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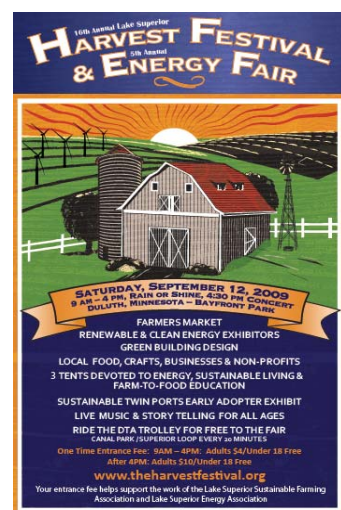
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2009 Harvest Festival Wrap-up

With most area meteorologists forecasting a good chance of showers, organizers of the 16th annual Harvest Festival and 5th annual Energy Fair were somewhat concerned about prospects for a successful festival. But, as has happened more than once in the past 16 years, the threat of showers evaporated, and blue skies and unseasonably warm conditions provided a nearly ideal day for the region's largest celebration of local foods and renewable energy practices. Held on September 12 at Duluth's Bayfront Festival Park, the event featured the area's largest farmers market; numerous renewable energy exhibits; green businesses and non-profit organizations; vendors serving locally grown food; local musicians; crafts fashioned by local artisans; activities for kids, including storytelling, and a variety of education classes in renewable energy and conservation, sus-

tainable living, and farm to food practices.

The festival expanded in a number of ways. For the first time, the sponsoring organizations, Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association and Lake Superior Energy Association, rented the entire grounds of Bayfront Festival Park. With plenty of extra space in the large open area near the bandshell, Kiwanis was able to continue their kite-flying event which has been run adjacent to the Harvest Festival for the past 6 years.



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Superior Grown Food Summit:



The demand for locally produced food is growing and has already far outstripped supply. In response, LSSFA members and local allies are working on rebuilding the capacity of our regional food system. The single biggest problem at hand is an insufficient number of producers. In a region that has moved away

A Conversation about our Lake Superior Food System

from agriculture in the past sixty years, the obstacles faced by would-be farmers are daunting: low pay, high health insurance costs, lack of first-hand experience, escalating land prices, inadequate processing and transportation infrastructure, unavailability of specialized, affordable equipment, and a narrowly structured marketing and distribution system.. As we slide down the back slope of world peak oil production, which appears to have happened in 2005, global-industrial food costs will most certainly rise, resulting

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2009 LSSFA

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LSSFA MISSION

The Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking. The organization is a participating regional chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

in further demand for food produced and processed in the western Lake Superior region.

Health care costs, still rising at an unsustainable rate, are already unaffordable for many. One contributing factor is treating for health problems resulting from the standard American diet of highly processed foods shipped over great distances. Revitalizing our local food system would have a significant impact on some of these health problems, and at the same time, provide an economic boost to an area suffering from the effects of the current recession.

Local food system efforts are cropping up all over the continent. In our region, the Superior Grown Food Summit will inform, energize, and coordinate our local food system efforts. The event will be held Saturday, November 14, from 9 am to 5 pm, in the UMD Kirby Ballroom. A locally harvested lunch will be provided. Registration is \$10. At the event, participants will learn more about the need for a local food system, discuss what steps they can take to achieve it, and clarify their goals and priorities. For further information, see below and the enclosed flier.

Superior Grown Food Summit Schedule of Events

8:30-9:15

Coffee, Registration, Poster Review

9:15-9:45

Welcome, Purpose and Overview

9:50-10:50

Foundations for a Food System in Transition

Overview of the Local Foods Movement
Maggie Adamek, University of MN
Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Foodshed Planning for a Locally Adapted Food System in our Region

David Abazs, David Syring, and Stacey Stark, University of Minnesota, Duluth

11:00-12:00

Platforms and Steps in Building Locally Adapted Food Systems

HomeGrown Minneapolis Initiative: Gaining Consent for Good Food—Julie Ristau, OntheCommons.org (pending)
Dane County Food Policy Council: What We Have Done, Where We Need to Go
Representative of Dane County, WI Food Policy Council

