



HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD EXHIBIT

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR • ECO EXPERIENCE

2021 SUMMARY REPORT

For over a decade, Renewing the Countryside and partners have curated a food-related, interactive educational exhibit at the Eco Experience—the award-winning sustainability expo about healthy and sustainable living at the Minnesota State Fair.

Theme: Climate Change and Agriculture

The consequences of rising global temperatures are showing all around us, with ever-increasing effects on farmers, agriculture and the future of our food supply. This exhibit showed creative ways farmers and others in the food sector are adapting and fighting back, as well as things one can personally do to work against climate change.

We explored the relationship between climate change and agriculture, and shared how responsible soil and water management, grazing, continuous cover, and the prevention of food waste can play a role in helping mitigate the climate crisis. We highlighted stories of innovative farmers, foodmakers and organizations who are building successful businesses and tackling the climate problem head-on.

The Fair was held from Aug. 27th through Sept. 6th, 2021. Components included an informative display, kids activity area, three daily cooking demonstrations, and our local food sampling station. The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to nearly every aspect of the exhibit. With safety in mind, and a desire to return to our event after having cancelled in 2020, the exhibit went on successfully.

Soil Health



Importance of Soil Health:
Healthy soil is critical for producing healthy crops. Creating a balance of minerals and nutrients in the soil leads to strong and healthy plants and good food.¹

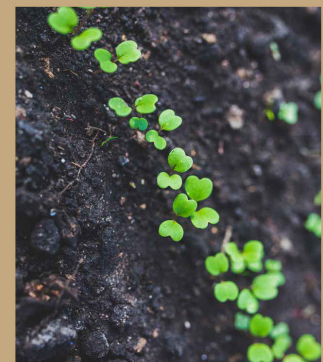
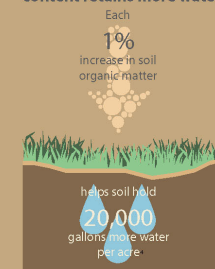
Natural Fertilizer:

One solution to helping soil is cover crops! Cover crops help keep the soil safe and prevent erosion while helping fertility. Making and using compost can be very beneficial for your home garden. Decomposing organic matter has lots of nutrients that help soil thrive. If you have a home garden, rethink using harmful pesticides that could harm the soil and other organisms.²

Agriculture and forestry together are estimated to account for 10.5 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. This can be balanced by crop management practices that increase carbon in agricultural soils and sustainable forest management.³



Soil with high organic matter content retains more water.



Sources: 1- Foodprint.org 2- UMN 3- USDA ERS 4- USDA NRCS
Photos: Top- Adobe Stock Bottom- Pexels(Kaboompics.com)

One of the 19 exhibit display panels

Made possible by Healthy Local Food Exhibit Partners





2021 Numbers

1.3 million attendees to the Minnesota State Fair.

86,823 visitors toured the Eco Experience.

Activities hosted for **144 hours** over **12 days**.

48 volunteers filled for the Healthy Local Food Exhibit amounting to **168 volunteer hours**.

24 cooking demonstrations took place on stage.

More than 20 local farms, food businesses, and organizations represented.

Nearly **10,000 local food samples** were provided to fairgoers.

Cooking Demos on the Sustainability Stage

The Sustainability Stage sits at the heart of the exhibit and is shared with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, who schedules hourly presentations meant to encourage sustainable living. We host three 45-minute cooking demonstrations on the stage daily at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. In 2021 we invited local food organizations, foodmakers, and farmers to share recipes, techniques, and talk about their efforts to build a healthier, more sustainable food system. Four of our demonstrations did not appear for reasons related to the COVID 19 pandemic. Masks were optional for socially distanced presenters on our stage.

Demonstrations (as originally scheduled)

