Healthy Local Food Exhibit

Artisan Grains Exhibition

Minnesota State Fair | Eco Experience
2019 SUMMARY REPORT
ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

The 2019 Healthy Local Food Exhibit told the story of Artisan Grains of Minnesota—a story that winds its way from local farms to millers, bakers, cereal and snack maker, malters, brewers, and consumers.

Often, interest in local foods has focused on vegetables and fruits, milk and cheese, honey and maple syrup. Some of us seek out local meats and eggs. Yet the one food group that is found at most every meal and could make the biggest impact on our landscape is grains.

From ancient grains to the crops of the future, fair goers were able to see and taste the quality, flavor and nutrition of these delicious foods, all the while learning about the environmental benefits provided by regenerative, artisan grain production.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) curates the Eco Experience. Fair attendees can explore interactive exhibits and watch shows and demos. The Eco Experience provides inspiration and resources for fair attendees to continue individual and community efforts to address environmental issues and engage more deeply with the environment.

Exhibit Components:

- A series of educational displays that used a combination of farmer profiles, photos, facts, and engaging activities.
- Three daily cooking demonstrations. Celebrated local chefs and foodmakers offered tips for cooking with artisan grains and how they can elevate your cooking.
- Daily sampling. Each day we sampled foods from local farmers and foodmakers, who focus on sourcing their ingredients from local grain farmers and processors.
- Kids activities. Children and families raced vegetables down our Veggie Grand Prix; played food trivia and “Guess the Vegetable.”
Our Healthy Local Food exhibit featured educational interactive displays. The 2019 Artisan Grains exhibit shared information on: the local foods movement, regenerative agriculture, the grain food system web, as well as grain and farmer profiles! Below and on the next page are a few examples of the posters we shared. The full set of posters can be viewed at: renewingthecountryside.org/mn_state_fair
What is Regenerative Agriculture

Our current agricultural system is very productive. It is in a testament to how good management, science, and technology can make a radical difference in how much food, fiber, and energy crops we can produce. But farmers and agriculturalHave to come realize that increasing yields and efficiency to increase production—whether it is bushels of corn or pounds of cucumbers per acre— is not a sustainable system.

Crops are grown within a larger system, and that system, if not managed thoughtfully, can become degraded and unproductive. To compensate, we often turn to short-term fixes like adding more fertilizer or using more pesticides. These fixes, in certain conditions, can cause unintended harm to our lakes, rivers and groundwater, and to pollinators and wildlife.

Regenerative agriculture is a term that is gaining popularity. It isn’t a specific type of farming, but rather an approach that works in step with nature and takes into account the complex interconnections of agriculture with the broader ecosystem. It uses science, technology, and good management practices to develop productive agricultural systems, but considers not only crop productivity, but things like soil health, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water management, and resilience. Rather than depleting the land, this approach aims to regenerate it.

Forever Green Initiative’s Small Grains

The Forever Green Initiative, led by the University of Minnesota, is developing new cropping systems including small grains that have the potential to break term profitability and provide environmental benefits.

Currently, our Midwest agricultural landscapes are dominated by corn and soybeans. While these crops can grow from seed to mature plant in a couple of months, their downside is that for the rest of the year the land is bare. Bare soil is a problem because topsoil can be blown or washed away, rain can cause runoff that carries nutrients into our waterways, and pollinator habitat is absent for critical parts of the year.

The Forever Green crops, which include winter annuals and perennial, solve this problem by providing continuous living cover throughout the year.

- Winter annuals are planted in the fall, after summer annuals have been harvested, and grow in the off season when soils would otherwise be bare. Examples include cereal rye, pennycress, winter barley, and cover crops.
- Perennials grow year-round. Examples include kernal, perennial fescue, and perennial sunflowers.

These systems are working! Researchers are breeding new winter annual and perennial crops, working with farmers to test these crops in the field, and evaluating the economic and environmental benefits of these systems.

Both Dooley’s Kitchen

Both Dooley is a James Beard Award-winning author and a seeker of great ingredients. She learned about kernal from her husband at the Bethesda Cafe who were some of the first to get samples of the grain to experiment with in cooking and baking. Both were intrigued, both for the culinary opportunities and because of the potential for perennial crops like kernal to regenerate our land. Her interest led her to the University of Minnesota where she has dived into learning about all the Forever Green crops and is testing them in her Farm to Table cookbook, “The Forever Green Kitchen.”

View the rest of the displays online at: renewingthecountryside.org/mn_state_fair
At the Sustainability Stage, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) curates presentations to encourage sustainable living. In addition to their daily presentations, we host three, 45-minute cooking demonstrations at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. We invited 12 Minnesota-based chefs and researchers to share information about their food, organization, restaurant, or business, and teach techniques for using artisan grains and other fresh, local ingredients.

