

FARM AID 40: MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Farm Aid 40 will take place Sept. 20, 2025, at Huntington Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This will mark the first time Farm Aid has brought its food and music festival to Minnesota.

The festival includes performances by:

- Willie Nelson & Family, Farm Aid President and Founder
- Neil Young, Board Member and Co-Founder, and the Chrome Hearts
- John Mellencamp, Board Member and Co-Founder
- Dave Matthews, Board Member, and Tim Reynolds
- Kenny Chesney
- Margo Price, Board Member
- Billy Strings
- Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats
- Trampled by Turtles
- Wynonna Judd
- Steve Earle
- Waxahatchee
- Eric Burton of Black Pumas
- Jesse Welles
- Madeline Edwards
- Wisdom Indian Dancers



Tickets are on sale now and available for purchase at FarmAid40.org. Ticket prices range from \$101 to \$390 (including fees, sales tax will be added).

Farm Aid 40 includes:

- **Generous Artists:** A unique blend of artists from many genres donate their performances and come at their own expense to shine a spotlight on family farmers and celebrate the many benefits they bring to all of us. More than 500 artists have performed on the Farm Aid stage since 1985.
- **HOMEGROWN Concessions®:** Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Concessions® features a delicious and fresh menu with ingredients that are grown or raised by family farmers who use ecological practices and are paid a fair price. Backstage, artists and crew enjoy HOMEGROWN Catering with the same farm-fresh standards. To meet the goal of a zero-waste event, all serviceware is compostable and a volunteer "green team" promotes composting and recycling throughout the venue.
- **HOMEGROWN Village:** Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Village features hands-on activities about the climate, soil, water, energy, food and farming.
- **Festivalgoers** will be able to access the entire Farm Aid experience through the official Farm Aid 40 mobile app, which will be available in August for iPhone and Android devices. Fans will be able to use the app to preview the HOMEGROWN Concessions® menu; learn the stories of Minnesota farmers; and make a personalized festival day schedule of music, workshops and conversations between artists and farmers.

Farm Aid's History

- Farm Aid was founded by Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp and Neil Young in response to the growing crisis facing American family farmers in the 1980s, known as the Farm Crisis.
- The inaugural Farm Aid concert, held on September 22, 1985, in Champaign, Illinois, marked a historic moment in the farm movement, raising more than \$7 million to support struggling family farmers. More

than 50 artists came together before a crowd of over 80,000 to highlight the urgent need to address the challenges farmers were facing, including skyrocketing interest rates, mounting debt, plummeting land values, crop failures and policies that drove farmers out of business. The Farm Crisis was the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression, with lasting impacts on our farm and food system.

- Since 1985, Farm Aid has become an annual festival that has raised more than \$85 million, featured performances by more than 500 artists who generously donated their time and talent, and championed policies that support family farmers, promote sustainable agriculture and strengthen rural communities.

Farm Aid's Ongoing Commitment

- Farm Aid's mission is to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America. We're best known for our annual music, food and farm festival, but the truth is we work each and every day year-round to build a system of agriculture that values family farmers, good food, soil and water, and strong communities.
- We know that to keep family farmers on the land we have to increase the number of people buying their good food. From our annual festival that features family farm food and unites farmers, artists and concerned citizens, to our inspiring and informative tv, radio, mail and online campaigns, we are building a powerful movement for good food from family farms.
- For family farmers to thrive, we must create more markets, giving more people the opportunity to access family farm food. Farm Aid fosters connections between farmers and eaters by growing and strengthening local and regional markets and working to get family farm food in urban neighborhoods, grocery stores, restaurants, schools and other public institutions.
- Since 1985, Farm Aid has answered 1-800-FARM-AID to provide immediate and effective support services to farm families in crisis. Farm Aid's [Farmer Resource Network](#) connects farmers and aspiring farmers to an extensive network of organizations across the country that help farmers find the resources they need to get started in agriculture, access new markets, transition to more sustainable and profitable farming practices, survive natural disasters, and build resilience to climate change.
- Farm Aid works with local, regional and national organizations to promote fair farm policies and grassroots organizing campaigns designed to defend and bolster family farm-centered agriculture. We've worked side-by-side with farmers to protest factory farms and inform farmers and eaters about issues like genetically modified food and growth hormones. By strengthening the voices of family farmers, Farm Aid stands up for the people upon whom we all depend.
- Over these 40 years and into the future, Farm Aid stands strong with family farmers and rural communities, advocates for policies that make farming more equitable, raises our voice with farmers to find solutions to climate impacts, and rallies against corporate power in our food system.

