Minneapolis local-foods Birchwood Cafe has produced some incredible success over the years. This year, the Blueberry Key Lime Pie and Lavender Lemonade are on the list – and not to mention, we’ll be reprising the well-loved Heirloom Tomato & Sweet Corn BLT, now with the option to add an egg to it.
Most importantly, all these foods are made with ingredients raised by Minnesota family farmers. A big part of the Minnesota State Fair’s mission is agricultural education. We’re doing our part to further that mission by supporting Minnesota family farmers in the food we serve at the Farmers Union Coffee Shop. We make sure customers know where their food is coming from and how much family farmers mean to our state.
The average Minnesotan is multiple generations removed from the family farm. We help bridge that gap at the Farmers Union Coffee Shop. We hope to see you there between Aug. 22 – Sept. 2.
More information about the new foods is on page 4.

Welcome Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey
I’d like to extend a personal welcome to new Minnesota Department of Agriculture Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey, recently appointed to oversee Outreach, Agricultural Marketing and Development, Dairy and Meat Inspection and Food and Feed Safety. Patrice comes over from, most recently, the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage. We look forward to working with him as he helps lead MDA in implementing new policies and funding passed by the Legislature.
I’d also like to recognize outgoing MDA Assistant Commissioner Susan Stokes, who is returning to practicing agricultural law. Susan has been a wonderful advocate for family farmers and a great friend to MFU. We wish her all the best.

NFU, National FFA sign memorandum of understanding in Minneapolis
In mid-June, Minnesota was the host of a signing ceremony for National Farmers Union and the National FFA Organization. NFU President Roger Johnson and National FFA CEO Mark Poeschl signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that affirms the ways we work together to share resources, support agricultural education, foster youth engagement and leadership in agriculture and elevate each other’s roles within farming communities.
We were pleased to be joined for the signing by Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen; Minnesota FFA Association President Lafe Aarsvold and Region VIII President Kelsey Biel (the granddaughter of Fillmore County President Eunice Biel); Minnesota FFA Foundation Executive Director Val Aarsvold and State Advisor Joel Larsen; and Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators President Tim Ulencamp.
MFU and Minnesota FFA have had a long-standing relationship, providing mutual support for each other in our work. This MOU shows our commitment to that relationship and that it will continue for years to come.

Appointment to USDA Ag Tech Advisory Committee
For the past four years, I’ve been serving on a committee with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service, the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee for Trade in Grains, Feed, Oilseeds and Planting Seeds. I’m pleased that I’ll get to serve at least four more and represent Farmers Union in important discussions regarding trade of these products. This committee, one of several ATACs, provides input to the USDA and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). We meet regularly in Washington, D.C.
Grain farmers have been facing economic disruption for the past five years due to low prices and trade wars. I will continue to be a voice for our members on this important committee and hope to guide the USDA and USTR toward getting our trade relationships back on track and stop the rampant use of tariffs, as trade is an important piece of the puzzle for family farm income.

World Farmers’ Organisation
As I mentioned in the June issue, I attended the World Farmers’ Organisation General Assembly in May, held in Luxembourg. My fellow Livestock Working Group members and I showcased the work we’ve done over the past year. We presented a paper on antimicrobial resistance to the General Assembly and it was approved with some discussion. There’s a possibility we’ll get to present it at the United Nations this fall, which would put family farmers’ voices in the larger global discussion of antimicrobial resistance.

Trade mission in South America
With trade being the top issue of discussion in agriculture for more than a year now, it was timely for Minnesota’s farm groups to go on a trade mission. I joined Commissioner Petersen and representatives from several agricultural organizations in traveling to Colombia and Peru, June 4-7. While in Colombia, we were also with Ted McKinney, USDA Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.
It was important for us to connect with these trade partners, as they purchase significant amounts of U.S. grain. Peru is the sixth-largest buyer of U.S. corn, as they don’t raise it themselves for livestock feed. And we’ve had a 72 percent increase in agricultural trade with Colombia since 2012. Minnesota can’t make big trade deals with other nations like NAFTA, but we can make business contacts that could increase market access for family farmers. We met with pork, beef and soybean buyers, which are all products hit by the tariff back-and-forth with China, Mexico and many others.
I’m glad to have been invited on this trade mission and to see the market opportunities we have in South America. But exploring new markets right now won’t ease the financial pain that’s hit farmers during President Trump’s trade war. Later in June, another high-ranking USDA official, Deputy Secretary Steve Censky, visited Minnesota and held a roundtable I participated in. He said farmers just need to “keep holding on.” I told him that while we agree with President Trump that we need to make our trade agreements fairer, these trade wars and tariffs have gone on long enough and need to end. They are causing long-term damage to the rural landscape by forcing family farmers out of business, causing further consolidation in agriculture and rural communities.
Farmers need access to markets and fair prices for their labor and investments. The administration’s tariffs aren’t getting us there. (continued on page 4)
Farmers Union Coffee Shop featured in official Minnesota State Fair New Foods list once again

Since the 1950s, Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) has had a 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, offering locally roasted coffee and locally grown food. Today, it is a place at the fair for visitors to connect with MFU, our state’s family farmers and their food.

Blueberry Key Lime Pie and Lavender Lemonade are featured among the 2019 new selections. MFU partners with local food-focused Birchwood Cafe of Minneapolis on these. The Heirloom Tomato & Sweet Corn BLT will return, now with the option to add an egg.

The full-service coffee shop offers products from two St. Paul businesses: JS Bean Factory’s Farmers Union Farmers Choice Coffee, hot and cold, including the popular Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee; and Grand Ole Creamery ice cream bars. It will also offer espresso drinks, chai tea and mocha frappes.

