

## Farmfest promises mix of exhibitors, forums and demonstrations

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GILFILLAN, Minn. -- Minnesota's largest outdoor farm show promises another great year of exhibits, forums and demonstrations.

Farmfest is Aug. 7-9 at Gilfillan Estate in Redwood County. Show hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 7 and 8 and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 9. Admission is \$7 per person for those 18 and older. Parking is free.

Farmfest became an annual tradition in 1982. Prior to that, it was held sporadically in different locations in Minnesota.

Since 1994, Farmfest has been held at Gilfillan Estate, near the corner of Highway 67 and County Road 13. The event attracts more than 35,000 people from Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Gilfillan Estate was willed to the Redwood County Historical Society to be kept in memory of Charles Oswin Gilfillan, who gifted several buildings in the area. His father, Charles Duncan Gilfillan, purchased 13,000 acres of land in Redwood County and raised livestock for export to Great Britain.

The estate comes to life during Farmfest with public tours, horse and buggy rides and root beer floats. Old-time engines and antique farm machinery will be on display. Threshing, shelling and grinding demonstrations are held. Volunteers will be churning butter and weaving rugs.

Next door to Gilfillan Estate will be the state's largest display of what's new in farm equipment.

More than 500 companies exhibit their latest and greatest on more than 50 acres. Grain carts, hay-making equipment, strip till units, harrows and hybrids will be on display. There will be the newest in precision agriculture, semi-trailer tarps, cattle handling equipment, lawn equipment, harvesting equipment, dairy equipment and fertilizer application equipment. Visitors will be able to see tractors and trailers, tools, tires, waters and woodburners.

Field demonstrations will be held daily on the east side of the show grounds from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Livestock demonstrations will be held daily at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Livestock Demo Tent at the north end of the show grounds.

About 40 acres are reserved for field demonstrations.

The field demonstrations include a sprayer ride-n-drive, a tractor ride-n-drive, mowing and ATV demonstrations and hay demonstrations.

Livestock demonstrations include information on chutes and other livestock handling equipment.

Make sure to visit the seed plots located just inside the Farmfest entrance gates. Twenty-one companies have seed plots at Farmfest this year, including: Albert Lea Seed House, Croplan Genetics, Crow's Hybrid Corn, Dahlco Seeds, Enestvedt Seed, Garst Seed, Gold Country Seed, Golden Harvest, Legend Seeds, Midwest Seed Genetics, Monsanto, Mycogen Seed, Na-Churs Alpine Solutions, NC+ Hybrids, NK Brand -- Syngenta, Pannar Seed, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Producers Hybrids, Stine Seed Company, Trelay Seed and Wensman Seed.

Make sure to register to win \$500 worth of biodiesel or E85. One winner will be randomly selected each day and two additional winners will be selected in a second chance drawing on Aug. 8.

If you go on Aug. 8, get there early for free pancakes. Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation is sponsoring a free pancake breakfast for the first 1,000 attendees. The breakfast is 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the forum tent.

After breakfast, stick around in the Forum tent. Kent Thiesse, Farmfest forum coordinator, has arranged a lineup of timely forums.

On Aug. 7, the 10:30 a.m. forum will feature Sens. Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar and Reps. Collin Peterson and Tim Walz talking about the farm bill. At 1:30 p.m. Arctic explorer Will Steger will talk about global warming.

On Aug. 8, "Farm Land Usage É Finding a Balance between Production, Conservation and Development," will be the topic of the 10:30 a.m. forum. At 1:30 p.m., grain marketing strategies will be discussed and at 3:15 p.m., Minnesota's Agriculture and Rural Leadership program will be featured.

At 10:30 a.m. Aug. 9, Gov. Tim Pawlenty will talk about strengthening rural Minnesota's economic future. He will be joined by Bev Durgan from University of Minnesota Extension, Jack Geller from the Center for Rural Policy Development, Steve Wenzel from USDA Rural Development, and Dan McElroy, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Each day, the Linder Farm Network will broadcast the Noontime Ag Jamboree live from the Forum Tent with special guests the Great Pretenders. The all-male singing group also performs at 9:45 a.m. each day in the forum tent with an afternoon performance at 2:45 p.m. on Aug. 7 and 8. They will entertain during the Farm Family of the Year recognition.

Farm families of the year will be recognized at 1:30 p.m. Aug. 9. The award, given annually by the University of Minnesota, honors families who active in their communities and have a commitment to agriculture.

The ever-popular family living programs continue this year in the craft and toy tent. There will be a Master Gardener Q&A panel, financial information sessions and sessions on women's health issues. The craft and toy tent also offers a variety of unique homemade items and farm toys for sale.

New this year are helicopter rides. Passengers can get a birds-eye view of Farmfest from a Hawk Eye Helicopter. Flights run from 8 a.m. to dusk Aug. 7-8 and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 9. All flights will depart from the east parking lot. Cost is \$35 for adults for the five to 10 minute flight and \$30 for children 12 and younger. Each flight can hold up to three passengers.

Tickets can be purchased at the ride site. Hawk Eye will donate 10 percent of their proceeds to Pheasants Forever.

Another new event this year is the Outdoor Sports Showcase. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 7 and 8 and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 9. It is located adjacent to the Farmfest site. It features presentations, outdoor exhibits, a climbing wall and a land owner's help desk. The two main themes of the showcase will be conservation/habitat development and getting youth more involved in the outdoors.