Current Issues

- A handful of corporations control our food from farm to fork, allowing them to manipulate the marketplace, pushing down the prices paid to family farmers and driving them out of business. The unbridled power of food companies also grants them increasing political influence over the rules that govern our food system, affecting both farmers and all of us who eat.
- For eaters, extreme consolidation leaves fewer choices in the grocery aisle and higher prices, while corporate-written policies create growing food safety concerns, food worker exploitation and less transparency in the marketplace. The COVID-19 pandemic provided us with a clear view of the failure of corporate consolidation as supply chains crumbled. Across the country, local farmers and local food systems demonstrated they are the best solution to a safe and steady food supply.

- Family farmers are all too familiar with the consequences of a changing climate that increases the frequency and severity of natural disasters like floods, droughts, wildfires and hurricanes. Decreased reserves of fresh, clean water are a consequence of these changing patterns.
- Our farm and food system is rooted in, and remains deeply entwined with, racism and injustice. Our vision of a transformed America in which family farmers and eaters are partners in a thriving farm and food system that benefits all is not possible without actively being part of the movement for justice.
- Farm Aid celebrates the incredible gifts and rich heritage of this land's many Native farmers and is deepening our relationship with and commitments to leaders at the forefront of the revival of Native foodways. Regenerative agriculture — largely seen as the best agricultural solution to lessen the impacts of climate change — comes from methods cultivated by Indigenous farmers, as well as Black, Latino and Asian American farmers, who are reviving and sharing their ancestral ways of producing food.

Minnesota Agriculture Facts

- According to data from the 2024 USDA Census of Agriculture, there are 65,351 farms in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, with more than 25.4 million acres of farmland. In the same year, the average farm size increased from 371 acres to 388 acres.¹
- University of Minnesota and Minnesota State data show that the median farm income for the state has dropped to \$21,964 in 2024, the lowest level in this century.²
- \$11.3 billion of the state's revenue comes from livestock and \$17.1 billion from crops, accounting for nearly \$28.5 billion in revenue total.³
- Minnesota's top agricultural products include corn, soybeans, hay and wheat.⁴

Innovations in Minnesota Agriculture

- In the past five years, Minnesota has had a 30% increase in the use of cover crops, which helps reduce erosion, improve soil health and improve water quality.⁵
- Minnesota is the leader in the food co-op movement, which embraces the idea of egalitarian systems of food distribution led by local communities. In the early years of the movement, during the 1970s, there were 60 co-op grocery stores in nearly half of Minnesota's 87 counties. Today there are more than 45 co-op grocery stores that source from 200 local organic farms.⁶

Threats to Minnesota Agriculture

- Rising temperatures, extreme storms and shifting ecosystems pose a threat to Minnesota agriculture. From 1895 to 2021, average minimum winter temperatures (December through February) rose by 7.3°F in northern Minnesota, 6°F in central Minnesota, and 4.9°F in southern Minnesota. Minnesota lakes have lost an average of 10 to 14 days of ice cover in the past 50 years, affecting lake and fish health, outdoor recreation opportunities, local governments and business owners.⁷

¹ Farm Flavor. (2024, May 23). *Top Minnesota agriculture facts from the 2024 Census of Agriculture*. <https://farmflavor.com/minnesota/minnesota-crops-livestock/top-minnesota-agriculture-facts/>

