

# Musical talent gathers to support farmers

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It will almost certainly be the highest one-day concentration of musical talent ever in Iowa.

About 50 musical acts — everything from grunge rock to hip-hop, Tex-Mex to traditional country — will donate their time and talent in an 11-hour concert to benefit U.S. farmers.

The ringleader is Willie Nelson. The date is Saturday, April 24 beginning at noon. The place is Cyclone Stadium in Ames, Iowa.

The name of the show, of course, is Farm Aid VI. Promoters are promising it will be the biggest musical event in state history. When it's over, some 1,750 people will have put in an estimated 28,000 hours of work on a gig that lasts less than half a day. About eight hours of the show will be broadcast live on the cable Nashville Network.

Last year's Farm Aid V attracted a crowd estimated at up to 50,000 to Texas Stadium in Irving, Texas, and raised more than \$1 million.

Organizers are hoping for similar numbers this time around (although ISU Center officials won't release how many tickets have been sold so far).

This year's lineup includes a mix of usual suspects (Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Farm Aid newcomers (Shai, Drivin-N-Cryin, First Brother Roger Clinton) and wild cards (Alice in Chains) that have made past Farm Aids so unpredictable.

## Tom and Roseanne

Noteworthy things to watch for: Bryan Adams' performance Saturday will mark the end of his North American tour. Tom and Roseanne Arnold will sing "I Got You Babe" and the theme from "Green Acres." ("The Star Spangled Banner" is blessedly off the set list.) Lyle Lovett and Tammy Wynette could get together for the only second joint performance of Wynette's hit, "Stand by Your Man," which Lovett covered with lacerating irony on his "Large Band" album.

In addition to the Arnolds, the show's hosts include Yakov Smirnoff, Williams and Ree and Lou Diamond Phillips.

These likely will not be perfect musical performances. Each act will have only a few minutes before time's up, so there's no time to get into a groove and work it as there is when only one or two artists are on the bill.

On the other hand, the concentration of talent makes for some interesting combinations, like Nelson and Arlo Guthrie doing "City of New Orleans." Waylon Jennings helping Johnny Cash on "Folsom Prison Blues," Nanci Griffith and James McMurtry doing "Trouble in the Fields" or Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and Kris Kristofferson backing up John Prine. The mixing and matching is a lot of the fun at these things.

## Stayed tuned for surprises

Other surprises? All but a sure thing. There likely will be unannounced performances. The ever-changing lineup has lost a few names and gained a few since it was first announced. One of those whose name has been dropped — a world music fan whose name rhymes with "rhythm" — may indeed show up. And if he does, he and Nelson could sing "Graceland," which Nelson covers on his new album. The song was a highlight



Photo from TNM

## BEHIND THE SCENE

### Some Farm Aid facts

- The Farm Aid Index (with apologies to Harper's magazine). All figures are approximate.
- People who will have worked on or performed in Farm Aid VI: 1,750
- Man hours required to put on Farm Aid VI: 28,000
- Amount of steel used in stage construction and show production, in pounds: 200,000
- Tents: 7
- Trailers: 23
- Radios: 102
- Fork lifts: 6
- Golf carts: 26
- Spot lights: 8
- TV cameras: 13
- Hot dogs and bratwursts expected to be sold, in pounds: 3,000
- Pounds of barbecued meat expected to be sold in pounds: 900
- Soda expected to be sold, in gallons: 1,500
- Popcorns expected to be sold, unpoped weight: 750 pounds
- Days it takes to set up Farm Aid VI: 4
- Days it takes to tear down Farm Aid VI: 2

\*Source: Iowa State Center



The photo

Willie Nelson, top, and Tom and Roseanne Arnold, above, will appear in Ames, Iowa, in Farm Aid VI on Saturday.

of last year's show.

And it's not inconceivable that semi-obscure songwriter Townes Van Zandt would be joined by some high-powered and better-known admirers. The guy's a legend among musicians — especially Texas musicians — but he's far from a household name. But remember: "subject to change" will be the operative phrase throughout the day.

"Due to this thing being a donation of the artists' time and talent, the schedule is tentative," says Andy Long, the ISU Center's director of marketing. "But in the past there have been a lot of surprises and additions. The lineup is constantly being updated."

## Mystery lineup

A revolving stage will help keep things moving along. While one act performs, another act on deck will be

getting ready to go on next while a third loads up after performing.

One thing concert-goers won't be able to have is a schedule of who will perform when. That's for several reasons: Farm Aid organizers want fans there all day to soak up the message as well as the music. A full house

looks better on TV. Logistics are easier. And it negates the opportunity for clashing egos — one performer demanding to go on after so-and-so, another demanding to go on last, first, in the daylight, in the dark, and so on. Something else that's subject to change — the weather.

Climatologist Harry Hillaker pored over 104 years of weather records and came up with some mixed views on what sort of weather Ames can expect.

"The scary part is there's been days with a high as low as 44 degrees," Hillaker says. "That's happened several times. It can be quite variable at that time of year. The good news is the most snow we've ever had on that date is one-tenth of an inch — although we had seven inches on April 29 one year."

And it's only snowed on that date twice.

"There's been measurable precipitation 31 times on that date during 104 years, which isn't too terribly bad," Hillaker says.

But remember, rain or shine, the show goes on.

## PERFORMERS

### Big names scheduled to appear at Farm Aid

- Willie Nelson
- Neil Young
- John Mellencamp
- Bryan Adams
- Bruce Hornsby
- Lyle Lovett
- Alice in Chains
- Dwight Yoakam
- Arlo Guthrie
- Marty Stuart
- Don Was with Ringo Starr and Jonelle Mosser
- Charlie Daniels Band
- Ricky Van Shelton
- John Conlee
- Highwaymen (Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson)
- Shai
- Drivin-N-Cryin
- Kentucky Headhunters
- Delbert McClinton
- Merle Haggard and the Strangers
- Pipefitters with Lou Diamond Phillips
- Dennis Alley's Wisdom Indian Dancers
- Asleep at the Wheel
- Sawyer Brown
- Black 47
- Little Joe y la Familia
- Zaca Creek
- Roger Clinton
- Tim Malchack
- Martina McBride
- David Annan
- John Trudell and Graffiti Man C.T.P.
- Johnny Gimble
- Knifewing
- Calhoun Twins
- Jayhawks
- Common Sense
- Faron Young
- El Dorado
- Milo Tremley
- Greenlaw Brothers
- Mickey Newbury
- Townes Van Zandt
- Paul Buskirk
- Jimmy Dale Court
- Winner of the Jose Cuervo "Quest for Gold" Talent Contest
- Hosts: Roseanne and Tom Arnold, Yakov Smirnoff, Lou Diamond Phillips

## THURSDAY

What are you going to do this weekend? Go to the movies, take in a concert, visit a street fair, or just rent a video and put your feet up?

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CHANCE  
 STRAIGHT UP  
 MONTY BLIND  
 20-20  
 20-20  
 20-20

20-20  
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