



small *farm* central

Small Farm Central “Getting Started” Guide

Last Revised: 4/26/2010

These are not the old dark days of the Internet - you can create your own farm website without technical knowledge. Using the Small Farm Central web development service is easy and you might even find it fun once you get comfortable.

In this guide we will cover some basic steps to getting your Small Farm Central site up-and-running.

1. Getting comfortable with the control panel.
2. Creating a new Farmer Defined Page
3. Upload a photo
4. Add a photo to your Farmer Defined Page
5. Using the rich text editor
6. Edit menus
7. Choose & Customize your template
8. Sending emails to your mailing list
9. Other Tips

Login to the Control Panel

Before we can move on to setting up your website, you must first access the control panel. The control panel allows gives you access to the Small Farm Central tools that allow you to publish pages, photos, and manage all aspects of your site. It is the administrator area of your site; your customers do not see this part of the system.

Access the control panel at:

<http://sfc.smallfarmcentral.com>

Use the login and username we provided; after login you will see all the tools available to you.



Figure 1 Logging in to the Small Farm Central control panel.

1. Getting Comfortable in the Control Panel

Now you are logged in to the control panel and you should see a screen that looks something like this:

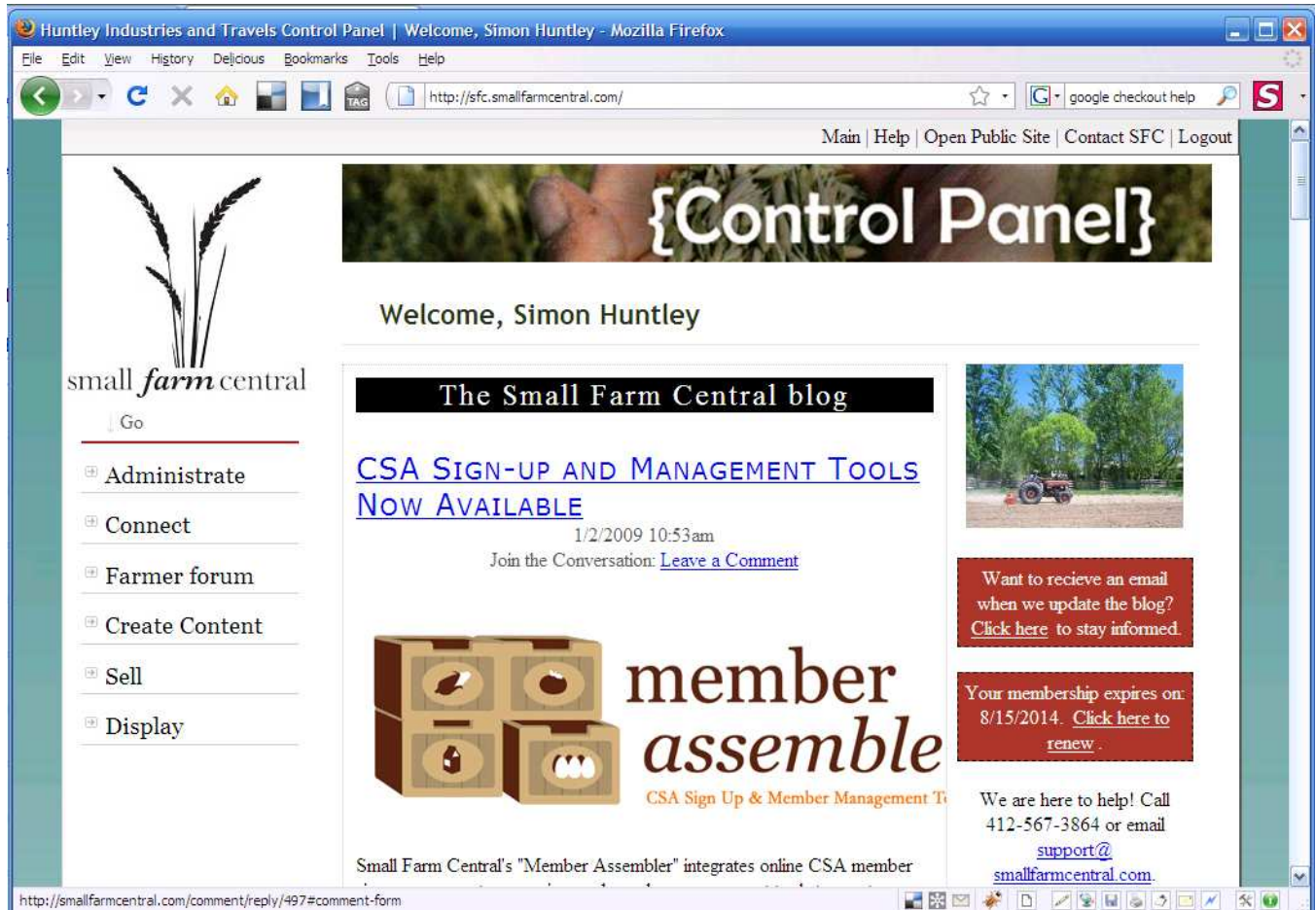


Figure 2 The Small Farm Central control panel.

The left side of your screen, starting with “Administrate” contains all the tools to work with your Small Farm Central site.

To give you a general idea of what type of functionality is under each main menu:

- **Administrate** is where all of your account information is stored. It contains options such as changing your password, altering your email address, viewing your SFC subscription information. You can also find statistics, manage comments, and download data to excel under this heading.
- **Connect** allows you to connect to your customers. You will find a tool that facilitates email blasts to your customers, if your plan level allows.
- **Farmer Forum.** Want support for your SFC site? Want to discuss strategies with other farmers? Want to read about the new features we add to Small Farm Central? Post at the Farmer Forum.

