



FARMAMERICA

Rooted and Growing

Expanding Minnesota's Center for Agricultural Interpretation

360-acres of educational opportunity, located in Waseca, heart of the GreenSeam

At Farmamerica, our mission is to:

CONNECT people with the evolving story of agriculture, starting with the first Minnesota settlers and continuing to today's farm families.

INFORM people about the diverse career paths within agriculture and about the impact agriculture has on our economy, workforce and in maintaining a safe, affordable food supply.

Help people **UNDERSTAND** how agriculture continues to provide our communities with food, fiber and renewable fuels in a more sustainable manner than ever before.



Farmamerica: Telling the Story of Minnesota Agriculture

Americans are increasingly concerned about how their food, fiber and fuel are sourced, however first-hand farming knowledge is in decline because farmers today make up only 2% of our population.

Places like The Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center (Farmamerica) are closing this knowledge gap. We inform a curious public about this crucial American industry, which includes not only farmers, but also the 23 million truck drivers, scientists, food inspectors and others who rely on farming for a living.

Farmamerica was established in 1978 by the Minnesota Legislature and lies in the heart of the GreenSeam region, an area that boasts more than 950 ag-related businesses. We serve more than 12,000 visitors each year.

Stepping Back in Time at Farmamerica

Farmamerica connects people with the evolving story of agriculture through sensory experiences, hands-on activities, educational programming and family events. Our site includes a Visitor Center, a pond and prairie restoration, a collection of antique farm equipment, and many historical buildings that visitors reach by walking the mile-long Time Lane trail.

These sites include:

- Prairie Interpretive Center
- 1850s Settlement
- Country Church
- One-Room Schoolhouse
- 1930s Farmstead
- Grain Elevator and Feed Mill
- Blacksmith Shop/Town Hall

Connecting with Agriculture

FarmAmerica offers a variety of programs to help our region connect with agriculture. Some of these include:

Self-Guided and Guided Tours. We are open to groups, families and individuals during the summer and by appointment in the fall. Visitors start at the Visitor Center before walking (or taking a tram) to our historic sites. Our free mobile app enhances self-guided tours as it brings each site to life.

School Field Trips. Through generous grant support, we provide free school field trips to over 2,000 elementary students from across southern Minnesota each year. Historic sites nestled among acres of the latest farming practices provide hands-on experiences and immerse students in interactive learning.

Career Exploration. In partnership with Junior Achievement and area ag businesses, junior high students look beyond the red barn to discover how their personal interests might align with a future career in agriculture.

Day Camps. Students of all ages enjoy day camps on the farm to learn about everything from how their food is grown to the importance of biosecurity on the farm.

Festivals and Celebrations. Unique community events allow visitors to learn about our agricultural roots while having a great time with family and friends.

Agriculture: Central to Our Story

Agriculture is much more than part of our history. It's a central part of Minnesota's identity today.

In fact: nearly **28%** of the region's workforce is connected to agriculture.

Source: GreenSeam



An Incomplete Story ...

During our open season, our current facilities and exhibits do an excellent job of interpreting our past agricultural history and accomplishments. But there are gaps in our story. Visitors are not able to see a full picture of agriculture today. And they can only learn our story during certain times of the year.

Facility updates would allow us to complete the story and:

- **Offer** year-round educational programming starting in 2021.
- **Increase** visitor attendance and student engagement by at least 50% the first year.
- **Better** serve the thousands of school-age children who visit each year with more interactive, hands-on activities that better explain the entire story of agriculture.
- **Offer** new workshops and extended learning opportunities for older students.
- **Attract** a wider, regional audience, drawing more visitors from the south metro area.
- **Seek** out new partnerships with complementary organizations.

“Farmamerica is a great facility for educating people, especially students, on the importance of agriculture. They do an excellent job showing agriculture from the 1850s, 1930s, and even some of the brand-new technology we are testing today for the future. It is beneficial to have a place where the general public can get facts about agriculture.”

~ Jason Leary

Ag Technology Manager, Crystal Valley Coop

The Solution: Expand Minnesota's Center for Agricultural Interpretation

Our project will both maximize our current space and expand our facilities. We will incorporate interactive and multisensory exhibits and immersive areas, prioritizing stories that help visitors find content relevant to their lives.

Our Goal: \$1 million

Maximize current square footage to more fully incorporate the story of today's agriculture by:

- **Revamping the main Visitor Center** to include hands-on experiences and exhibits that explore agriculture in our everyday lives so visitors have a better understanding of where their food, fuel and fiber originate.
- **Remodeling the Feed Mill** to be a three-season, state-of-the-art classroom and exhibit space to teach kids about feed manufacturing as well as new innovations in agriculture engineering.
- **Adding an inclusive outdoor playground** that is accessible to children of all abilities.
- **Expanding educational programming and outreach** in greater Minnesota so that more people understand the economic and environmental impact of agriculture on our state.





Case Study: From a Feed Mill of Yesterday to a Center of Innovation for Today

A Feed Mill of Yesterday. Our current historical feed mill at FarmAmerica, open during the summer, provides a glimpse into the past.

A Center of Innovation for Today. Updates to our feed mill will go beyond preserving the past. The new exhibit space will encourage children and adults to experience a historic feed mill, engage through interactive exhibits and follow the progression and innovations of technology from early feed mills until today. It will also include a three-season classroom.



“ Growing up on my family’s dairy and crop farm, I have seen firsthand how important agriculture is for all ages. Farmamerica tells the story of agriculture starting with the hardships homesteaders overcame when coming to Minnesota all the way through to modern agriculture, making it the perfect place for visitors of all ages to learn about the ways agriculture has impacted their lives.”

~ **Megan Eldeen**
Former Intern at
Farmamerica and
2019 Waseca County
Dairy Princess



We Invite You To Partner With Us to Make the Expansion Possible

For over forty years, Farmamerica has been telling the story of Minnesota’s agricultural heritage to elementary school groups, families and other visitors from around the state and beyond.

But we can do more.

With our new space and exhibits, we will be able to fill the gaps and tell the story not only of Minnesota’s agricultural history—but also of our present and our future. To make this possible, we need your help. We are embarking on a campaign to raise \$1 million to expand and upgrade our facilities.

EXPANSION TIMELINE

2017 VISION **2018** STUDY **2019** CAMPAIGN AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
2020 CONSTRUCTION (RENOVATIONS) **2021** GRAND OPENING AND NEW PROGRAMMING

With your help now, we can ensure that we stay rooted in our agricultural heritage and that we continue to nurture the growth of agriculture together.



“ With fewer and fewer people today having had experience living or working on a farm, only a small number of people actually know how food is raised. To be relevant to consumers, the content at Farmamerica must be current. **This expansion can accomplish that.**”

~ **Gary Sandholm**

Economic Development Coordinator, City of Waseca



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