Aug. 26 Patrice Johnson, author, *Land of 10,000 Plates*

Aug. 27 Ryan Brown and Mel Meegan, Peace Coffee

Aug. 28 Beth Dooley, Author, *The Perennial Kitchen*

Aug. 29 Tony DiMaggio, Sacred Blossom Farm

Aug. 30 Ruhel Islam, Gandhi Mahal's Curry in a Hurry

Aug. 31 Saba Andualet, Urban Roots

Sept. 1 PowerUp with HealthPartners

Sept. 2 Kyle Oglesby, Daddy Sam's All Natural Sawces

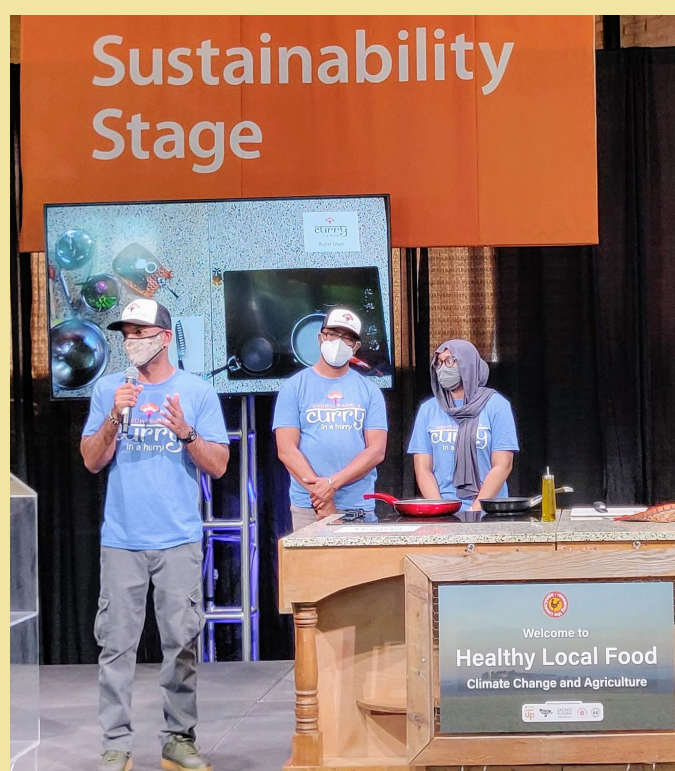
Sept. 3 Lucas Rosenbrook, Alma Cafe and Wine Bar

Sept. 4 Lachelle Cunningham, The Good Acre, VoCul

Chelle's Kitchen / Healthy Roots Institute

Sept. 5 Monica Jimenez, Chocolate San José

Sept. 6 Julie Wong, UFisheries



Volunteers

Volunteers are the “face” of our exhibit, welcoming fairgoers, supporting the cooking demonstrations, and prepping and passing out local food samples. In 2021, with of our reduced hands-on activities and the need for greater social distancing, we trimmed volunteer shifts by two-thirds. Because of this, we gave volunteers from past years priority to sign up first. Shifts filled very quickly and of the 48 individuals who signed up to volunteer, more than 35 had volunteered for the exhibit in two or more previous years. Volunteers were required to wear masks and were protected by a plexiglass barrier at our sampling station.

Volunteer quotes:

“Thank you for the opportunity to volunteer with Renewing the Countryside, it is always my favorite day at the fair.... I hope to see you again next year!”

“I had a blast and I love our tradition of volunteering each year. Thank you!”



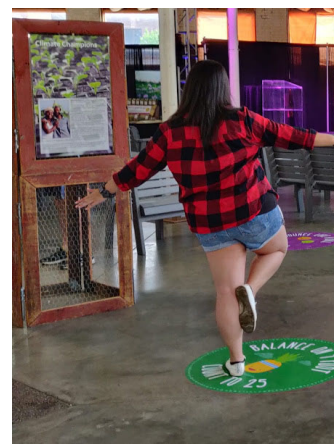
A volunteer helping fairgoers with the PowerUp Try for Five challenge

Kids Activity Area

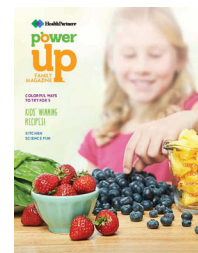
Our partners HealthPartners curated brightly colored and engaging, self-directed activities from their PowerUp campaign, encouraging children and families to eat well and move more.

Activities included:

- A fruit and vegetable identification activity featuring common and less familiar varieties
- Floor decals with PowerUP activity moments, prompting activities promoting movement, stretching and balance.
- “True or False” questions about nutrition and exercise.
- A video kiosk featuring short healthy cooking videos aimed towards children and parents and the Chomp Stomp dance.
- Fruit and veggie character cutouts to pose with for selfie photos.



All participants were encouraged to take away a PowerUp magazine filled with recipes, activities, experiments, mazes and games.



Local Food Partners & Climate Change Champions



Muesli makers and certified B corporation, **Seven Sundays**, returned for each day of the Fair to share their passion for local grains, agriculture and delicious cereal. A true Climate Change Champion, Seven Sundays directly supports sustainable and organic farmers, uses responsible packaging, and prevents food waste with upcycled ingredients.

SACRED BLOSSOM

living herbal teas

Joining us for all 12 days, Farmer Tony DiMaggio's display and demonstrations taught about his innovative polyculture systems, intensive cover cropping, and long term sequential no-till plantings which boosts soil health and sequesters carbon. His hands-on approach allows him to select the best herbs for **Sacred Blossom Tea** and prevents the need for using herbicides or pesticides.