Cont. 11:00-12:00

Platforms and Steps in Building Locally Adapted Food Systems

Farmers and Locally Adapted Food Systems

Rick Dale, Highland Valley Farm, Bayfield, WI

12:15-1:30

Local Lunch and Keynote Speaker

National Perspectives and Developments on Food Localization

Jim Slama, FamilyFarmed.org

1:45-3:15:

Breakout Sessions I: Defining the Food System We Want

What We Value, What Changed, and What We Want Preserved

3:30-4:30

Breakout Sessions II: Drafting Attainable Food Goals

Citizen/Participant breakout session around Defining Partners, Pathways and Priorities for Action

4:40-5:00

Summing Up, Moving Forward

Enrollment Still Open for 2009-2010 Lake Superior Farm Beginnings Program

Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association (LSSFA) will be holding its second Lake Superior Farm Beginnings (LSFB) course in Cloquet MN starting November 2009. Registrations will be accepted through the end of October. The course is for aspiring and beginning farmers, as well as experienced farmers wishing to make a fresh beginning using sound business planning, new marketing ideas, and sustainable farming methods. The program draws a diverse audience: enterprises in poultry, diversified vegetables, beef, hogs, Community Supported Agriculture, meat and dairy goats, organic grains, cut flowers, honey and more. Participants find this diversity exposes them to approaches and enterprises they would not have otherwise considered.

Original intentions were to hold the course every other year, but the interest in a 2009/2010 offering far exceeded expectations. Before this newsletter went to print, the class size was already large enough to justify coordinating the participation of the diverse parties that goes into making up a successful program: farmer educators, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Northeast MN Sustainable Development Partnership, Carlton, Bayfield and Cook County Extension, Community Action Duluth, Land Stewardship Project and LSSFA.

Farm Beginnings is a farmer-led educational training and support program to help people evaluate and plan their farm enterprise. Participants engage in practical, high-quality classroom workshops and on-farm field sessions, network with a variety of successful, innovative farmers, and receive resource materials. Classes begin November 7 and meet 9 times into the spring on weekends and evenings. Winter topics include goal setting, financial management, business plan creation, Holistic Management, alternative marketing and more. In May 2010, sessions move out into farm fields across NE MN and NW WI for 10 optional field sessions planned around participant enterprise interests and key farm production topics.

Lake Superior Farm Beginnings provides essential

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Become a Member...or Renew Your Membership Today!

By becoming a member of the Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association (LSSFA) you will be supporting the work of the Association to create a more sustainable food and farming system for our region. You will receive the *Farm & Market News*—a quarterly newsletter of LSSFA to “keep you posted” about sustainable agriculture events and happenings in our region. You will also receive the State of MN Sustainable Farming Association Newsletter, *The CornerPost*.

One Year Membership - \$30

CONSIDER A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

Already a member and want to further help build LSSFA's capacity—consider giving a tax-deductible contribution of \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25 to help LSSFA fulfill its mission.

Gifts of any size are welcome and appreciated.

Name

Farm/Business/Organization (please list products produced if applicable)

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone

Email

I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities with LSSFA.

Annual Membership (\$30) \$ **30**

Tax Deductible Donation \$ _____

Total Support \$ _____

**Please send a check payable to
Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association
310 Chestnut Ave—PO Box 307
Carlton, MN 55718**

Farming Sustainably Makes the Most Sense

By Barb Adams

Chad and Stephanie Coffey say they are surprised at how “easy it is to find people to buy our produce.” The Coffey’s home is named “Naked Veggie Farm.” They grow “different” kinds of veggies -- leeks, shallots, unusual potatoes and tomatoes, Japanese squash, Italian zucchini -- and as Chad said, the least of their struggles has been finding customers. This year they had enough to sell at the UMD Farm market on Wednesdays and also from their farm.

Chad and Stephanie moved here from south/central Wisconsin about 10 years ago. They joined LSSFA and gardened to feed themselves. They bought 36 acres outside of Two Harbors, with the idea of someday growing enough to sell to others. A year ago they decided to take the plunge. What spurred them to pursue growing more and selling?

“Unemployment” says Chad -- an unpleasant condition -- but things have turned out well so far. Stephanie has kept her full time job, and Chad takes odd jobs. They both enjoy working outside in their fields and are planning to continue and expand.