**Pictured in order, left to right:**
Aug. 28: Beth Dooley, Beth Dooley’s Kitchen
Aug. 23: Carrie Riggs, Alma: Cafe, Hotel and Restaurant
Aug. 26: Christopher Sarles, Lowertown Bakehouse
Aug. 24: Lachelle Cunningham, Chelles’ Kitchen LLC
Sept. 2: Hannah and Brady Barnstable, Seven Sundays
Sept. 1: Mark Schiller, Loon Liquors
Aug. 30: Mark Augustine, MPLS Public Schools | Culinary and Wellness Services
Aug. 27: Joe Williams, Pizzeria Lola
Aug. 22: Misen Luu, University of Minnesota - Food Science
Aug. 31: Hai Truong, Ngon Bistro
Aug. 29: Saba Andualem, Urban Roots
Aug. 25: Gilbert Williams, Lonesome Stone Milling
EXHIBIT PARTNERS

Two of our exhibit partners, Seven Sundays and Peace Coffee, sampled their delicious products all 12 days of the fair! Seven Sundays served their sustainably sourced muesli made with local, artisan grains, and Peace Coffee sampled their organic, fair trade, shade grown and bike-delivered coffee.
EXHIBIT PARTNERS

HealthPartners PowerUp partnered with us on our Kids Activity area. PowerUp is a community-wide initiative to make it easy and fun to eat better and move more.

Activities included:
1. Identifying and then racing local vegetables on the Veggie Grand Prix
2. A "Try for Five" guess the vegetable game
3. A HealthPartners spin the wheel game with questions and activities promoting healthy eating and movement
4. A "head in the hole" selfie station where you can pose with Chomp, a YumPower carrot mascot
Volunteers

We could not have told the winding tale of Artisan Grains without the help of our many volunteers. This year, we had the help of over 150 volunteer shifts. Volunteers helped during our cooking demos, sampled food, ran the Kids' Activity area trivia wheel and "Veggie 500." Our volunteers greeted fair goers and encouraged them to participate in the exhibit.

Several of our volunteers have been with us at the Healthy Local Food exhibit for multiple years. 60% of our Volunteer Survey respondents are repeat volunteers--with 45% having volunteered at the Fair 4 years or more! When asked about their favorite thing about volunteering, our volunteers said:

"Seeing all the people come through the exhibit, many with a genuine interest in local, healthy food."

"I enjoyed interacting with attendees at the "spin the wheel" activity because it was a chance for authentic dialogue with the community."

"I enjoy talking to the kids that come to the spinning wheel. While most are interested in getting their bingo card stamped, I try to engage them on food related issues based on the wheel questions. I especially like it when the parents gain some insight when they hear their kids' comments. It spurs a discussion."
LOCAL FOODS SAMPLING STATION

To help raise awareness of local food, samples were offered each day at our sampling station. During morning and afternoon shifts, nearly two-dozen local farmers, producers and businesses donated their products and shared their stories. Other times of day, volunteers handed out samples of local foods donated from the Twin Cities based food distributor, Co-op Partners Warehouse.

Samplers:
- August 23rd - Whole Grain Milling Co.
- August 24th and 25th - Lonesome Stone Milling
- August 26th - Nomi Snacks
- August 27th - KAKOOKIES
- August 28th - Bare Honey
- August 29th - Grandma's Gourmets LLC
- August 30th - KellyG's Inc.
- August 31st - Squash Blossom Farm
- September 1st - GUSTOLA GRANOLA
- September 2nd - 3 Bear Oats

Co-op Partners Warehouse Samples Donated from:
- Featherstone Farm
- Harmony Valley Farm
- Ridgeland Harvest
- St. Croix Valley Growers
2019 in PHOTOS
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EXHIBIT DISPLAYS

a special thanks to MCAD

2019 was our second year partnering with Background Stories founder and Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) professor Arlene Birt. Students in her Human Factors course at MCAD helped design our display and some new interactive components, like a wheat berries guessing game and a hunt for the malted barley activity.
2019 NUMBERS

6 record breaking attendance days

1 new attendance record for all 12 days

2,126,551 total state fair attendees

267,893 total Eco Experience attendees

Over 150 volunteers shifts at the Healthy Local Foods Exhibit

6 grains featured in the exhibit displays

26 local food businesses or organizations participated

~89,600 samples shared

HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD EXHIBIT PARTNERS

[Logos of HealthPartners, powerup, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Artisan Grains Collaborative, Go-Op Partners Warehouse, Seven Sundays, Peace Coffee, McKnight Foundation]