The Farmers Union Coffee Shop is proud to source ingredients from Minnesota family farmers and businesses. This year, sources include:

- Hidden Stream Farm, Elgin: bacon, lavender
- Hmong American Farmers Association, Vermillion: lavender
- Heartbeet Farm, Zumbro Falls: greens
- Riverbend Farm, Delano: tomatoes
- Featherstone Farm, Rushford: tomatoes, greens, kale
- Twin Organics, Eagan: tomatoes, basil
- Blue Fruit Farm, Winona: blueberries
- Happy Fish Aquaponics + Gentleman Forager, Stacy and St. Paul: lettuce, basil
- Sno Pac Foods, Caledonia: blueberries, corn
- Whole Grain Milling, Welcome: cornmeal
- Baker’s Field Flour + Bread, Minneapolis: Kernza® flour
- Locally Laid Egg Company, Wrenshall: eggs
- Stony Creek Dairy, Melrose: butter, milk, cream
- Wild Country Maple, Lutsen: maple syrup

Photo credit: Keelie Ritter Photography

President’s Message (continued)

Women’s Conference

We had a wonderful turnout at our annual Women’s Conference last month – thank you to all who attended, to our hosts at L’Etoile du Nord Vineyard, to our speakers and to La Ferme for providing a local foods lunch. We are one of several Farmers Union states to hold Women’s Conferences, which provide spaces for our women members to get to know each other, build relationships and grow as leaders. I look forward to seeing even more rising women leaders in our organization, in addition to those who’ve already made their mark.

Renewable energy events

July is a big month for our renewable energy work. We’ll hold our annual series of Renewable Energy Working Sessions at the end of the month in locations around the state. Programming Director Michelle Medina is putting those together, so contact her if you have suggestions for what you’d like to see in those sessions. Meanwhile, I was glad to be invited on a return trip to Germany with the University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment for another look at their rural renewable energy efforts. The delegation for this trip will include rural advocates and a bipartisan group of state legislators. I’m glad to participate and make sure farmers are included in discussions of how to keep advancing renewable energy.

Other upcoming events

County conventions are starting up again soon, if you can believe it. This is your time to make your resolutions for what we should pursue policy-wise as an organization. Make sure to attend yours – you’ll receive a postcard in the mail, and the conventions will all be listed on our website and Facebook page.

Lastly, we’ll be holding three more Rural Voices Discussions on Aug. 1 and 2 in northwest Minnesota. Join us at one of them and share what’s on your mind, and we’ll talk about it with elected officials at Farmfest the following week, where you can also visit us in our hoop barn near the main building.
Program delivery process. Part of a local decision making and farm of Agriculture. If elected, members become farm programs in their counties. Committee fair and equitable administration of FSA agricultural producers responsible for the administration of federal farm programs. Committees are comprised of locally elected administration of federal farm programs. For election purposes, counties are divided into Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). Each LAA nominates and elects one producer to serve a three-year term on the FSA county committee. A county committee is composed of three to eleven elected members from LAAs. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. To find out which LAA is open for nomination and election in 2019, contact your local FSA office. County committees may have appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Under-served producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.

MFU also works closely with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to fund programs like the Aggie Bond Loan Program and the AGRI Beginner Farmer Farm Business Management Scholarship. The Aggie Bond is a federal bonding program administered by MDA through the Rural Finance Authority, which offers affordable financing for qualified beginning farmers. The FBM scholarship helps beginning farmers access valuable Farm Business Management training, where they learn strategies that will lead to successful farming operations.

There are many ways that MFU advocates for our future farmers and what we want our rural communities to look like. With the present difficulties of access to land and capital, getting started in farming is a challenge that parents and grandparents have faced. They now deal with low prices and market uncertainty due to trade wars. MFU stands up for policies that will not only help family farmers to survive these tough times, but to thrive for generations to come. We will accomplish so much if we show our youth that they can continue the legacy of family farming, so let’s give them the tools and encouragement to succeed.

Some would say that you can’t put a price tag on the importance of our youth in agriculture, but I beg to differ. From toddlers obsessed with tractors to kids doing farm chores to teenagers driving tractors. And at some point, you hope that they come back to the farm to continue your legacy. Without this life cycle, it’s hard to keep family farmers on the land.

In these tough economic times, it can be hard to encourage your children to farm, but the older generations need encouraging, too. Our youth have strong desire to carry on family legacies. They can handle the tough times and know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Our youth are energized coming into their careers when often their parents and grandparents are exhausted from fighting the battles of farming throughout their lives.

We have many ways of engaging our youth in agriculture, including 4-H and FFA. Minnesota Farmers Union has programs such as Leadership Camp and day camps, the Torchbearer Award and scholarship offerings. Young adults can apply for the New Leader Academy when they turn 21. All of these are great opportunities that get young people involved in agriculture and rural leadership. You can find more information about each of these programs at www.mfu.org/education.

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FSA News and Views

By Dan Mahoney, CED Sibley County FSA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers and FSA program participants to take part in their local county committee election nomination process. Although the election won’t take place until November, the nomination period is already open.

County committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level. FSA’s county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

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To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.
Despite the Legislature’s adjournment, this month was a busy time for MFU’s policy team. Agencies began implementing programs created during session, and the state and federal governments moved through rule-making processes on issues important to family farmers.

On June 11, MFU President Gary Wertish joined Gov. Tim Walz, legislative leaders and representatives from various advocacy organizations for a ceremonial signing of SF1, the agriculture, housing and rural development finance bill. The agriculture bill provides a two-year budget for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and addresses several MFU priorities, including increased funding for rural mental health and Farm Advocates, increased funding for meat inspections, an initial investment in a soy research facility in northwestern Minnesota and funding for the DAIRI program, which provides financial assistance to farmers and other stakeholders, including MFU. The rule, also known as the Groundwater Protection Rule (GPR), includes two parts. The first restricts fall application of nitrogen fertilizer rule, aimed at reducing the risk of nitrates from fertilizer leaching into groundwater. This follows years of gathering input from farmers and other stakeholders, including MFU. The rule, also known as the Groundwater Protection Rule (GPR), includes two parts. The first restricts fall application of nitrogen fertilizer in specific areas of the state and will become effective on Jan. 1, 2020. The second seeks to promote best management practices and involve local farmers and agronomists in adopting Alternative Management Tools where additional action is needed and practices make sense on the ground. No regulatory action associated with part two of the rule will come about until at least 2022.

