

## MinnesotaCooks

*Falcon Heights*--For many State Fair visitors, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is all about food. So what better place to highlight the connection between farmers and food than at the 12-day Minnesota State Fair.



The Minnesota Cooks program celebrates the diverse foods produced in Minnesota, and educates consumers about the importance of supporting locally grown food and agriculture

through discussions and demonstrations with Minnesota chefs, farmers, and celebrities. The 6th annual program was held August 26th with a breakfast show, then continued with stage presentations throughout the day.

Local chefs prepared dishes using locally-grown ingredients. The farmers who produced those ingredients were given the opportunity to talk about their farming operation and how they connect with local restaurants.

“There was a tremendous amount of interest at this year’s event,” says AURI Project Development Director Dennis Timmerman. “That reflects a heightened awareness among consumers about the source of their food. They can identify with producers and how their food is produced.”

Visitors to the event were able to sample such fare as roasted butternut squash creme brulee and chicken and grilled plum salad

Minnesota Cooks was created by the Farmers Union and is presented with cooperation from Food Alliance Midwest, and Renewing the Countryside, and with major sponsorship by AURI.

For information about Minnesota Cooks, please visit their website at [www.minnesotacooks.org](http://www.minnesotacooks.org).

## FarmfestRecap

*Gilfillan, Minn.*—Cool, comfortable weather, a generally upbeat ag audience and healthy political debates fueled strong attendance at Farmfest 2008.

With an estimated attendance of over 35,000 people for the three day show, the more than 500 exhibitors had ample opportunity to connect with Farmfest participants.

“Weather, the overall outlook of the agricultural economy and program opportunities always play a key role in getting people out to Farmfest,” says Dan Lemke, AURI communications director and coordinator of AURI’s Farmfest exhibit. “We were fortunate this year to have almost ideal conditions for the show.”

Political debates for several high-profile seats including U.S. Senate and Congress stirred lively debate, as did a forum focusing on the debate over food vs. fuel uses for agricultural products.



*Linder Farm Network broadcaster Lynn Ketselsen attracted a crowd as he autographed hats in the AURI Farmfest tent.*

“AURI has been a part of Farmfest for over 15 years because it provides us with a great opportunity to showcase what AURI is about, highlight projects that we’ve assisted and to hear from producers about ideas they have,” Lemke adds. “Plus, for three days, most of Minnesota’s agricultural industry is focused in one place.”

## MeatingNeeds

*Marshall, Minn.*—Minnesota’s animal product’s processing industry is a multi-million dollar industry with several large processors calling Minnesota home. But the state is also home to hundreds of small to medium-sized processors that are equally important. These businesses provide valuable services to livestock producers and are innovative in their efforts to develop new value-added meat products.

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## Needs continued...

Now this highly valuable meat processing industry has a new resource at their disposal. Carissa Nath has joined the AURI staff as meat technologist at the Marshall animal products laboratory. The Texas native holds a master's degree in animal science from South Dakota State University and served as coach of the SDSU meat judging team.

"I'm looking forward to working with a variety of different projects and helping to develop new products," Nath says. "Research and development was something that really attracted me about this position."

Nath has hit the ground running, working with processors on a number of projects including taste panels, new product development and meat handling issues.

AURI Executive Director Teresa Spaeth says "the animal product industry is very important to Minnesota and to AURI, so Carissa's expertise and enthusiasm for working with the state's processors is very valuable."



*Carissa Nath, who joined the AURI staff in Marshall, provides technical assistance to the state's animal processing industry.*



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