



Annual Tour de Farm offers cyclists a unique Sumter County experience

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Over 50 cyclists are expected to attend this year's Tour de Farm

AMERICUS - Cyclists from across the Southeast will be in Sumter County Nov. 7-9 for a weekend biking adventure that will feature Americus-based artists, local farm visits, a ride on SAM's Shortline Excursion Train and a farm-to-table supper.

"We really wanted to showcase Americus and Sumter County on this ride and offer something new to participants," said George Ellis, president of Sumter Cycling, one of two non-profits that will benefit from the funds raised during this year's Tour de Farm.

Now in its third year, Tour de Farm was started by local coffee company Café Campesino as a fundraiser for Sumter Cycling, a local cycling advocacy group that also organizes the annual Prison-to-Peanuts ride in the spring, and Georgia Organics, an Atlanta-based non-profit that encourages the production and consumption of healthy, locally produced foods.



Local residents are encouraged to participate in Tour de Farm and can either sign up as a weekend or by-the-day cyclist or as a diner for the Saturday, Nov. 8, “Meat and Greet” farm-to-table dinner.

The “Meat and Greet” dinner is a signature event of Café Campesino’s Tour de Farm that is meant to bring out-of-town riders to the dinner table with locals. “We really wanted folks to get to know each other over a meal, and the Meat and Greet dinner has been a fun way for non-cyclists to meet and host some of our out-of-town guests,” said Nema Etheridge, sales and marketing manager at Café Campesino, who is working with Sumter Cycling and the River Valley Regional Commission to organize Tour de Farm.

★ Lee Harris of Sweet Georgia Baking Co. will prepare this year’s “Meat and Greet” dinner that will feature pasture-raised pork from Bluffton, Ga.-based White Oak Pastures, as well as locally raised seasonal vegetables.

It will also showcase some of Americus’s outstanding artistic talent with demonstrations from potter Sam Hendley, glass-blowers Phil Vinson and Robin Humphreys and local bluegrass musicians Pat Spann, Wayne Arrington, Ralph Cornwell, Steve Strowbridge, David Becton and Sissy Ledbetter, who play every Tuesday in Americus at Pat’s Place. Tickets to the “Meat and Greet” dinner can be purchased at Café Campesino for \$25 or online at http://www.cafecampesino.com/tour_de_farm_p/tdf14.htm

Local residents interested in cycling can sign-up for the full weekend of events for \$110, which will include 80 miles of guided cycling, breakfasts, lunches and snacks, camping at Georgia Veterans State Park and in Americus, Friday night dinner, tickets to the “Meat & Greet” dinner, a SAM’s Shortline train ride and entrance to the Rural Telephone Museum in Leslie, which will be featured during Sunday’s portion of the ride. Individuals interested in riding Saturday or Sunday only can purchase tickets at Café Campesino. Saturday-only tickets are \$70 and do not include “Meat and Greet” dinner tickets and Sunday-only tickets are \$50.

Sumter Cycling is encouraging locals to participate in Tour de Farm by offering a series of training rides that will help novice cyclists prepare for the 80-mile weekend ride (about 40 miles each day). Those rides will be Saturdays Oct. 18, Oct. 25 and Nov. 1 and will each offer participants a 10 percent discount toward the Tour de Farm ticket price.

http://www.americustimesrecorder.com/sports/article_189e1f8e-5560-11e4-bf8c-1f92993029ce.html