- **Create Content** contains all options relating to content such as pages, photos, recipes, maps, calendars, and etc.
- **Sell** contains all options for the ecommerce extension such as creating new items, printing reports, and more. If you do not have the ecommerce extension, you can just ignore this heading.
- **Display** determines how your website looks to customers. In this heading, you can choose and edit a template and work with your “widget” column.

The middle of the control panel screen displays the latest blog entries from the Small Farm Central blog. We write weekly about strategies for marketing your farm on the web, so you may be interested in these articles.

2. Creating a New Farmer Defined Page

What is a Farmer Defined Page (FDP)?

A Farmer Defined Page is a blank slate page that is about anything you want. Many Small Farm Central pages are programmed in special ways, such as calendars, blogs, and etc, but Farmer Defined Pages are completely free of formatting and allow you to create at will.

Some ideas for Farmer Defined Pages:

- Growing practices
- Farmers Markets listing
- Your CSA Information
- Employment Opportunities
- Links to other farming-related sites
- ..or anything else you can dream up.

Create A New Farmer Defined Page (FDP)

In the control panel, navigate to:

Create Content / Farmer Defined Pages / New FDP

On the resulting screen, find larger text that reads “Add New Page” and then a text box labeled “Title.” Type the title of your page – you can change this later, but create one for the meantime. Pages, titles, content, and everything are editable at any later date, so don’t think you will add something or make a change that cannot be rolled back (except for deleting, which cannot be rolled back).

The second part of the form asks, “**Add this page to which menu?**” with a listing of the menu headings currently defined for your site. We will define these terms later, so you can just keep the default at this point unless you recognize these menus and want to experiment.

You will then be taken to a screen to add content to your page. See the next section for details on editing your page.

Editing a Farmer Defined Pages (FDP)

Whether you have just created a new page, or clicked “Edit” on the Manage FDPs page, you will be taken to an edit Farmer Defined Page screen. It will look somewhat like this:



Figure 3 Editing a Farmer Defined Page and using the toolbar.

Right below the word “Text”, you will see the editor tool bar which starts out with Bold (B), Italic (I), and Underline (U). You will find this toolbar throughout the control panel – it allows you to format your content without needing any technical knowledge. Behind the scenes, it translates your work into the language of the web (HTML).

It is basically a stripped-down version of Microsoft Word. You will find tools to change text color, create bullet points, change font size, change font type, add photos, add links, show rich media files, and create tables.

Edit your text as needed, and click “Save Changes” below the text area. It is important to remember to Save Changes or your work will not be saved.

View Your Page

Your page has now been created and is ready to view.

In the top right hand corner of the control panel, you will see a link that is label “Open Public Site.” This will open your public site in a new window. This is nice trick to remember because it makes it easy to go between the public and administrator areas of your site.

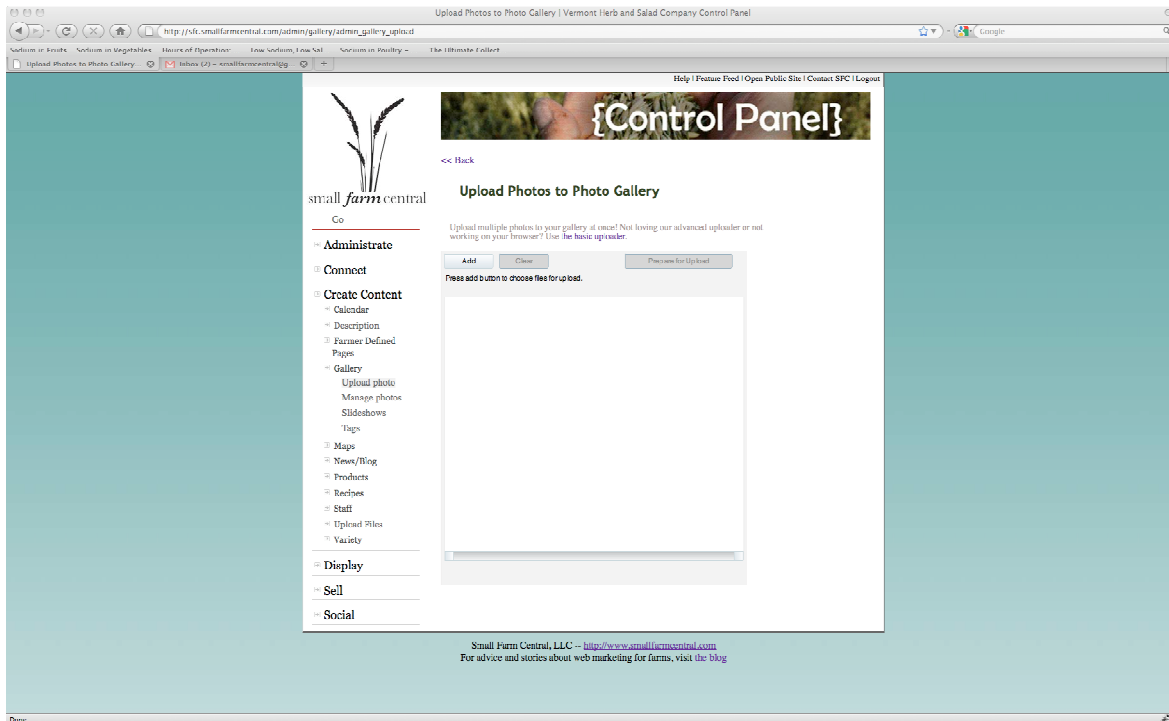
Go find your page. This all depends on the template you are currently using, but you may find a “What’s New” area with your Farmer Defined Page page or you will be able to find it in the menu area. If you don’t remember what menu you created your page under, just look through all the menus to find your page.