On the federal level, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced a change in policy that will allow farmers who plant cover crops on prevented plant acres to hay, graze or chop those fields starting on Sept. 1, instead of Nov. 1, without surrendering any of their prevented plant insurance payment. This change, which so far applies only to 2019, will help avoid feed shortages from excessive rain and flooding this spring. It reflects legislation proposed in the FEEDD Act, introduced by Congresswoman Angie Craig (D-MN02) and endorsed by NFU and MFU.

Significantly, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is holding a special sign-up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help farmers plant cover crops on lands affected by excess rainfall. The deadline to apply is July 12. Farmers should contact their local NRCS offices before planting to indicate interest in cost-share for planting cover crops.

On June 25, MFU Vice President Bryan Klabunde and other staff joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at a public hearing regarding the agency’s proposal to remove the gray wolf from the endangered species list and return the species to management by the state. Bryan spoke in favor of the proposal, as did many farmers and ranchers from throughout northern Minnesota. The public comment period goes until July 15. If you’d like to submit comments, visit www.regulations.gov.

As with during the legislative session, if you have any thoughts or questions about MFU’s policy work, don’t hesitate to reach out to me. ▲
MFU county conventions: policy from rural grassroots

Since the first local was organized in Jackson County in 1918, having a local presence throughout the state has been a hallmark of Minnesota Farmers Union. MFU has members in all of Minnesota’s 87 counties, and Farmers Union county organizations are active in 67 counties. Farmers Union county chapters are the base of our statewide grassroots organization. Voting members are a mix 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 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 advocate 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 78th Annual Convention, elect or re-elect a county president who serves on the MFU Full Board of Directors and elect or re-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 and email 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 2019? 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.
Farmers Union women demonstrate the power of community

By Brita Moore, Public Relations & Communications Director

Gathered in a room usually reserved for wine tasting, looking out over Lake Irene, many of MFU’s women members spent June 8 strengthening their bonds with each other and being inspired to lead in our rural communities.

Douglas County MFU members Polly Perkins and David Christianson, owners of the farm winery L’Etoile du Nord Vineyard in Parkers Prairie, generously hosted us for that day in their stunning setting, the sun shining on everyone. Our guest speakers shared stories, laughter and valuable information with us. A special thank you to each of them:

• Mary Nell Preisler, Director of Farmer-Lender Mediation, UMN Extension
• Whitney Place, Assistant Commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture
• Alana Petersen, former Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Tina Smith
• Karen Clark, Executive Director of the Women’s Environmental Institute and former State Representative

Mental health support resources were a significant topic of discussion. Mary Nell passed around a handout detailing the signs of stress and how you know you are suffering from stress. Whitney discussed the resources at MDA to address mental illness in rural Minnesota, and all participants received a card containing the Farm & Rural Helpline number. And, participants were reminded to check in on each other, their families, friends and neighbors.

Alana, who just recently retired from working with Sen. Smith, shared her story of how while growing up, she organized people in her neighborhood around election times. That passion for advocacy blossomed into a 25-year political career. She reminded the women of MFU that we all lead in our own ways, and we all have unique strengths we can learn from.

Karen retired from the State House after the 2018 legislative session. Growing up on a farm in southwest Minnesota, she made agriculture one of her main priorities while representing South Minneapolis in the Legislature. She introduced bills particularly supporting urban agriculture and helped her fellow legislators see the great cultural, racial and ethnic diversity of farmers in Minnesota. She remains a great friend to MFU.

Former State Rep. Karen Clark discusses legislation she sponsored to support urban agriculture.

We were lucky to have a camera crew on site from Twin Cities Public Television’s Almanac program. Kaomi Goetz, who hosts segments on the show featuring rural Minnesota, attended the conference as part of a story she’s working on about women farmers. She interviewed Alana, Whitney, MFU State Secretary Anne Schwagerl, Polly and me. We’ll share the episode with you once it airs.

As always, we made sure to serve food grown by local farmers, working with Minnesota Cooks™ restaurant La Ferme for a delicious lunch. After the end of programming, participants stuck around to taste the wine grown and made right on site at L’Etoile du Nord, while reflecting on all they’d learned that day.

The MFU Women’s Conference is a beloved tradition of our organization. We will continue working to embolden rural women to lead in their communities and come together to support Minnesota’s family farmers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Petition forms must be in the hands of the State Secretary by October 1, and a list of candidates will be included in the October Minnesota Agriculture, paper deadline permitting.
When Mark and Terri Thell moved to their current Wrenshall acreage in 1987, they faced the challenge of converting land previously used for growing cabbage into pasture and hay fields. Now with beef cattle, chickens, pigs, birdhouses and fruit trees, and relationships with chefs, a grocery store and community members, the 4 Quarters Holding farm family has undoubtedly succeeded.

Three generations farm together on their 640 acres, which proudly sport an MFU sign on the mailbox. Mark and Terri’s grandchildren Connor, Patrick and Kira can be found there often, moving cattle or building birdhouses. The root cellars that stored cabbage way back when still store the Thells’ own root vegetables and feed for their livestock. Belted Galloway and Red Angus cattle dot the landscape, about 170 in all, including cows, calves, yearlings and a few bulls. Young broiler chickens chirp inside their coop, excited for the day they’ll get their feathers and go into the pasture themselves. The pigs come running excitedly when a family member enters their barn, especially Kira. Such is a spring day at 4 Quarters Holding.

