

## Farmfest's Feature Forum lineup is exciting

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GILFILLAN, Minn. -- Farmfest will feature an exciting line-up of Feature Forums and a Farm Family of the Year Recognition Event, says Kent Thiesse, Farmfest Forum coordinator.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns will visit Farmfest Aug. 7.

Johanns will participate in the Feature Forum at 10:30 a.m. The forum is titled "The New Farm Bill .... Shaping the Future of Rural America."

"The opportunity to have secretary Johanns, House ag committee chair Peterson, and the other congressional leaders from Minnesota on a Farmfest forum at this stage of development of the next farm bill is outstanding," said Thiesse.

Forums will be held Aug. 7-9 in the Forum Tent on the show grounds located at on Gilfillan Estate. The show site is 7 miles southeast of Redwood Falls.

Thiesse said the Forum schedule has a heavy emphasis on national and state agriculture policy issues and will focus on strengthening the rural economy in Minnesota.

It will feature special forums on the 2007 farm bill, global warming and developing future land use policy.

All forums will provide ample time for audience questions, and follow-up discussion by panel members.

The "The New Farm Bill.....Shaping the Future of Rural America" is the featured Forum on Aug. 7, at 10:30 a.m.

The Forum Panel will feature the four members of Minnesota's congressional delegation who serve on the U.S. Senate and U.S. House ag committees.

Seventh District Congressman Collin Peterson is the chairman of the U.S. House ag committee, which also includes 1st District Congressman Tim Walz. Sens. Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar serve on the U.S. Senate ag committee.

Will Steger, world-famous Arctic explorer, will keynote a special afternoon Forum titled: "Global Warming ..... Agriculture's Role in Finding Solutions."

The Aug. 7 forum begins at 1:30 p.m. Steger will draw on his vast travel experiences to provide an overview on the potential impacts of global warming. A Response Panel will provide their agricultural solutions to address the impacts of global warming.

The Response Panel will include Gerald Tumbleson, Martin County farm operator, who serves as National Corn Growers Association Board Chairman; Mark Willers, CEO of MinWind Energy in Luverne; and Loni Kemp, senior policy analyst for the Minnesota Project.

"Farm Land Usage . . . . Finding a Balance between Production, Conservation, and Development" is the title of the feature Forum on Aug. 8, at 10:30 a.m.

Future land use and zoning issues have become a major statewide and local policy issue in Minnesota and other Midwest States. The issues will be addressed during the forum. Minnesota Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau has been invited to keynote the Forum. The Response Panel will include Gene Hugoson, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture; Mark Holsten, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources commissioner; Perry Aasness, USDA State Farm Service Agency director; and Steve Taff, University of Minnesota agricultural economist.

A special grain and livestock marketing Forum is scheduled for Aug. 8, at 1:30 p.m. and is titled: "Grain and Livestock Marketing Strategies During Volatile Markets."

The Panel for the Forum will include four well-known marketing experts: Al Kluis, private grain marketing analyst; Mark Schultz, Northstar Commodities; Kent Beadle, Country Hedging; and Ed Usset, U of M grain marketing specialist.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty has been invited to keynote the feature Forum on Aug. 9 at 10:30 a.m. The forum is titled "Strengthening Rural Minnesota's Economic Future." Those invited to participate in the Response Panel for this Forum include Steve Wenzel, USDA Rural Development state director; Dan McElroy, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development commissioner; Colleen Landkammer, Blue Earth County Commissioner and president of the National Association of Counties; and Bev Durgan, Dean and Director of the U of M Extension Service.

The "Farm Family of the Year" Recognition Program is also planned. More than 60 farm families from throughout Minnesota have been selected at the county level for this recognition. The event will be held Aug. 9, at 1:30 p.m. in the Forum Tent. The event is sponsored by Farmfest and the University of Minnesota.