3. Uploading Farm Photos

Photos are the lifeblood of any farm website because they instantly connect the customer with the work that is required to bring food from the ground.

To upload a photo to your Small Farm Central site, in the control panel navigate to: Create Content / Gallery / Upload Photo

You'll use the Advanced Uploader to upload and resize your photos, all in one stop!



Click on the “Add” button, and browse to find the photo you’d like to upload. Select the photo. You’ll notice that a thumbnail of the image is placed in the upload box. Feel free to upload more than one image. Once you have all your images in the upload box, click “Process for Upload”. This tool will automatically resize the images. Once the images have been prepared, you’ll notice that the button now says ‘Upload’ Click this button again, to upload the newly resized images.

You’ll need to head to “Manage Gallery” to insert captions and tags. See below for more information about this process.

3b. Managing Photos

Once your photos are uploaded, you can manage photo properties by navigating to:
Create Content / Gallery / Manage Gallery

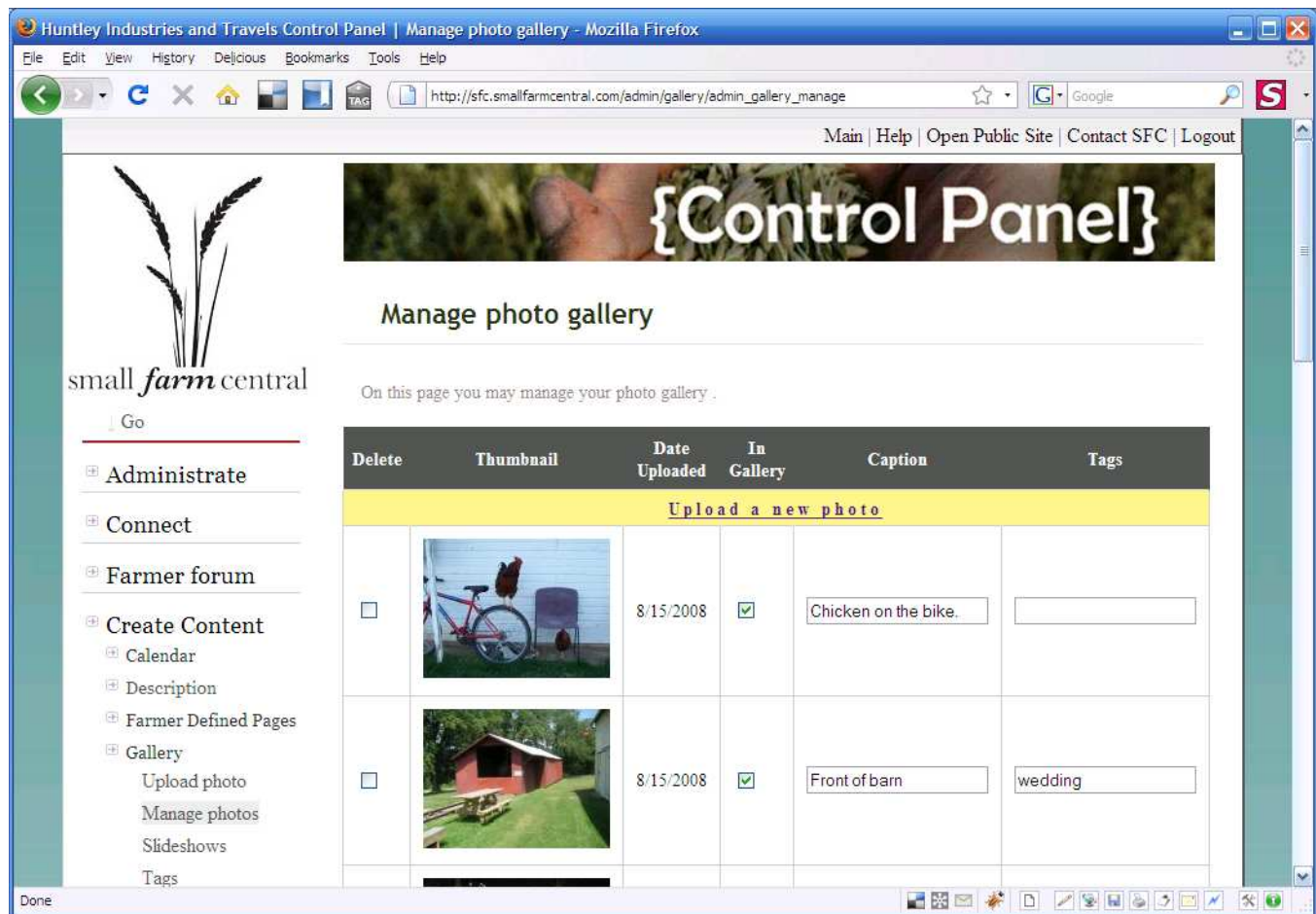


Figure 4 Manage Photos quickly on the Photo Manager page.

The options in the manage gallery area are explained below:

Caption

What is this photo about? This will show up when a customer looks at your photos. It is not required, but it is recommended so your customers have some context and the search engines can find the photos.

Tags

Tags create groups of photos that can be viewed by customers later. If you have a photo of a farmers market you may want to tag the photo with the following tags:

- Farmers Markets

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More information at <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com>

- Summertime
- Working on the Farm
- Produce
- Local Food
- ..and anything else that makes sense for the photo in question.

To create these tags, in the tags textbox you would separate each with a comma like this:
Farmers Markets, Summertime, Working on the Farm, Produce, Local Food

If you tag all your photos like this, you will start to have a really nice database of your photos that customers can search through easily by topic.