Sustainable methods in farming “make the most sense,” says Chad. They like not having to rely on agribusiness to provide something they can provide for themselves. They compost for fertilizer, save seeds and, while they are not certified organic, they grow in accordance. It is “important to take care of the land” – this is why they try to farm sustainably.

The most difficult part of this new venture, Chad says, is not having a regular paycheck and not always knowing what to do. Both he and Stephanie have read extensively, taken short classes and gone to workshops but probably the best learning has come

FARM BEGINNINGS (Continued from page 3)

information and firsthand knowledge through networks of like-minded farmers, with mentoring by those actually doing it. The program helps farmers develop a solid business plan that enhances their quality of life goals - a plan factoring in sound environmental practices while being economically viable. The program can also help remove the sense of isola-



Chad and Stephanie with their son, Oscar.

from conversations with other growers.

They enjoy meeting and talking with people at

the UMD Farm Market. Sometimes they get together with other growers in their area to trade a surplus for something that didn’t grow as well.

In the future, the Coffeys plan to expand their greenhouses and develop a dependable composting system. They have been pretty successful at keeping the deer away this year with a new solar-powered electric fence around a more distant field (this came as a much-appreciated gift from family). Chad says they always could be more organized, and he plans to do more with offsetting plantings next year. He tries to keep a diary of what is planted when and how it grew each year. They have been saving seed and want to do more of that in the future.

Chad would advise someone interested in farming to read and plan as much as they can before beginning. “There’s a lot of information out there,” he says.

Chad and Stephanie live on Naked Veggie Farm, outside of Two Harbors, with their 3 ½ year old son, Oscar. If you have questions about their produce or would like to talk with them, call Chad and Stephanie Coffey at 218.834.6035 or email chdcoffey@gmail.com

tion by developing a lifetime community of support. Making a go of it in farming today is a challenge. However, a growing group of farmers are showing that through the use of low-cost techniques, creative marketing and whole farm planning, one can develop a farming operation that is economically viable and provides a good quality of life.

Tent spaces were expanded to accommodate a growing number of exhibitors in the Energy Fair and vendors in the farmers market. Class offerings were greatly expanded and included some people prominent in their field of specialty: wild foods expert Sam Thayer came from Ogema, WI and entertained overflow audiences with presentations on “Harvesting and Using Wild Food” and the “A to Z of (Wild) Food Preservation.” Chris Schneider, well-known to Wisconsin Public Radio listeners as the “Hybrid Guru”, shared his expertise on the subject of zero oil, no emission vehicles.

After most portions of the festival had shut down, an evening concert featuring nationally known performer Greg Brown was held with the waterfront as a backdrop, and the setting sun adding a stunning color contrast (but creating some challenges for Greg as well as opening act Rachel Kilgour). Fitzer’s Brewhouse sold a locally-brewed beer during the evening concert, marking the first time in our sixteen-year history that any kind of alcohol has been served. Discussions are already underway for a special Harvest Festival label beer for 2010 which can be sold at next year’s evening concert as well as before and after the festival. If all goes well, some locally produced ingredients like hops and barley will be included in the brew.

While the nearly ideal weather and thoughtfully redesigned layout brought big smiles to the faces of most attendees, there were complaints about some of the changes. Until this year, admission to the festival had always been free, and although the sponsoring organizations tried to publicize this change as much as possible, there was some grumbling about the cost, particularly after some of the same people had just paid \$5 for parking in a lot that had previously been open to the public for free. The number of booths at the farmers market increased by 50%, and this factor, combined with the new fees and a still-soft econ-

omy, were the likely causes of a noticeable decrease in sales for most of our local growers.

