

For Immediate Release

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Local Farmers Spread the Wealth at Spring Festival

Minnesota's largest sheep and wool festival cultivates new farmers. March 6, 2010

On May 8th and 9th, the Minnesota Shepherds Harvest Festival will paint a pastoral scene, just minutes from the metro area at the Washington County fairgrounds in Lake Elmo, MN. City dwellers of all ages are invited to enjoy fiber artists, demonstrations and the many breeds of sheep, rabbit, goat, llama and alpaca on display.

This year, the festival is sharing the secrets of animal husbandry and encouraging more people to step into the mysterious world of shepherding. Classes on small flock ownership, how to measure wool quality, breed displays and discussions with local shepherds make this the richest all around experience for those longing for a rural lifestyle. "Every year people come here asking about how to raise sheep and we want to help them make the leap." says Pat Ryan, a founding member of the planning committee.

In addition, over 120 vendors sell every type of animal fiber as well as rare handspun yarns, spinning wheels, pottery, horn, lanolin and even vet supplies. Classes run the gamut from beginning spinning to working with natural dyes -nowhere else can you find such a breath-taking range of opportunity.

A Kazakh Yurt, live music, book readings, sheep shearing and dog-herding demonstrations bring history, art and cultural diversity to the festival. And the Fiber Sandwich, a charity spin-in, attracts hand spinners from around the region to raise money for Heifer International.

Shepherds Harvest has been building the wool community in Minnesota for over a decade. Pairing with Llama Magic it offers a unique opportunity for families and fiber lovers to shop, learn and enjoy themselves in one fun-filled trip. Now they can be shepherds too.

Festival Hours: Saturday, May 8th 9:00 – 5:00 and Sunday, May 9th 10:00 - 4:00.
Free Admission and Parking.

Travel advice: Wear comfortable shoes and warm sweaters - there's lots to see!

For more information visit <http://www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org>

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Minnesota's Shepherd's Harvest Festival is the largest sheep and wool festival in Minnesota. Held annually, each Mother's Day weekend at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo, MN, vendors sell a full spectrum of sheep and wool related items. It offers the only fleece competition in the state as well as hosting felting, skein and photo competitions. Its educational component includes fiber related and sheep raising classes. Demonstrations include sheep shearing, dog herding, horn-carving and a natural fibers fashion show. Local authors, sheep experts and knitting designers are invited to share their sheep and wool expertise with the community. The festival began in 1997 and is run entirely by volunteers with support from the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association. Llama Magic is held on the fairgrounds the same weekend as Shepherd's Harvest.