Add this Photo to Your Public Gallery Page

Once photos are uploaded, they become available around the site for different purposes including the toolbar as we will cover in the next section on adding a photo to a Farmer Defined Page. If you want a photo for a different purpose, but for some reason do not want it on the gallery page, you may uncheck this box. Unless you have a specific reason to hide this photo from the gallery, leave this checkbox checked.

Tag Products

If your photo is of picking apples, you may want to bring up the “Tag Products” to find the Apples section. Users can later find a detail page about apples and see this photo. This option is similar to tagging above and is not required. For now, just skip this option.

4. Adding a Photo to a Farmer Defined Page

Now, let's spruce that Farmer Defined Page you created in Step #2 by adding a photo to the page.

Navigate to:

Create Content / Farmer Defined Pages / Manage FDPs / Click edit beside the Farmer Defined Page you created in Step #2

This will take you to the "Edit" page for the FDP. Follow the instructions below to add a photo to the page:

1. First, the photo you want to add must be in your photo gallery. Hopefully you added at least one photo in Step #3, but even if you did not, your site comes with a few demo photos that you can use to test.
2. In the editor toolbar, click the button that looks like a photo of a tree. See the button circled in red on the screenshot below.

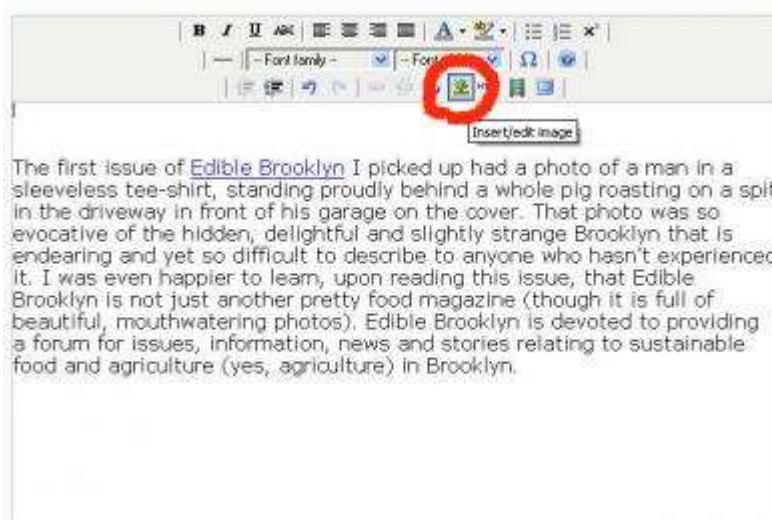
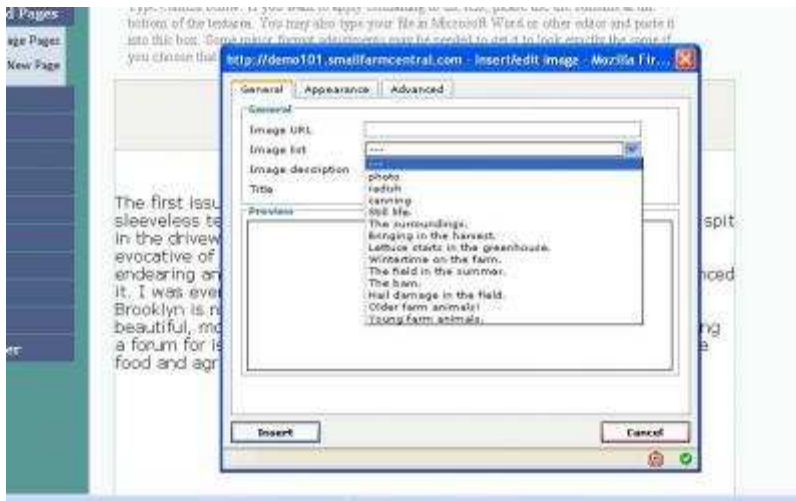


Figure 5 An example toolbar with the "Add Photo" button circled in red.

3. After clicking the tree icon, a pop-up box entitled "Insert/edit image" will appear. In the dropdown box "Image list" is a list of the photos that are in your photo gallery (identified by the caption you defined for the photo when you uploaded it).



4. Select the photo you want to add to your page and then click insert in the bottom left of the pop-out box. The pop-out will disappear and your image will show up in the content area of the page.
5. You will probably notice that the image is quite large. To resize it, left click on the image once. You will see a series of square white boxes appear around the image (see the red circles in the screen shot below). You can resize the image by clicking on the boxes and dragging them around the screen. Play around with this functionality to get an idea of how it works.



6. When you click submit to save the Farmer Defined Page, the photo will now appear on your public site!

5. Using the Rich Text Editor

The rich text editor is a core component of Small Farm Central because it allows you to type information about your farm, format the text, and behind the scenes, this software translates your text in the language of the web: HTML. When you created your first Farmer Defined Page, you were using the rich text editor.

The Text Editor

You will see the rich text editor throughout the control panel; it looks a bit like this:



Figure 6. The Rich Text Editor which will you find throughout your Small Farm Central control panel.

Creating Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are words usually underlined and shown in blue that represent a link to another page in your site or on the Internet (there is more explanation of how to create them [here](#)). It can sometimes be difficult and time-consuming to figure out where you want your link to lead, so we have added a new feature to the editor: the "link list." This is a list of every page on your Small Farm Central site; simply click on the page you want to link to and the URL will be automatically populated.

To do this, follow these steps:

1. Select the text or photo you want to link
2. In the rich text editor, find the "insert/edit link" button which is on the second row near the right. It looks like a link in a chain -- fine metaphor there.