**Commitment to the local**

The Thells have based their operation in direct marketing to individuals, caterers, the Duluth Grill and The Organic Carrot natural foods store. Their relationship with Duluth Grill owner and chef Tom Hanson earned them a spot in the 2012 Minnesota Cooks™ calendar, as well as the Twin Cities Public Television show Farmers & Chefs of Minnesota, the predecessor of Farm Fresh Road Trip. Chef Hanson cooked booya with them out in the field with their beef and vegetables from a nearby community-supported agriculture operation.

In a way, this marketing gives them a small-scale supply management system.

“I send a letter out to our customers the first of May and ask how much they want, and we raise it accordingly,” Terri said. “At least we know if we need to raise 500 or 1,200. Our regular customers are priority.”

Customers can request any amount of meat they want, or combinations of different types of meat. Their products aren’t certified organic, but Mark said that their growing methods meet the criteria for certification. The demand from the Duluth Grill is more cyclical, depending on the time of year. Grandma’s Marathon increases demand.

“They’ll take 600 pounds of ground beef from us in a week instead of 400,” Mark said.

The Thells also are committed to processing their meat as locally as possible. They process their beef at Lorentz Meats in Cannon Falls, pork at McDonald’s Meats in Clear Lake and chicken at Nelson Shine in Brainerd. Terri mentioned that Nelson Shine chicken isn’t state inspected anymore, due to a decrease in the numbers of state inspectors. Fortunately, custom inspection works for their direct-marketing operation, but it’s an issue that MFU is working to address, so farmers have access to the meat processors they need.

**Farm background**

Mark grew up on a farm in the vicinity of his current land, and he and Terri started their own farm on 20 acres in Esko.

“We had an apple orchard there, Apple Hill Farms was our name,” he said. “And we had some beef cattle and some pasture, and some cattle at my parents’ place, plus we made hay.”

They bought the 4 Quarters Holding land in 1986 and moved there in 1987. “We’ve never forgotten the day they started moving cows over, as it’s the same as Terri’s birthday.”

“That year, the grass was high and the dandelions were blooming in April. It’s never occurred since.”

They’ve seen changes in the environment over the past 20-plus years, including the die-off of bats and wetter autumns. Lately, however, it’s been quite dry, in contrast to southern Minnesota.

In addition to the grandkids, Thell sons Joe and Jim are active in the farm operation as well. Jim lives a few miles away and farms with them, while Joe buys animals from them. Their daughters Kristy (mom of Connor, Patrick and Kira) and Tanya live nearby as well. Jim is especially helpful with his expertise in diesel mechanics, as he takes care of the farm equipment. But Mark said he wants to teach the grandkids to work on it, too.

**Making the MFU investment**

While Mark was working at a paper mill, one of his co-workers brought in copies of Minnesota Agriculture. He read the paper and was encouraged to become a member of MFU in the 1990s, and he got to know former MFU Vice President Dennis Sjodin. Now he’s the Carlton County President.

Ever since then, the Thells have been making the most of their investment in membership. They’ve made connections in their community and engaged with the farming community, building trust and relationships. That helped Mark win election to the Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District Board in the early 2000s, and, in 2018, to the Carlton County Board of Commissioners.

“If you’re going to be in public office, you have to have name recognition,” he said. “Call people up and ask them what they think about issues, and you can get credible answers.”

Membership in MFU also means being active in political advocacy. Property taxes and health care were two big issues they mentioned as particularly important to them.

“There would be a lot fewer people on small acreages if we didn’t have that assistance paying down our taxes,” Mark said. “On the Ag2School property tax credit that went from 40-70 percent, that’ll be a big help in rural districts.”

Both Thells worked off-farm, Mark in the paper mill and Terri as a special education teacher, so they’ve always had access to health care. But they empathize with young farmers and families who don’t.

“When you think of young families trying to cope with these medical bills, you can’t sit there with that and student debt and think you’re going to be able to invest in your property and your farm,” Mark said. “That is the biggest issue we as a country face.”

“The CSA farms around here, they’re very small,” Terri added. “They have to pay for insurance with such limited income.”

These both have been important issues to MFU for a long time, as we want to see all farmers prosper on their land and get fair prices for their labor. The investment that the Thell family and all of you have made in your MFU membership makes that reality a bit more possible.
MEET THE 2019 CAMP STAFF

Minnesota Farmers Union Leadership Camp is affordable and open to everyone! It’s all about helping young people become good citizens by planting the seeds of responsibility, leadership and cooperation in an environment where those qualities can grow and flourish.

Hi, my name is Katie Brown and I’m the Head Counselor for the 2019 Camp season! I’m from Corcoran, Minn., and I’m a recent graduate from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities with a degree in agricultural education. This fall I’ll be the Minnewaska Area Schools agriculture teacher and FFA advisor. I’m so excited to be coming back as a counselor for the second year. I grew up on a hobby farm where I developed a love for chickens and agriculture. I was never involved with MFU before last summer, but I can’t imagine my life without it now.

Greetings! My name is Matt Shaver and after seven summers as a camper, two summers on the Youth Advisory Council, five summers as a counselor and camp director, I have returned to camp, after a brief seven-year retirement, as a Curriculum Specialist. I have been a middle school teacher in Boston, and my hometown of Minneapolis for seven years. My hobbies include walking my rescue lab Charlie, going on adventures with my wife Kristin, reading nonfiction and playing baseball with the Minneapolis Sea Donkeys. I’m looking forward to showing all these young counselors how we did leadership back in the early 2000s.