² University of Minnesota Extension. (2025, April 3). *Minnesota farm incomes decline again in 2024*. <https://extension.umn.edu/news/minnesota-farm-incomes-decline-again-2024>

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2024, February 13). *2022 Census of Agriculture: Volume 1, Chapter 1 – State Level, Minnesota*. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/minnesota/mnv1.pdf

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2024, October 17). *Minnesota state agriculture overview*. https://data.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=MINNESOTA

⁵ Kagan, A. (2024, February 29). *Glimmers of hope in the Census of Agriculture*. Minnesota Reformer. <https://minnesotareformer.com/2024/02/29/glimmers-of-hope-in-the-census-of-agriculture/>

⁶ Minnesota Women's Press. (2021, October 27). *Minnesota's history of co-ops*. <https://www.womenspress.com/minnesotas-history-of-co-ops/>

⁷ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. (n.d.). *Climate change impacts*. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/climate-change-impacts>

- Across the Midwest, winter and spring precipitation are projected to increase up to 30% by the end of the century. Average annual damages from increased flood risk in the Midwest are projected to exceed \$500 million by 2050.
- Flooding has cost Minnesota more than \$1.45 billion of damage to corn, soybeans, forage and other crops.⁸
- Food insecurity remains a persistent issue in Minnesota. A recent study shows that one in five Minnesota households can't afford the food that they need, which is 20% of the state's population.⁹ Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, food insecurity has surged by 40%.¹⁰

Food System Leaders in Minnesota

- [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#) (FLAG) is a nonprofit law center dedicated to providing legal services and supporting family farmers and their communities to keep family farmers on the land. In response to the Farm Crisis in the 1980s, after tens of thousands of families lost their farms, attorneys joined forces to help stop the foreclosures of 80,000 farms. This earned the attention of Farm Aid's very own Willie Nelson. Nelson invited these attorneys to the first Farm Aid festival and the next spring, the first funding check arrived from Farm Aid to help create FLAG.
- [The Land Stewardship Project's](#) (LSP) mission is to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop healthy communities. LSP is dedicated to creating transformational change in our food and farming system by building vibrant rural communities that are places of belonging and opportunity for all.
- The [Institute for Ag and Trade Policy](#) (IATP) works both locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure a fair and sustainable food, farm and trade system. IATP envisions agriculture, trade and food systems that are good for people, farmers and food system workers, ecosystems and social justice globally.
- Minnesota is home to 11 sovereign Tribal nations, composed of seven Anishinaabe reservations and four Dakota communities, each with a distinct government. Many Indigenous foods are native to Minnesota, like pumpkins, corn, squash, wild rice and more. Organizations like [NATIFS](#) work to rekindle and empower Indigenous food sovereignty through regional hubs that celebrate and elevate Indigenous culinary traditions.
- [Farm Advocates](#) provides one-on-one assistance at no cost to Minnesota farmers who face crises caused by natural disasters or financial problems. This program has been supported by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture since 1984 and stands as a model that other states could emulate to support family farm agriculture in their own state.
- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has created an [Emerging Farmers](#) program, the first of its kind nationwide, to diversify agriculture and create equitable access to farmland, capital and programs that support farmers. This program serves to advance the success of farmers who traditionally face barriers to the education and resources necessary to build profitable agricultural businesses, including women, veterans, persons with disabilities, people of color, Native people and immigrants.

⁸ Horn-Muller, A. (2025, March 28). *The \$20 billion question hanging over America's struggling farmers*. Grist. <https://grist.org/food-and-agriculture/the-20-billion-question-hanging-over-americas-struggling-farmers/>

⁹ Second Harvest Heartland & Wilder Research. (2025). *2024 Statewide Hunger Study: Findings from a survey for Second Harvest Heartland*. https://www.2harvest.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/mhh_2024-statewidehungerstudy_0.pdf

¹⁰ Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute. (2025). *Food Security Dashboard*. University of Minnesota. <https://hfhf.umn.edu/resources/dashboardintro>