

Southern Minnesota Organic Crops Day Tuesday, March 27, 2018

University of Minnesota Extension will host its Thirteenth Annual Southern Minnesota Organic Crops Day, an educational event for current and transitioning organic crops farmers. The event will be held in Owatonna at the Steele County Community Center.

University of Minnesota Extension's Thirteenth Annual Southern Minnesota Organic Crops Day to be held in Owatonna

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(February 20, 2018) — University of Minnesota Extension's Thirteenth Annual Southern Minnesota Organic Crops Day will be held Tuesday, March 27th at the Steele County Community Center, located at 1380 South Elm Avenue in Owatonna, next to the Steele County Fairgrounds. This program aims to provide current, transitioning, and future organic crop producers with additional tools and knowledge to help their operation succeed. Registration starts at 2:30 p.m. and the program begins at 3:00 p.m. There is a cost of \$15 at the door to help offset program expenses, including an organic meal. A discussion led by a panel of experienced farmers will follow the lineup of speakers and our all-organic supper.

This event offers a broad range of topics applicable to organic row crop production. Several of the presentations emphasize integrating diversity into organic farming systems. Elaine Evans, University of Minnesota Extension Educator, will discuss how to incorporate habitat for insect pollinators in a row crop system.

Solar energy is becoming a feasible option for use on farming operations, and Fritz Ebinger, University of Minnesota Extension CERTs Rural Energy Development Program Manager, will review how to make solar energy work on an appropriate scale for a farm setting.

Attendees will also learn about the contract options that Seneca Foods Corp offers in Minnesota, specifically for organic sweet corn and green pea food crops. Perry Caspers, Ag Manager at Seneca Foods, will discuss these organic contract options.

Weed control is an issue on many Minnesota farmers' minds, and weed control can be more complex in organic production. Ryan Miller, University of Minnesota Extension Crops Educator, will discuss weed biology and will touch on weed control options in an organic system.

Our featured speaker, Kathleen Delate, Iowa State University Professor and Extension Organic Specialist, will discuss improving soil health and crop yields by using cover crops and reduced

tillage in an organic system. She will highlight recent research on incorporating reduced tillage and cover crops, which are methods that have proven somewhat challenging to implement in an organic system. Kathleen will discuss how these methods are possible and beneficial in organic row cropping.

This event is sponsored by Albert Lea Seed, Grain Millers, and SunOpta in cooperation with University of Minnesota Extension. Pre-registration is not necessary, but it is requested for a meal count. For more information or to pre-register, contact Extension Educator Claire LaCanne at 507-444-7691 or lacanne@umn.edu.

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