Hello, my name is Landon Remington. I’m from Saint Paul and I’m currently pursuing a double major in Psychology and Philosophy at Cornell College. I never went to MFU Camp as a kid, but I’m always interested in expanding my knowledge of the world. My hobbies are playing and listening to music, playing video games, running, writing poetry and reading. I want to be a counselor because I enjoy working with kids and I want to repay the generosity and warmth that my favorite counselors gave me at camps years ago.

Hi, I’m Eric Trogen, and I’m from Apple Valley. I’m 18 years old, and I’m going to be a second-year student at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. I’m studying to be an Instrumental Music Educator. I’m a percussionist, and music is a huge part of my life. MFU Camp has also been a huge part of my life. I was a camper for 10 years and spent an additional year on YAC. This year I’m coming back as a counselor because I want to give all the campers the same great experience I had going to MFU Leadership Camps. I can’t wait to see everyone at camp this year.

My name is Shelly Firchau. I’ve been a part of the MFU Leadership Camp organization for 20 years. This year I’m returning as camp coordinator for three camps. I’m an art teacher during the school year, and my hobbies are hiking, canoeing and any type of art or craft. I have a black lab and a Russian tortoise. I am very excited to spend more time at camp this year!

I’m Jade Person, from Oklee, Minn. I’ve been involved with Farmers Union youth programs for 8 years and have served on both state and national Youth Advisory Councils (YAC). I’m very excited to be a counselor this year as my counselors always made a positive difference in my life and I hope to do the same for the incoming campers. Along with camp, my passions include (but are not limited to): my cat, Cheeto; tubing; going to the movies; and making and drinking coffee and tea. I can’t wait to see what the summer holds.

My name is Desirae Hertling. I’m from New Ulm, Minn. I’m a senior at South Dakota State University pursuing a double bachelor’s degree in Natural Resource Law Enforcement and Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. I’m also getting a double minor in criminal justice and Range Land Ecology. I have been involved with MFU Camp for 12 years! I love the outdoors and exploring the beautiful world we live in. There’s so much to see in our country and our own backyards. I can’t wait to give campers the same experience I received when I was a camper. Some fun facts about me: I was on YAC the summer of 2017, I have a 2 lb. puppy named Chevy, my favorite color is pink, I love hiking, tubing, four wheeling, hunting and learning.

Hello, my name is Desirae Hertling. I’m from New Ulm, Minn. I’m a senior at South Dakota State University pursuing a double bachelor’s degree in Natural Resource Law Enforcement and Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. I’m also getting a double minor in criminal justice and Range Land Ecology. I have been involved with MFU Camp for 12 years! I love the outdoors and exploring the beautiful world we live in. There’s so much to see in our country and our own backyards. I can’t wait to give campers the same experience I received when I was a camper. Some fun facts about me: I was on YAC the summer of 2017, I have a 2 lb. puppy named Chevy, my favorite color is pink, I love hiking, tubing, four wheeling, hunting and learning.

My name is Kiefer Servin. I’m 19 years old and I went to camp for longer than I can remember, I also had the privilege of being on YAC for 2 years, which I feel has prepared me perfectly for a role as counselor. I’m very passionate about MFU and how it brings people together from all over. I’m very happy to be a part of that. I love music, and, just like many of the campers, I still love video games. I can’t wait to see what this summer brings.

My name is Marta Zurn and I’m from Benson, Minn. I’m currently a student at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities double majoring in Global Studies and German. I recently returned from a year-long study abroad program in Austria, where I studied European culture. During my time in Austria I taught English, and I’m very excited to bring the skills I have gained to MFU Camp. I attended camp for 9 years as a camper, and I’m excited to now be on the other side as a counselor. I wanted to be a counselor because camp was so special for me, and I want to return the favor to the campers of today. My hobbies include painting, alpine skiing and traveling.

My name is Kyra Gerst. I was born in St. Paul and lived in the Twin Cities for a year until my mother relocated us to Arizona. I lived in Arizona until 2014, when I moved back up to Minnesota. That summer, my aunt enrolled me and my brother in Minnesota Farmers Union Senior Camp. I attended Senior Camp for three years, then went to All-States. This is my first year being a counselor with MFU. I am a teacher’s aide at a childcare center in Maplewood. I plan to get a degree in elementary education. I love writing, and another dream of mine is to write books. I also enjoy reading, crafts/DIY projects, watching movies and television shows and spending time with my family.

For more about camp, see page 15.
I am pleased to announce that the New Leader Academy will continue this fall with Class Two. This program seeks to identify leaders within MFU and give them the resources and training needed to become active leaders in their communities and in MFU. We want to ensure that rural and urban communities, farmers and consumers have leaders who understand the agricultural landscape. NLA Class One has had an excellent year getting to know each other and growing as leaders, and we are excited for the next round to join us.

The New Leader Academy Class Two will kick off at the 78th Annual MFU Convention in November and end in September 2020 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 the Farmers Union triangle: Education, Cooperation and Legislation. These sessions will be held in different locations, urban and rural, so that participants can experience the diversity of our state.

MFU covers 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 their communities and helping sustain our local economies. This program was created 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, as well as lessons in advocacy that will help participants understand how the various levels of government form a community.

The class will include approximately a dozen selected individuals from Minnesota. MFU is looking for participants that come from various backgrounds and ages. Participants can be farmers, Farmers Union Insurance Agents, cooperative leaders, local food and urban food advocates, entrepreneurs and anyone looking to get more involved in MFU and rural leadership. The program does emphasize the history and role of Farmers Union in the topics addressed, and participants must become MFU members before the start of the kickoff session in November, if they aren’t already members at the time of application.

For more information, to recommend a participant for the program or to apply, please contact me at glen@mfu.org, (651) 288-4066 or visit www.mfu.org/new-leader-academy. The application is also online. Participants in the New Leader Academy must be 21 years of age or older by the start of the November kickoff session. There is no maximum age limit.