3. When the "insert/edit image" window pops up, find the drop down menu labeled "Link List." When you expand that drop-down, you will see a list of all the pages on your site. Simply choose the page you want to link to and click on it. You will see the "Link URL" text box above automatically populate.
4. Complete the link by clicking "Insert" in the lower-left corner. Your text should turn blue to indicate it has been linked. (Always remember to save your changes when you are done editing!)

Photo Uploads and Insertion

Earlier, you learned how to upload photos to your gallery. There is another way to upload photos into your Small Farm Central site right through the rich text editor.

1. Find the "insert/edit image" button. It is in the 2nd row on the right and looks like a photo of a tree. Click that button to bring up the insert/edit image window.
2. To select an image from your photo gallery or to upload a new photo, click the "Browse" button which is just to the right of the Image URL text box. This screenshot shows where the browse button is:

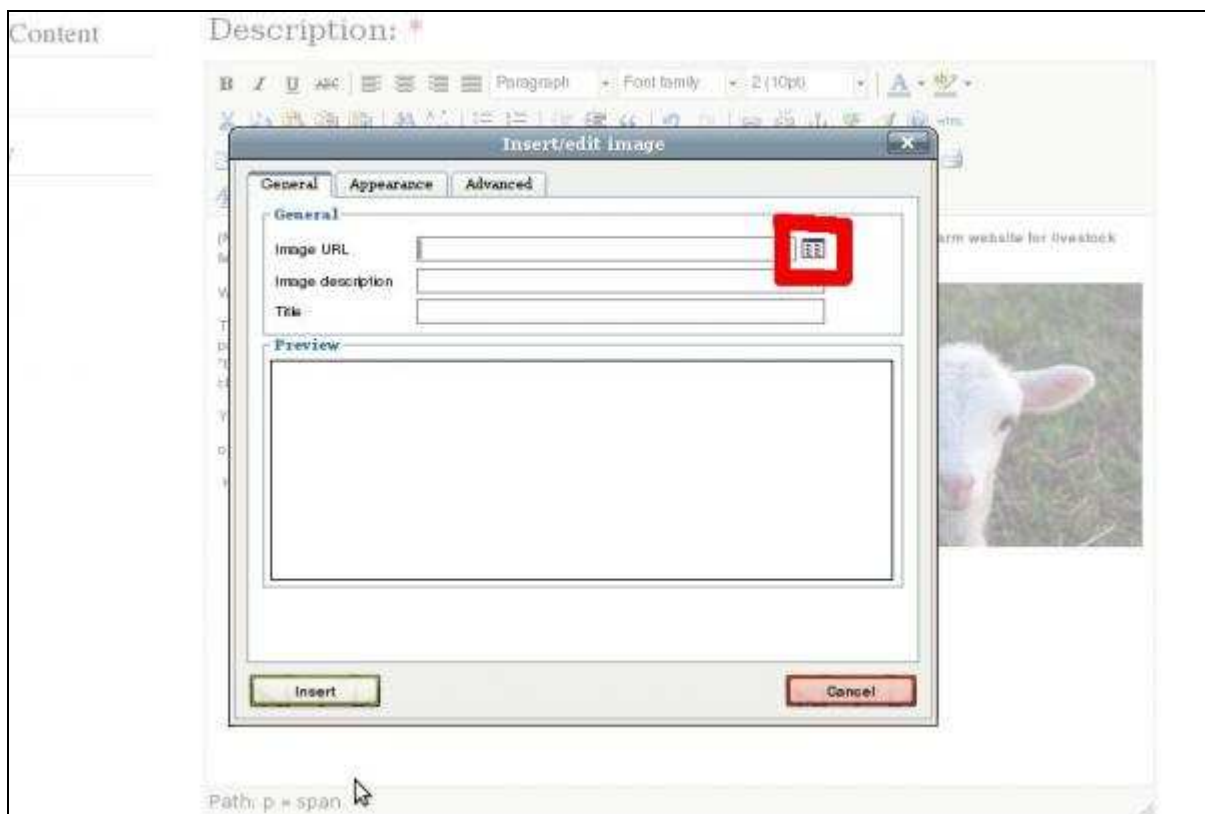


Figure 7. Adding a photo into the content of your rich text editor.

3. Once you click the browse button, another window will pop-up that shows you thumbnails of images that are in your gallery. To insert these images into your page, you could click on any of these images. But let's stay with uploading for a minute.

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More information at <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com>

4. In the upper right corner of this window, you will see a button labeled "Upload." Click that button now. A further window will pop up that allows you to choose files to upload to your site.



