

Healthy Local Food



EcoExperience · Minnesota State Fair 2014
Summary Report

Summary

The 2014 Healthy Local Food exhibit of the Minnesota State Fair ran from Thursday, August 21-Monday, September 1st. Organized by Renewing the Countryside, the 2014 exhibit theme was "Grow a Farmer," and was housed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's EcoExperience. Approximately 265,000 visitors attended the EcoExperience exhibit during the 12 day event.

Purpose:

Educate the community on what it takes to create a successful farm business in Minnesota. The Grow a Farmer exhibit focused on the challenges new and young farmers face in accessing good farmland, securing traditional financing, understanding farm law and reaching new markets. The exhibit explored the hurdles as well as the rewards of entering our food economy.

Audience:

Demographics of visitors attending the EcoExperience exhibit were similar to those attending the State Fair as a whole. Demographics differed in that visitors who were white, highly educated and made over \$75,000 were particularly attracted to the EcoExperience. Additionally more women than men attended the EcoExperience while fewer families with two children planned visits to the exhibit hall.

Partners:

Whole Foods Market,
HealthPartners,
Peace Coffee

Volunteers:

Over the course of the fair, nearly 120 individuals volunteered to assist with cooking demonstrations, sampling local foods, and overseeing the children's activities.

Healthy Local Foods Presented by:



Healthy Local Foods Partners:



With additional support from: Coop Partners Warehouse, Eversharp Knives, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

The Cooking Demonstration Stage was provided by Domain Architecture & Design, Dakota Surfaces and Warners' Stellian Appliance Company.

Exhibit Description

The Grow a Farmer Exhibit highlighted the obstacles the next generation of food producers face. Through poster displays, the exhibit explained common challenges, misconceptions, and solutions farmers regarding, capital, market and land access, as well as profitability and risk management. Attendees also had the opportunity to draw and write answer to on chalkboards and hangtags throughout the exhibit. Questions ranged from “Where do you buy local foods?” and “Why do you buy local foods?”, to “What is your favorite fruit or veggie grown in Minnesota?” to “Leave a message of encouragement for a farmer!”



CAPITAL ACCESS

- Issue** For beginning farmers access to capital continues to be limited.
- Myth** Banks are loaning money to small businesses at record low interest rates.
- Reality** Many young farmers don't have the equity or collateral needed to qualify for those low interest bank loans. With skyrocketing school loans, land prices, and many banks unfamiliar with small farm financing and you see a tightening of credit markets for beginning farmers.
- Solution** Consider investing in a beginning farm by purchasing a CSA share.

Cooking Demonstrations

Three 30-minute cooking demonstrations took place per day at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm featuring healthy and creative recipes with locally sourced ingredients.

Kids Activity Area

The kids activity area included a nutrition trivia wheel and healthy eating coloring worksheets designed and provided by HealthPartners YumPower team. Children also got to race local vegetables down the Veggies Grand Prix, race track. Super veggie and Grow a Farmer temporary tattoo and weekly veggie trackers were additional giveaways for youth.

Host Station

During the first 11 days of the fair local host organizations welcomed visitors to the exhibit and introduced them to their organization's support new and aspiring farms, and a healthy local food system.

Host Station Schedule	
Date	Organization Name
Thursday 8/21	Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services
Friday 8/22	Sandbox Center for Regenerative Entrepreneurship
Saturday 8/23	Koby Seed Sages
Sunday 8/24	Minnesota Food Association
Monday 8/25	HealthPartners
Tuesday 8/26	Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services
Wednesday 8/27	Hmong American Farmers Association
Thursday 8/28	Cornercopia Student Organic Farm
Friday 8/29	Land Stewardship Project
Saturday 8/30	Do it Green! Minnesota
Sunday 8/31	Renewing the Countryside/Feast Local Foods Network
Monday 9/2	Do It Green Minnesota!



Perennial Plate Video

Clips from the first season of Perennial Plate, an online weekly documentary series, was screened twice each evening starting at 7pm. The documentary featured Chef and Activist, Daniel Klein and Co-producer/Camera girl Mirra Fine on their travels exploring the global food system. Season One took place over a calendar year in Minnesota. While watching the documentary attendees has the opportunity to sample local popcorn drizzled with local fbutter, a new addition to the evening program this year. Whole Grain Milling of Welcome MN provided the popcorn and the butter was from Rochdale Farms.