I married Marge Meier in July 1971 and we’ve lived on our family farm in rural Fulda ever since. We raised four children together: Jason, Nathan, Shannon, and Brent; and now we are spoiling our nine grandchildren. Marge and I enjoy working together on flower gardens around our home and at the Fulda Heritage property, planting and taking care of the Fulda Depot grounds as well as the Veterans Memorial Park by Fulda Lake.

Why is working with Farmers Union Insurance Agency and MFU important to you? Working with MFU and FUIA has offered a great opportunity for me to connect with the people that live and work in SW MN. I enjoy the people I get to work with, whom I consider friends, and it gives me great satisfaction to secure the correct coverages for their family and their businesses. The quality and availability of coverage opportunities we have through the Agency is a huge benefit to my present and future customers to meet their individual insurance needs.

What community organizations are you passionate about? I’ve been involved in many Civic organizations starting with 4-H in my youth and with my children. I was a MN Jaycee member for 15 years, and am a member of the Fulda Lions Club. In 2016 I joined the Fulda Heritage Society, a local nonprofit involved in preserving the nationally registered Historical Fulda Depot as well as other places in our area that preserve the rural heritage that makes up our community’s history.

Please tell us a little bit about your family life. I married Marge Meier in July 1971 and we’ve lived on our family farm in rural Fulda ever since. We raised four children together: Jason, Nathan, Shannon, and Brent; and now we are spoiling our nine grandchildren. Marge and I enjoy working together on flower gardens around our home and at the Fulda Heritage property, planting and taking care of the Fulda Depot grounds as well as the Veterans Memorial Park by Fulda Lake.

What is your #1 concern when reviewing and selling farm insurance? Working with farm customers is a great opportunity to create the right mix of coverages essential to meet the financial requirements of family and farm business. I always try to eliminate gaps in their protection, and many times during our review, we’re able to uncover areas my clients weren’t even aware needed coverage. It’s also important to keep communication lines open for any changes to their operations so we can make updates to their policies. We are a team, and working together we can protect and secure their family’s financial security and protect the family treasures.

Ted has been an Farmers Union Insurance Agent in Windom for 16 years, is the current President of Rock and Nobles County MFU, and serves on the FUIA Executive Board. Be sure to follow Farmers Union Insurance Agency on Facebook and Twitter at @MNFUIA, and visit our website at www.mnfuia.com for more information about our Agents and the insurance services we can provide. We are Trusted. Local. Committed. Photo © 2019 Katie Cannon Photography
A monthly update from National Farmers Union

This year, planting season has come with great uncertainty. Across the Midwest and Great Plains, a flurry of tornadoes and unseasonably cold and wet weather has delayed planting substantially, and many farmers are unsure they’ll be able to plant at all. On top of bad weather comes the uncertainty caused by escalating trade tensions. As key agricultural export markets dry up, it’s hard to predict which crops will be profitable come harvest.

However, there are at least two small bits of good news – USDA has announced an assistance package to support farmers who have been affected by international trade disputes, and EPA recently approved year-round use of E15 gasoline. Though neither will solve the current farm crisis, they will provide a little relief to farmers during this difficult year.

New round of MFP payments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released initial details for a new trade assistance package to support family farmers and ranchers struggling with oversupply and low prices due to escalating trade conflicts. The agency plans to allocate as much as $16 billion from the Commodity Credit Corporation for the package, including $14.5 billion in direct payments to producers of certain commodities through the Market Facilitation Program (MFP). Additionally, USDA has designated $1.4 billion for commodity purchases through the Food Purchase and Distribution Program (FPDP) as well as $100 million for the development of new export markets through the Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP).

USDA issued two rounds of payments via MFP to soybean, sorghum, wheat, corn, pork, dairy, cotton, almond and sweet cherry producers last fall. All those commodities are included in the new package, as well as other products affected by the trade war. Eligibility and payment rates depend on the commodity. Most commodity grain producers will be compensated based on a flat county rate multiplied by total acreage of those crops in 2019, not to exceed 2018 plantings. In contrast, most specialty crop producers will receive payments based on 2019 production while dairy producers’ payments will be based on historical production. Payments will be distributed in three separate tranches, with the first expected in late July or early August. If USDA determines that additional assistance is necessary, a second and third round of assistance may be implemented later.

National Farmers Union was encouraged by some of the improvements that the administration made over the previous trade aid package.

“We are pleased that USDA will be providing payments for a broader range of commodities than were covered under last year’s program,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “We also appreciate that producers of all covered commodities will receive equitable support.”

Though the USDA’s support is much needed, it will not provide long-term solutions producers need to earn fair prices.

“Our ongoing trade wars have destroyed our reputation as a reliable supplier and have left family farmers with swelling grain stores and empty pockets,” said Johnson. “The very least we can do is provide our country’s food producers with the certainty of a longer-term plan that also addresses the persistent and pernicious problem of oversupply.”

Kansas City named as new NIFA/ERS site

Ten months after introducing a plan to relocate two major agricultural research agencies, the USDA announced that it will move the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Economic Research Service (ERS) to the Kansas City region by Sept. 30. The initial proposal would have also realigned ERS under the Office of the Chief Economist, but USDA has decided to keep it under the Research, Education and Economics mission area. Current employees must decide by July 15 if they will either keep their jobs and move to Kansas City or find new jobs.

Due to its implications for the quality, quantity and objectivity of agricultural research, NFU has objected to the USDA’s proposal since it was introduced last August and has continuously urged Congress to halt the relocation process. Most recently, President Johnson submitted written testimony to House Agriculture Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research reaffirming the organization’s opposition.