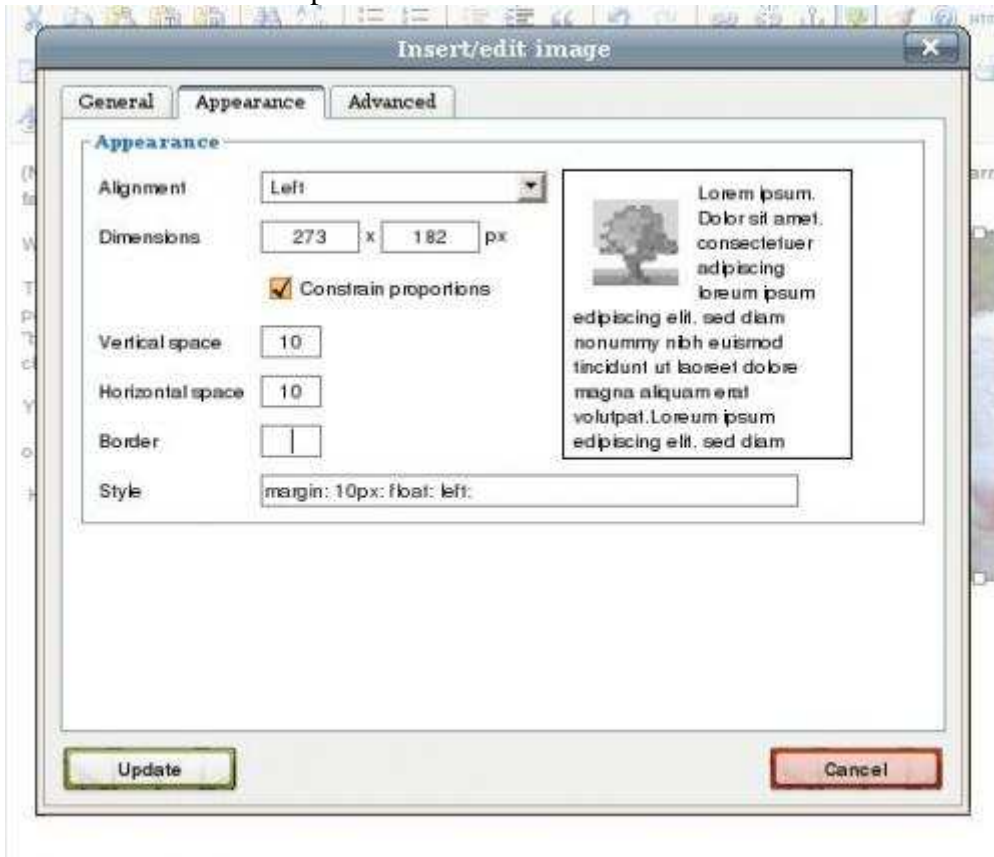
5. Click on "Choose Files" and browse your computer for the photo you want to upload. Although the Small Farm Central software will automatically resize the photos to a size that makes sense for the web, due to upload times it may be smart to [resize your photos first](#).
6. After you have chosen your photo, you may upload multiple photos at a time by clicking on the "Add More" link which is below the photo you have chosen. When you are ready to upload, click "Upload to Server" and off they go.
7. Once the photos are uploaded, they will be added to the list of thumbnails. It can sometimes be a chore to find the thumbnail of the photo you just uploaded once you start to have a lot of photos on your site. Remember, they are listed in alphabetical order.

Wrapping Text Around Photos

Once your photo is in your page, you will wonder about how to make it look like it belongs inside the page. You want to wrap the text around the photo in a natural way. Follow these steps:

1. Select a photo that is in your page by clicking on it. White boxes will appear in all the corners of the photo to signify that it is selected.
2. Find the "insert/edit image" button again (2nd row, near the right) and click it to open the insert/edit image window. Now click on the "Appearance" tab at the top of the insert/edit image

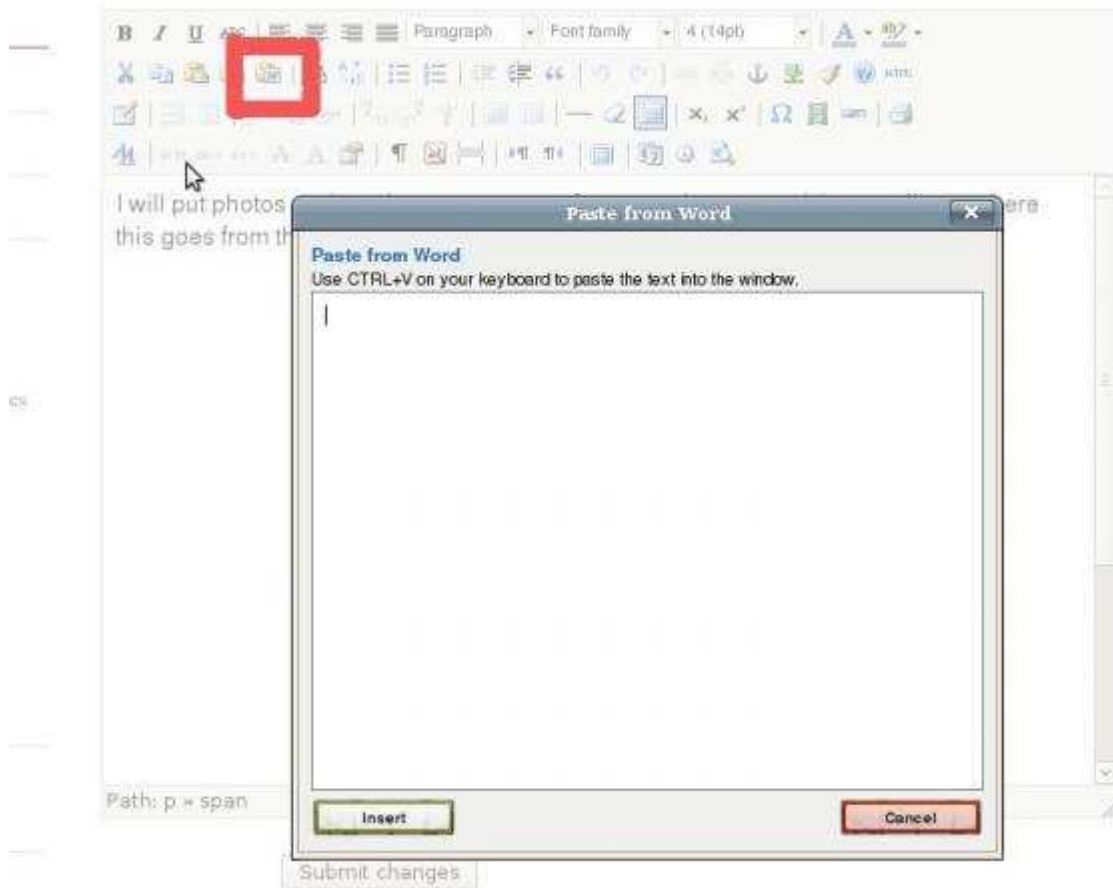
window. You will see options like this:



3. Using the alignment drop-down, you will see lots of options such as Baseline, Top, Bottom, Left, Right, and more. The most useful alignment options will be "Left" and "Right" which will float your image either to the right or left of the page and allow the text to float around the image. When you choose an alignment option, you will see a preview on the right.
4. You will also want to have space between your text and the image so they do not look cramped together. To do this, use the "Vertical Space" and "Horizontal Space" options; a value of 10 is a good start. Again, this change will be reflected in the preview box.
5. Once you have made your changes, click "Update" in the lower left hand part of the menu and watch your text float around your image.