The decision to charge admission has been in the works for a number of years. Putting on an event of this magnitude is an expensive proposition, and as much of the available grant money dried up, LSSFA and LSEA found themselves in the position of depending almost entirely on sponsorships. A modest admission fee is the simplest solution to ensuring that the sponsoring non-profit organizations are able to sustain operations into the future and bring this popular annual event to the community. Construction at the DECC caused an unanticipated loss of free parking for fairgoers, and event organizers were unable to generate enough cash flow to purchase the parking rights from Duluth Economic Development Authority and Secret Service Entertainment. A generous grant from the Zeppa Foundation made it possible to bring Greg Brown to the community for a fraction of the usual ticket price, but the concert had no real connection with the \$4 admission fee. To soften the impact of the \$5 parking fee, all of which went to Secret Service Entertainment and DEDA, LSSFA managed to make arrangements for free DTA trolley service to the festival. Unfortunately, shortly before the event, the city extended parking meter fees to Saturdays in critical areas, and not enough attendees knew about the free shuttle to make it an effective alternative.

Planning and discussion are already underway for the 2010 Harvest Festival and Energy Fair. Those who wish to get involved, either as volunteers or to provide input on planning, should contact the coordinator at info@lakesuperiorfarming.org or make arrangements to attend the LSSFA annual winter business meeting or one of our regular board meetings. Those who are hoping to see changes next year might also consider attending city council meetings, lobbying the mayor or council members, or writing letters to local newspapers.



Cree Bradley sharing her experiences running a vegetable CSA farm near Two Harbors.

SFA Member Cree Bradley Honored

Farm Beginnings facilitator Cree Bradley, LSSFA chapter board secretary and a CSA market gardener, was honored recently by the Carlton County Soil & Water Conservation District as their Conservation Educator of the Year for her role in bringing Farm Beginnings to the Lake Superior region.

Long-time SFA member Mark Thell, an SWCD Supervisor who was instrumental in initiating the effort to make Farm Beginnings available in our area, presented the award, thanking Cree for her efforts which will enable more farmers to care for our land and water. SFA board member Karola Dalen, a Natural Resources Conservation Service Grazing specialist who also played a key role in bringing Farm Beginnings to the area, recounted Cree’s hours of work coordinating students, instructors, grants, and cooperating agencies to make Farm Beginnings a rousing success. Congratulations Cree!

Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association
PO Box 307—310 Chestnut Avenue
Carlton, MN 55718-0307
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US POSTAGE

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DULUTH, MN

**JOIN OR RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP
TODAY!**

The date on your mailing label indicates the expiration date of your membership. If there is no date, you have received a complementary copy and we ask you to consider joining our membership to help fulfill our mission.

**See PAGE 3 for a
membership &
donation form.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Superior Grown Food Summit

Saturday, November 14—9AM to 5PM

UMD Kirby Ballroom—See *Front Page Story and Schedule on Page 2 for More Information*

Farmers Take the Stove

Tuesday, November 17—6PM to 8PM

Peace United Church—1111 E. 11th St, Duluth

Tickets Available at the Door: \$10 Adults,
\$5 Children between ages 10 –5, children under 5 free.

Don't miss this annual scrumptious Potluck Style Dinner with local foods, prepared by local farmers, and a Superior silent auction comprised of great prizes!

To donate a dish made of local foods, contact Joel Rosen at 218-389-3306 or email plf@g.com. We are looking for large quantities of a single dish but anything you can contribute is welcome.

To donate an item for the Silent Auction, please contact Kelly Smith at 218-879-3829 or kellythegreenman@yahoo.com. Crafts, baked goods, and chocolate items are always popular. Do you have skill you could donate? Do you have a connection with a local business that would donate items? Let us know!

All proceeds from Farmers Take the Stove benefit the work of the Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association.

Superior Grown Directory Update

Superior Grown received a nice boost in image and marketing due to the fantastic t-shirts and tote bags bearing the logo that were sold (like hotcakes) at the Harvest Festival. Help continue to spread the word about Superior Grown!

All new farmer listings and updates are now complete at www.superiorgrown.org. Please visit the website to view your farm! Remember that online listings can be edited and photos can be added at any time by contacting LS-SFA.

For those of you interested in being listed in the hard-copy Superior Grown Directory, this project is on hold until this winter when both farmers and the organization have more time to build a complete directory for the 2010 growing season. We are still accepting directory forms and will file them until this project goes to print next spring.

To fill out and submit a directory form for both online and hard-copy directories, visit www.lakesuperiorfarming.org or contact info@lakesuperiorfarming.org or 218.393.3276.