“Farmers desperately need more objective, science-based research to face the many challenges of modern-day agriculture,” said Johnson. “So far, USDA’s process has done just the opposite. By moving these agencies farther away from policy makers, we are concerned that their research will be devalued and their influence diminished.”

The plan lacks support from agency employees. To try to delay the move, ERS and NIFA staffers voted 138 to 4 and 137 to 2, respectively, in favor of unionization. During a meeting with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, unionized employees stood up and turned their back to him in protest. Some members of Congress have dug their heels in as well; a draft of the House agricultural appropriations bill released in May would block the move. Additionally, legislators in both the House and Senate have introduced bills that would keep both NIFA and ERS in the nation’s capital.

Farmers Union urges climate action

The U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry held a hearing in May dedicated to climate change’s effects on agriculture. Four witnesses, including two farmers, a professor of animal science and former Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, presented verbal testimony on the effects of climate change on agricultural production and livelihoods; the role of agriculture in mitigation and adaptation efforts; and potential policy solutions.

President Johnson submitted written testimony, thanking the committee for addressing the deleterious effects of climate change on the agricultural industry, as well as emphasizing the need for policies that assist farmers in implementing practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon and build resilience to extreme weather events.

“Climate change is not a future or hypothetical issue for family farmers and ranchers – they (continued on the next page)
Dairy Revenue Protection (DRP) is a new risk management tool available to dairy producers to help manage downward price risk. It first became available in October 2018 and has gathered lots of attention and interest as producers are continually looking for risk management tools. Compared to some previous risk management tools, DRP is equipped to handle one of the dairy industry’s more challenging perils, price fluctuations. Since this is a product administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), like crop insurance, it’s subsidized; meaning in most cases, it’s more affordable than “put” options on the open market.

DRP is an area based insurance product insuring revenue (price x production). The production isn’t an individual’s production, but rather production by state multiplied by the elected quarterly contract price. DRP is sold daily when markets are open.

To elect a DRP Endorsement the producer must make 5 decisions:
• Value of the milk protected (CME Quarter Price);
• Amount of milk production to endorse;
• Coverage level (80-95 percent in 5 percent increments);
• Which quarterly contracts they wish to purchase; and
• Protection factors between 1 and 1.5 in .05 increments.

First quarter results showed that DRP can work. Early purchasers of DRP class III endorsements saw payments as high as $1.15 per cwt. The earlier the endorsement was taken, the higher the indemnity. This is consistent with what modeling has shown if historic scenarios are analyzed. If producers choose to endorse the furthest quarter out, the indemnities were more frequent and showed larger payments per cwt.

As class III milk futures have neared $17 per cwt, more producers have taken endorsements. This could be attributed to producers waiting to see how Q1 endorsements performed. If you have questions about DRP or other risk management options, contact your local Compeer insurance officer for answers.

Lucas Conmey is a State Insurance Product Officer with Compeer Financial. For additional insights from Lucas and the rest of the Compeer team, visit Compeer.com.

EPA finalizes year-round E15
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule that will permit year-round sales of gasoline blended with 15 percent ethanol, or E15. The rule’s finalization comes in time to allow for summertime use of E15 this year, but does not extend to higher blends of ethanol, such as E30.

Because high-level blends of ethanol like E15 play an important role in cutting into corn surpluses and creating markets for farmers, NFU has long advocated for policies that expand their use. President Johnson applauded EPA’s move to facilitate year-round E15 and urged the agency to expand on the achievement by promoting E30 in the future.

“While family farmers contend with slumping commodity prices and an overwhelming corn glut, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to implement policies that address both problems. Biofuels, which establish new uses and markets for agricultural products, are an obvious solution,” said Johnson. “Now EPA should take full advantage of all the benefits higher-level ethanol blends offer by expanding the use of E30 fuel. Not only would this support family farmers, but it would also create new jobs and economic growth in rural communities, lower fuel prices for American drivers, improve air quality and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.”

The Washington Corner can be found at www.nfu.org/corner.
How does the global connect to the local?

By Anne Schwagerl, MFU State Secretary

For the past two years, I have been traveling regularly with the World Farmers Organisation – Gymnasium program. Through this expansive educational and capacity-building program specifically for young and beginning farmer-leaders, I have gained experience advocating for family agriculture at the global level. My cohort has been an active participant in international events over the past two years including the United Nations Committee on Food Security summit in October 2017 and 2018, as well as the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin Germany in January 2018. Ahead of those summits we attended a lecture series presented by leaders in their fields, from Nobel Prize winners to the former head of the World Trade Organisation. My cohort is comprised of farmer-leaders from every continent (except Antarctica, ha!) and that global nature helps inform our conversations.

What has been surprising to me, and a very teachable moment, is that although our operations and scales of farming in our respective countries are highly variable, farmers globally are facing many of the same problems we face locally in Minnesota. We are all adapting to farming in a changing climate. We struggle to access land and capital. We’re all facing continued consolidation in the marketplace, from inputs to the choices for buyers of what we produce. We all need to have a voice at the table when policy decisions are made. This is true at the local, state, national AND global levels. When we travel to New York City this July for the United Nations High Level Political Forum, we will be representing farmers as a stakeholder in global conversations and policy decisions on sustainable development.

Minnesota Farmers Union and National Farmers Union continually work to make our voices heard at the state and national level when policy decisions are made. The same must happen at an international level if we are to confront global challenges like climate change and market consolidation. The World Farmers Organisation serves a similar role to the Legislative side of the Farmers Union triangle when global policy is discussed. Over the past two years, I have grown in my leadership skills and knowledge doing this global advocacy work and look forward to bringing these skills back to the work we do locally with MFU.

Certify your land, water and legacy for years to come

By Danielle Isaacson, Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Over 750 producers are water quality certified in Minnesota, and many of them are members of MFU.