Pasting Text from Microsoft Word

It is often advisable to create your content in a word processor like Microsoft Word and then paste into the text editor to ensure that you do not lose the work you are doing. One issue is that Microsoft Word will add extraneous code to your text and can cause problems in certain web browsers. The rich text editor will help you with this problem by using the "Paste From Word" button.



The "Paste from Word" button can be found in the 2nd row of buttons near the left. When you click it, a window will pop up that asks you to paste your content into the window. The text editor will then do the work to strip out the wonky code. Then click insert to get your text into the text editor.

6. Edit Menus

Menus navigate your customers through your Small Farm Central site. Your site comes with an example configuration, but they are completely customizable to your specific needs.

Menus are a little different on each template. You will see in the screenshot below an example of a menu on a Small Farm Central site:



In this example, “The Experience” is an example of a top-level menu and under that top level menu are the links (or menu items):

- Event Calendar
- News
- Milking the Goats
- Making Cheese
- The Orchard

To edit the top-level menus and to change the links under those menus, visit the Menu Manager by navigating to:

Administrate / Menu Manager

The following help file explains the Menu Manager in more detail:

<http://smallfarmcentral.com/help/menu-manager>

7. Choose and Customize Your Template

Small Farm Central includes a number of farmer-centric templates that you can choose from and then customize to your specific needs. We will be adding more templates soon, so be sure to check back and see what new templates are available. You can change your template with one click, so the choice you make at the beginning does not lock you into one look.

Visit the template selection page by navigating to:
Display / Template Settings / Template Settings

You will see a list of the templates available, a little like this screenshot below:

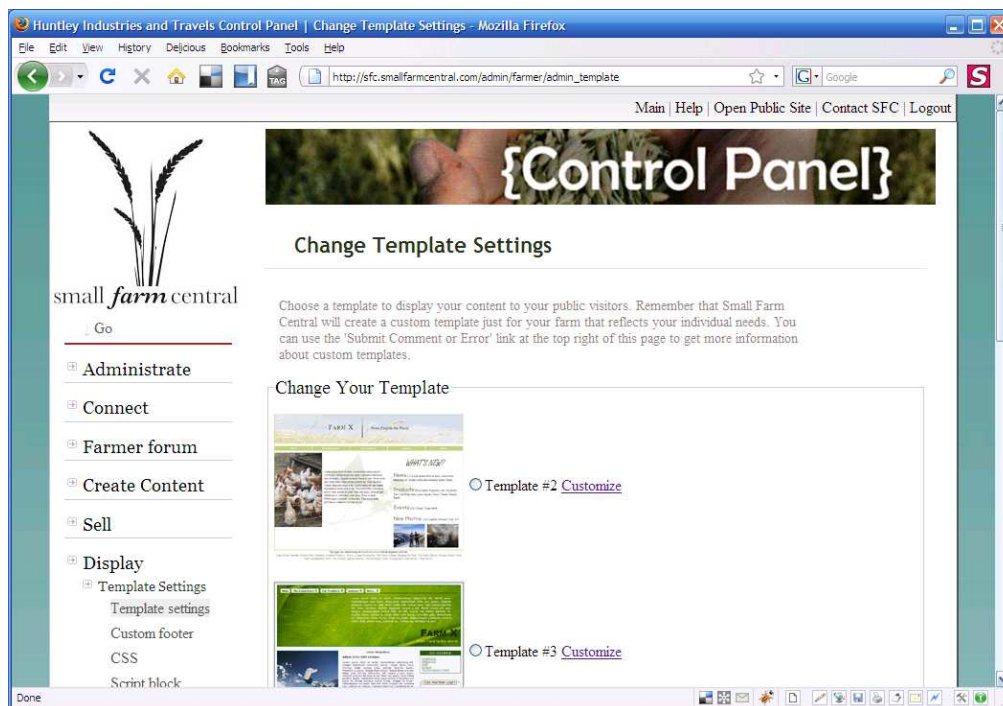


Figure 8 The template selection page.

The easiest way to go through these templates is to click the box beside the template you want to view, click Save Changes at the bottom of the page, and after the changes are saved click on “Open Public Site” in the top right hand corner of the control panel or click “Refresh” on your browser while viewing your public site.

Remember, each template is very customizable. That’s the next step..

Customize a Template

Navigate to the template selection page:

Display / Template Settings / Template Settings / Click customize beside the template in question

Each template has different template options, so I’ll leave you to explore the differences.

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More information at <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com>

Most templates have an image at the top of the screen with the farm name written over it, which is called the header image. If you are on the Harvester or Communicator plans, we can help you create a header image that fits the area and represents your farm. We can create a header that integrates some text, a photo of your farm, and a logo if you have one.

If you need a more advanced header image, we can refer you on to a graphic designer to work through the details.

8. Send Emails to Your Mailing List

Email lists are an extremely effective marketing tool for farms. That's why we have integrated mailing list functionality right into websites with the Harvester plan or above.

