This article appeared in the December, 2025 issue of
The North Dakota Soybean Growers Magazine Volume 14 Issue 6



Building Bridges From Farm to Fork

Every year, the NDSC's Food & Farm Tour turns the spotlight on North Dakota agriculture, inviting chefs, influencers, nutrition professionals, students, and farmers to explore, taste, and connect. Since 2018, the tour has provided a unique opportunity that draws in participants not only from across North Dakota, but also nationwide.

This year's event attracted 15 nutrition professionals with wide-ranging backgrounds, some with sizable social media followings, and 24 culinary students from the North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) in Wahpeton. The Food & Farm Tour included a well-rounded program, featuring up-to-date nutrition information about soy foods from renowned experts Mark Messina, Ph.D., director of nutrition science and research at SNI Global; and Linda Funk, executive director of The Soyfoods Council. Attendees also had a hands-on cooking session at NDSCS, visited NDSC Chairman Jim Thompson's farm and got a soybean processing facility tour.

"The Food & Farm Tour allows us to bridge the gap between agriculture and the people who influence food conversations," says Shireen Alemadi, NDSC outreach and engagement director. "By offering firsthand experiences, we are helping shape a deeper understanding of where food begins, and how soy contributes to a healthy diet



Participants got hands-on cooking time at NDSCS, preparing and enjoying delicious soy-based meals.



After hands-on cooking with soy ingredients, participants enjoyed a delicious lunch at NDSCS and were impressed by the flavors of every dish.

Participants left the two-day event with some diverse experiences.

"My dad was actually a soybean farmer, so I was really interested in seeing beyond the harvest, to what happens to soybeans," states Becky Feltman, a registered dietitian and human resources manager in Fargo. "As a registered dietitian, I'm very interested in all of the nutrition that is in soybeans and what we can do with it."

Sarah Tee owns and operates Inspire Nutrition in Fargo. She's also the current president of the North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She describes how participating in the event goes beyond cooking with soy or walking through a field.

"It's also about gaining a true farm-to-table perspective: seeing soybeans in the ground, following them through processing and then turning them into foods like homemade tofu," Tee asserts. "These experiences make the journey from soil to plate personal, meaningful and practical for the work I do every day."

The Food & Farm Tour reached beyond North Dakota because participants came from as far away as Tennessee and Florida.

Rosanne Rust traveled from Florida to take part in the event. She operates Rust Nutrition Services and has authored several books.

"I have been a fan of farmers for a couple of decades," Rust explains. "I really enjoy sharing the story of farming with consumers. There's a lot of misinformation about where food comes from and the tools farmers use, and I like to shed light on that so people can feel confident in the foods they choose."

Shireen Alemadi notes that most participants leave the tour amazed at how interconnected everything is, from the farm to the table, and at how much farmers care about the land and the food they grow.

Chelsea LeBlanc, from Nashville and owner of Chelsea LeBlanc Nutrition, is a longtime fan of soyfoods and incorporates them into her diet regularly. She also values meeting the farmers and seeing the process firsthand.

"I'm always really interested to meet the farmers and hear their story, to see how soy is harvested, processed, and eventually reaches our table," says LeBlanc. "It's fascinating to see the full process and get the complete picture."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos by staff



Participants enjoyed an educational tofu and soymilk demo at Northern Crops Institute.