There are numerous benefits available to water quality certified producers:

- Regulatory certainty: certified producers and landowners are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules for 10 years (the length of the certification period).
- Financial assistance: certified producers and landowners, and those seeking certification, can apply for a 75 percent cost share grant of up to $5,000 to implement practices that promote water quality. These grants are available to all certified producers annually.
- Recognition: certified producers and landowners receive a certification sign to display on their property and may use their certification to promote their business as protective of water quality.

The process to become certified is free and is led by local Soil and Water Conservation District staff. It includes a field-by-field and crop-by-crop risk assessment, along with a meeting and technical assistance from SWCD staff. On average, producers spend less than 10 hours on the certification process.

Check out the MAWQCP Story Map at MyLandMyLegacy.com to get to know some of the producers from around the state who are water quality certified. If you’d like to learn more, please visit MyLandMyLegacy.com or contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

New intern – Adam Schneider

Hello! My name is Adam Schneider and I’m the new intern at Minnesota Farmers Union. I’m from Shakopee, Minn., where I was very active in school helping lead clubs and organizations such as Amnesty International, Youth in Government, FIRST Robotics and my high school’s German Club.

I have also volunteered for several political campaigns that ranged from local to statewide and have worked with candidates from at least four different parties.

I’m currently studying environmental studies and political science at the University of Minnesota, Morris. During the school year, I work at the Center for Small Towns as a community program assistant, helping towns and organizations in rural Minnesota with marketing, community organizing, surveys and more. Last year, I worked with the Red Lake Nation to promote recycling and composting on their reservation. In my free time, I like to stroll around campus and in town.

I’m very excited to be working at MFU this summer to help represent farmers, their families and their interests!
UPCOMING EVENTS

July 15 • Crow Wing County Farmers Union meeting • noon • Northwind Grille, 603 Laurel St., Brainerd • FFI: Crow Wing County President Steven Koering at (218) 251-8650

July 21 • Aitkin County Farmers Union Picnic • 12:30 p.m. • Berglund Park, Palisade • Potluck meal – please bring your favorite dish! • FFI: Aitkin County President Markell Vogt at (218) 927-2215 or County Secretary John Grimsbo at (218) 845-2913

July 24 • Pine City Farmers Union meeting • noon • Pine City American Legion • FFI: Pine County President Kay Hills at (715) 635-9521

Rural Voices Discussions:
Thursday, Aug. 1 • Thief River Falls • 9:30–11 a.m. (Note: doors do not open until 9 a.m.) • Thief River Falls Public Library, 102 First St. E, Thief River Falls
Thursday, Aug. 1 • Fergus Falls • 2–4 p.m. • Lakes Country Service Cooperative • 1001 East Mount Faith, Fergus Falls
Friday, Aug. 2 • Little Falls • 9:30–11 a.m. • Initiative Foundation, 405 First St. SE, Little Falls

Summer Day Camps
Wed., July 10 • 9:30 a.m. –1 p.m. • Mahnomen County Day Camp • Klabunde Farms, 2843 140th Ave., Waubun • RSVP to Ann Lindblom, (218) 261-1188
Thurs., July 11 • 9 a.m.–1 p.m. • Prairie Oaks Institute Day Camp • Prairie Oaks Institute, 1200 W South Street, Belle Plaine • RSVP to Diana Rico, (651) 368-6247

Free 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 that meets the specific guidelines in accordance to the Limited Liability Law and a two-page guide to the law. 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.

Order MFU County Fair Kits!
Want to share the message of Minnesota Farmers Union at your county fair this year? We can help you!
Each year, MFU compiles county fair kits consisting of MFU logo items you can easily distribute at the fair, at no cost to you. You can either order a full kit, or individual items.

Some examples of items included in the kits:
• Chip clips
• Pens
• Jar openers
• MFU Brochures
• Carpenter pencils
• Copies of Minnesota Agriculture

County fairs bring together rural Minnesotans each year. Make it an opportunity to help people in your county learn more about MFU!
For more about county fair kits, contact MFU Programming Director Michelle Medina at michelle.mfu.org. The order form is available at mfu.org/mfu-county-fair-kits.
Please allow 2 weeks to receive your items.

Renewable Energy Working Sessions
Tuesday, July 23 • 3-6 p.m. • Doubling Thomas Farms, 12506 20th St. N, Moorhead • RSVP to Noreen Thomas at noreen.jo.thomas@gmail.com
July 24 • Lancaster (tentative)
July 25 • Aitkin (tentative)
July 30 • Marshall (tentative)
July 31 • Mankato (tentative)

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County Conventions
Dakota County • Thursday, July 25 • time and location TBD • FFI: Dakota County President Linda Larson at (612) 554-9963
Goodhue County • Monday, Aug. 5 • 7 p.m. • Area 57 Coffee Café, 125 Main St., Wanamingo • FFI: Goodhue County President Deborah Mills at (651) 764-0006
Redwood County • Tuesday, Aug. 6 • 4 p.m. • Gilfillan Picnic Area (just outside the Farmfest grounds), 28269 State Hwy 67, Morgan • FFI: Redwood County President Ted Suss, (507) 828-3377 or Cottonwood County President Brent Imker at (507) 430-3190

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MFU Leadership Camps
Go to www.mfu.org/camp to register.
Southern Elementary Camp (Ages 8-11) July 16-20 (Tues-Sat) • Sibley State Park (near New London)
Southern Junior Camp (Ages 11-14) July 22-26 (Mon-Fri) • Sibley State Park
Senior High Camp (Ages 14-18) July 28-Aug 2 (Sun-Fri) • Sibley State Park
FFI: Contact MFU Education Director Glen Schmidt at glen@mfu.org or (651) 288-4066.

Free 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 that meets the specific guidelines in accordance to the Limited Liability Law and a two-page guide to the law. 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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