



DATCP to co-host National Value-Added Ag Conference

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MADISON – National leaders in value-added agriculture will convene in Madison for the 18th Annual National Value-Added Agriculture Conference, July 21-22, 2016. The theme of this year’s conference is “Agriculture, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship: Developing Thriving Rural Communities.”

Conference topics include: agri-tourism, rural and urban economic development, food waste, food safety, marketing, policy, local and regional food systems, labor issues, alternative energy, technology, supply chain management, and more.

The 2016 conference is hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and University of Wisconsin – Dane County Extension. The event runs all day Thursday, July 21 through mid-day Friday, July 22, with a welcoming reception the evening of Wednesday, July 20, and tours Thursday afternoon.

“We are pleased Madison has been chosen to host the National Value-Added Agricultural Conference and that the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will serve as co-host,” said DATCP Sec. Ben Brancel. “The conference will draw large numbers of agricultural producers, industry representatives and academic specialists to Wisconsin to focus on a theme that underpins many of our department’s own efforts: promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture to help develop thriving rural communities.”

The conference’s target audience includes farmers, business owners and operators, entrepreneurs, consultants, policy makers, extension specialists, academics, community leaders, and service providers.

Conference participants will have an opportunity to choose from three different tours highlighting Wisconsin businesses and value-added industries. Tour themes are cheese, wine and beer, and sausage. Tours are not included in the price of registration.

The event will be held at Park Hotel (formerly Inn on the Park), 22 S Carroll St, Madison, WI 53703. The cost to attend the full conference is \$150, which includes meetings, two breakfasts, two lunches, and a reception. There are volunteer opportunities for students and others who cannot afford the full rate. Persons/groups interested in presenting can find more information on the event webpage. The deadline to register is July 7.

To register and see a draft of the agenda, visit <http://www.agmrc.org/national-value-added-agriculture-conference/>.

For more information about the conference, contact Theresa Feiner (DATCP business development specialist) at 608-224-5140 or Theresa.feiner@wi.gov

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