Local Food Sampling Station

We offered Fairgoers the chance to sample the farm-fresh local foods at our sampling station. Produce was provided by **Co-op Partners Warehouse**, who supports sustainable farms and foodmakers throughout our region with their extensive distribution infrastructure. The sampling station was also possible by our local food partners, **Peace Coffee**, **Chocolate San Jose**, **Daddy Sam's**, and **Velvet Bees**.





Masks are not required for those with disabilities or special health needs.

COVID 19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unusual challenges to planning and hosting the exhibit. Planned during a time when Minnesota's case numbers were trending lower, it appeared that the fair would take place similarly to past years. Later, when Minnesota began to experience a surge in cases, we determined with our partners that the exhibit would go on with a number of safety measures and adaptations. Participants were required to wear masks, hands-on activities were replaced with self-directed, contactless options, food sampling activities were greatly reduced, and the exhibit area was spaced to allow for greater social distancing. Overall the fair's attendance was off 40% and our indoor exhibit's attendance was off 70% from our record high in 2019.

2021 Gallery



Climate Change & Agriculture

The consequences of rising global temperatures are showing all around us, with ever-increasing effects on farmers, agriculture and the future of our food supply.

This exhibit shows creative ways farmers and others in the food sector are adapting and fighting back, as well as things YOU can do to help in the struggle against climate change.

In this exhibit, we'll explore the relationship between climate change and agriculture, and share how responsible soil and water management, grazing, continuous cover, and the prevention of food waste can play a role in helping mitigate the climate crisis.

We'll share stories of innovative farmers, foodmakers and organizations who are building successful businesses and tackling the climate problem head-on.

Healthy Local Food Exhibit Partners

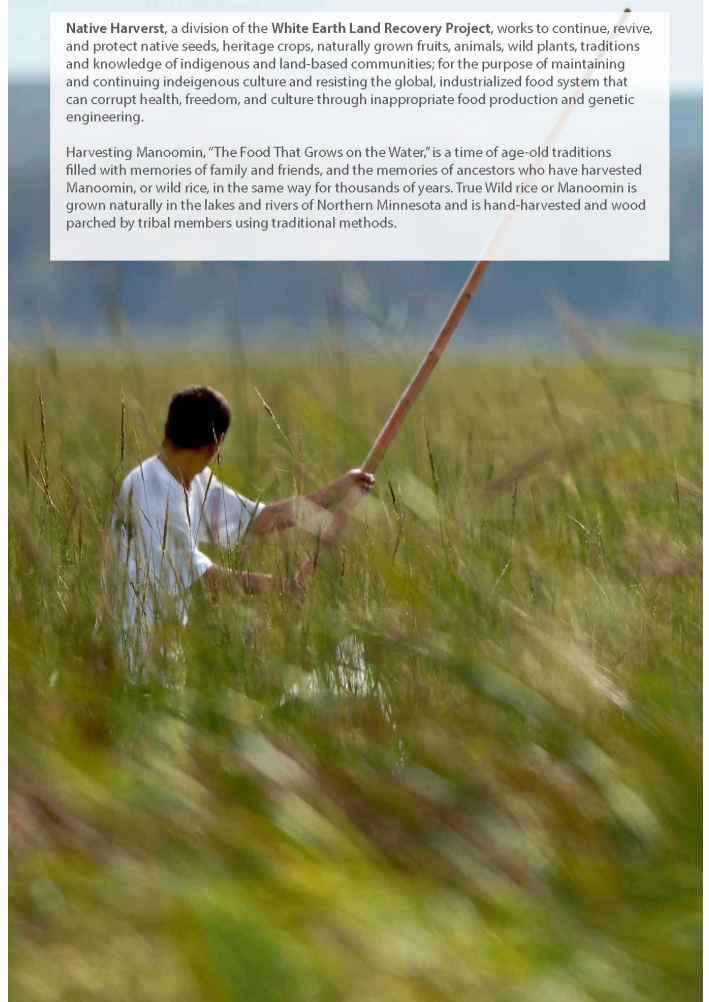


Made with support from:
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD SECURITY

Climate Champions

Native Harverst, a division of the **White Earth Land Recovery Project**, works to continue, revive, and protect native seeds, heritage crops, naturally grown fruits, animals, wild plants, traditions and knowledge of indigenous and land-based communities; for the purpose of maintaining and continuing indigenous culture and resisting the global, industrialized food system that can corrupt health, freedom, and culture through inappropriate food production and genetic engineering.

Harvesting Manoomin, "The Food That Grows on the Water," is a time of age-old traditions filled with memories of family and friends, and the memories of ancestors who have harvested Manoomin, or wild rice, in the same way for thousands of years. True Wild rice or Manoomin is grown naturally in the lakes and rivers of Northern Minnesota and is hand-harvested and wood parched by tribal members using traditional methods.







Special thanks to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota State Fair!



renewing the countryside
just. sustainable. vibrant.