Prize Drawing

Names and email address were collected and entered to win a local food book. Twelve winners (one for each day of the fair) were selected randomly at the end of the fair and prizes were mailed to them. Books were donated by Eggplant Urban Farm Supply, Minnesota University Press, Red Balloon Book Shop, and local author Beth Dooley.

Cooking Demonstration Schedule			
Date	Company	Recipe	Chef
Thursday 8/21	Whole Foods Markets	Fresh Pasta with Heirloom Tomatoes and Herbed Gremolata	Chef Ani Loizzo
Friday 8/22	Whole Foods Markets	Rice Noodle Salad with Oil Free Pesto	Produce Associate Team Leader Sean
Saturday 8/23	Whole Foods Markets	Zucchini Lemon Cookies	Chef Ani Loizzo
Sunday 8/24	Whole Foods Markets	Zucchini Pickles	Chef Ani Loizzo
Monday 8/25	Mendoberri Cafe and Wine Bar	Apple Strudel	Chef Robert Uhrich
Tuesday 8/26	Birchwood Cafe	BLT with Sweet Corn Chipotle Coulis	Chef Marshall Paulsen
Wednesday 8/27	Sarah's Topsy Pies	Sara's Topsy Pies presents Pie Pops and Pie Pals	Chef Sara Hayden
Thursday 8/28	Whole Foods Markets	Eggplant Caponata	Chef Ani Loizzo
Friday 8/29	Whole Foods Markets	Bison Chili	Meat Team Leader Derek
Saturday 8/30	Whole Foods Markets	Zucchini and Sweet Corn Fritters with Romesco	Chef Ani Loizzo
Sunday 8/31	Whole Foods Markets	Watermelon Tomato Gazpacho	Chef Ani Loizzo
Monday 9/1	Sioux Chef	Smoked Turkey Wasna; Wild Rice Flatbread; Mixed Berry Wojapi; Wild Purslane Iced Cedar/Maple Tea	Sean Sherman



CSA Showcase

During several days of the fair, local Community Supported Agriculture farms engaged visitors who wanted to learn more about farming and CSAs.

CSA Station Schedule		
Date	Farm	Location
Saturday 8/23	Savory Spring Farms	Wisconsin
Sunday 8/24	Treasured Haven Farm	Rush City, MN
Sunday 8/31	Lacey"J"Ranch	Zimmerman, MN
Monday 9/1	Wozupi Tribal Gardens	Prior Lake, MN



Sampling Station

Local food samples were handed out all day, every day. Many local food producers and businesses donated their products, and Co-op Partner Partners Warehouse donated additional local foods for sampling.

Conclusions

Overall the 2014 Healthy Local Food exhibit was a success, engaging a large audience around the challenges new farmers face, and opportunities to eat local and healthy food options. New additions to the exhibit, like Peace Coffee's daily presence handing out coffee samples in the morning, and popcorn sampling in the evening, greatly added to the exhibit. Moreover, many individuals donated their time as volunteers, and many farmers, both small farms as well as regionally known producers, donated their products for sampling. For 2015 Healthy Local Food exhibit, we are looking forward to continuing to build strong partnerships and deepen our collaboration with the community.



Sampling Station Schedule		
Date	Food Item(s)	Company/ Producer
Thursday 8/21	Edemame	Sno Pac, Caledonia, MN
Friday 8/22	Peanut Butter	Buddy's Nut Butters, Minneapolis, MN
Saturday 8/23	Sauerkraut	Artisan MN Saurkraut, Arden Hills, MN
Sunday 8/24	Labore Farms Lettuce	Way of Life Gardens, Wells, MN
Monday 8/25	Vinegars	Clover Valley Farms, Duluth, MN
Tuesday 8/26	Apples/Jams	Hoch Orchards, LaCrescent, MN
Wednesday 8/27	Grass fed beef	Thousand Hill Cattle Company, Cannon Falls, MN
Thursday 8/28	Hand pies	Sara's Topsy Pies, Oak Park Heights, MN
	Juice	Zula Juice, Bloomington, MN
Friday 8/29	Wild Rice, Maple Syrup	White Earth, White Earth, MN
Saturday 8/30	Elderberry Juice	River Hills Harvest and Minnesota Elderberry Cooperative, Upper Midwest
Monday 9/1		





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