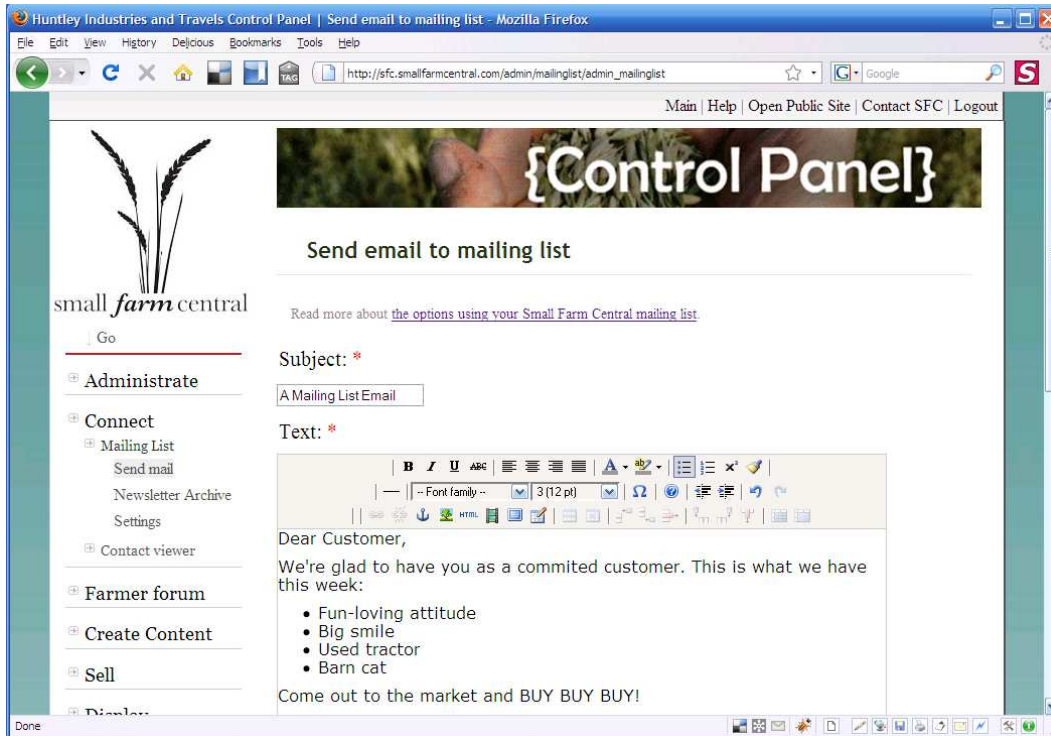


Figure 9 Sending a mailing list email.

The mailing list FAQ:

How do I get my addresses into the mailing list?

- If you have an existing group of email addresses that you would like to be added to your database, please get them into an Excel Spreadsheet and send them in an email to us.
- You can create new user accounts (hence email addresses you can send mail to) by navigating to: Administrate / Users / Add Users
- Or use the “Batch Add Users” tool to add up to 20 email addresses at once: Administrate / Users / Add Batch Users

Can customers sign up for my mailing list on my website?

Yes. By visiting:

<http://www.yourfarmwebsite.com/maillinglist>

Replace yourfarmwebsite.com with the public website addresses that we provided with your account. You can link your customers to this page to get them on your email list. When a new customer fills out this mailing list form, an email will be generated to you that notifies you of the addition.

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More information at <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com>

How do I send mail to users once I have built my list?

Navigate to:

Connect / Mailing List / Send Mail

Use the editor toolbar to develop your email and then click “Send Mail” when you are ready to send the email out to your customer list.

More detail on the options available for the mailing list can be found at:

<http://smallfarmcentral.com/help/mailing-lists>

9. Other Tips

Edit “What’s New”

If undesired items get in to your “What’s New” list during set-up of your site and you want to delete them, navigate to:

Administrate / Rss (Changes)

You will see a list of items in your What’s New list with an option to delete the ones you do not need.

The Widget Column

Widgets are in either the right or left column of your site. They can be customized and narrowed-down to certain specific pages. Read more about widgets here:

<http://smallfarmcentral.com/help/mailling-lists>

Upload Files

If you need your customers to download files such as PDFs, Word Documents, or Powerpoint Presentations, you can upload them to the File Manager:

Create Content / Upload Files

This is not the place for image files – they should be placed in the Photo Gallery as described earlier in this document.

Change Your Password

It is good practice to change your password to something easy for you to remember, but hard to guess. For security purposes, it should have at least 8 characters with a mixture of letters, numbers, and other characters if possible. To change your SFC password, navigate to:

Administrate / Account / Reset Password

Other Users Access to the Control Panel

If you have other users who should have access to the control panel (like business partners, a spouse, or employees) you may create an account for each user. To create new users, navigate to:

Administrate / Account / Farmer Users

Each “Farmer User” will receive emails that come through the site like contacts, mailing list sign-ups, ecommerce notifications, Member Assembler sign-ups, and etc. If their access is temporary, you may give them an account now and delete the account later.

Transferring Your Work to a Live Website

Feel free to work on your demo site at will. We can transfer that site to a live site whenever you are ready to get started; you will not lose any of your work.

Next Steps

Hopefully this “Get Started” document has given you some ideas on how to move forward with your site. We have many options and your site can grow as you get time to work on some of the advanced functionality like maps, calendars, and blogs.

Please contact us with any further questions.

Problems, Questions?

There are many ways to get in touch with us if you need some help:

- Control Panel: “Contact SFC” link in the top right hand corner of each Control Panel page.
- Website: <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com/contact>
- Website Help: <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com/memberassembler/help>
- Email: support@smallfarmcentral.com
- Phone: 412-567-3864