Buncombe County Small Farm Initiative Updates

The Small Farm Initiative held its third on-farm demonstration in August at Thatchmore Farm in Leicester, where Tom Elmore is exploring production of different species of container-grown trees to be sold as “table-top trees”, and field-grown trees, as alternatives to Fraser fir for Christmas trees. He is comparing a variety of species and cultivars to determine the ones best suited to the market and his micro-climate at approximately 2200 feet. Some trees will be grafted onto disease-resistant rootstock to compare their growth to ungrafted cultivars. At the workshop, Jeff Owen, NCSU Christmas tree specialist, demonstrated the grafting process on Fraser fir. Workshop attendees received handouts describing different species of exotic fir that are suitable for Christmas tree production in WNC, as well as a handout on sources of seeds, seedlings, and transplants. If you would like a copy of either of these handouts, contact Jean Harrison or Amanda Stone at 255-5522.

The second fall workshop, “Growing Specialty Cut Flowers”, will be held on Thursday, October 16 at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station from 9:00 am-12 noon. Come learn how cut flowers can be a good business alone or add diversity to your existing farm production. Leah Cook, flower grower from Wild Hare Farm in the Piedmont, will share with attendees how she grows and markets a great selection of cut flowers. This workshop is free, but if interested in attending, please register by calling Jean Harrison or Amanda Stone at 828-255-5522.
WNC AgOptions Demonstration Awards for 2009

In the upcoming month, announcements will be made about availability of demonstration awards for the 2009 WNC AgOptions program. In the 2008 AgOptions program, 23 area farmers received $5,000 grants and 14 farmers received $2,500 grants.

In partnership with the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, HandMade in America and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the West District of NC Cooperative Extension has offered the AgOptions program since 2004. The grants offer farmers an incentive to try new enterprises, which will encourage the sustainability of their farm operations as well as demonstrate farming methods to the larger agriculture community.

Of the 37 grants awarded in 2008, 9 are fruit and vegetable or edibles projects, 9 are nursery projects, 8 are livestock, 4 are beekeeping, 4 are product-processing, and 3 are agritourism projects. To stay informed about the upcoming availability of grants for 2009, go to http://www.wncagoptions.org.

Southern Region SARE Producer and On-Farm Research Grants

The calls have been released for the 2009 Southern Region SARE Producer Grants and 2009 Southern Region SARE On-Farm Research Grants. Proposals for both programs are due by November 17, 2008. Obtain the calls at http://www.southernsare.uga.edu/callpage.htm

or by sending an email request to info@southernsare.org

or by calling 770-412-4787.

Please join Blue Ridge Food Ventures for the Second Annual Food Ventures Marketplace

Tuesday, September 23, 2008
3:00-5:00 pm Trade Only
5:00-7:00 pm General Public

Register now at www.blueridgefoodventures.org

Sample products from over 30 specialty food entrepreneurs

Good Husbandry Grants Program
Deadline October 15, 2008

The Animal Welfare Approved program and food label is announcing its 2008 Good Husbandry Grants Program. Farmers who are approved, or who have applied to be in the program, are eligible to apply for grants of up to $10,000 to improve animal welfare on their farms. The application deadline is October 15. Grant guidelines and an application form and further details may be obtained at http://tinyurl.com/65tv8z
Getting Started in the Nursery Business, September 24, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station

A workshop for getting started in the nursery business is being offered through the Buncombe County Small Farms Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to preserve farmland in Buncombe County by assisting farmers in finding ways to increase farm profitability.

Nursery crop production has shown economic promise in WNC, but as with any new business venture, there are important questions that need to be addressed, including how to select an appropriate site, assess your resources (physical, personal, skills, etc.), develop a business plan, how to manage risks, and last but NOT LEAST—determining your market! This workshop is designed to help you address these issues.

Join us at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station on September 24 from 8:30 am—2:00 pm. Registration fee of $10 includes lunch. For a brochure with agenda and registration form, see http://tinyurl.com/5s29f6 or call Jean Harrison at 255-5522.

2008 On Farm Processing Workshops For Poultry and Rabbit Meat Production

The Independent Small Animal Meat Processors Association (ISAMPA) and Foothills Family Farms are pleased to announce two half-day workshops for small scale harvesting and processing of poultry and rabbits. Training is designed to increase participants' knowledge of processing techniques to maximize product quality and increase profitability of small-scale meat production. All activities will contribute to planning and organizing a small scale meat production business under exemption from NC Meat and Poultry Inspection laws.

Saturday, October 18, participants will gather at the McDowell County Agricultural Barn in Marion to learn about processing rabbits. Rabbit farmer Walter Harrill will lead the workshop as participants harvest and process rabbits ready for market. Dr. James McNitt, a nationally renowned expert on rabbit production from Southern University in Louisiana, will present on food safety issues critical to proper small scale processing.

Sunday, October 19, participants will meet in Old Fort as pastured poultry producers Meredith and Casey McKissick lead a hands-on training workshop using a Mobile Processing Unit (MPU) for increased efficiency of on-farm poultry processing. Small scale poultry expert Anne Fanatico, of ATTRA and the National Center for Appropriate Technology, will discuss regional perspectives on the viability of pastured poultry.

Registration cost is $10 per workshop, $15 for both days. Please RSVP by October 1 by calling Smithson Mills at 828-273-9119, or by emailing smithson@smithsonmills.com. Please give your name, phone number, and email address when you register. Directions to both events will be provided.

These workshops are organized by the Independent Small Animal Meat Processors Association of WNC (ISAMPA). ISAMPA's mission includes: Promoting best practices for raising, processing and marketing small meat animals; support for the development of a small animal processing facility meeting state or federal inspection requirements, and; raising public awareness of small animal meat products humanely raised and processed in a manner that contributes to the social, economic, and environmental well being of Western North Carolina's people and natural resources.
Seven-Star, Inc. America’s largest green event production company is looking for a CSA relationship for certified organic (transition ok) fresh vegetables, fruits, cheeses, soaps and roots. They have 25 employees and feed them a vegetarian light breakfast and heavy lunch daily. Since 1999, Seven-Star produces events advancing the local, organic, fair-trade, sustainable, green, clean-tech and LOHAS markets. The firm strictly serves non-profits or CSR firms who are dedicated to eR/sR environmentally Responsibility/social Respect.

Please prepare a bid for them for a weekly delivery. They are located on Lyman Street on the River, in Asheville, NC.

“Any farmers out there who might be able to keep us well fed year round, please fax your bid to 1.866.465.0066 attention Joseph. The contract would activate in late September of 2008.”

Thanks!
Green Regards,
Joseph B. Malki
Co-Founder/Partner/CBDO
Seven-Star, Inc. :: Green Event Experts
PO Box 2837, Asheville, NC 28801-2837

direct:  +1.828.333.9429
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mobile:  +1.828.216.5769
efax:    +1.866.465.0066

http://www.sevenstarevents.com/
http://www.greensponsorship.com/
http://www.greeneventmanagement.com/

Cranbrook at Biltmore Park is seeking a farmer to sell veggies and other local products to its residents on two Saturdays in September. This arrangement has the potential to grow in the future. If interested, contact Sharon Cooke at 681-0033.

Brad Martin of Southeastern Natives Nursery is looking for a farmer to lease 2-3 acres of rich bottom land in the Candler area for vegetable production. If you are interested, call Brad at 713-3531.

An online local directory has recently been launched, Support-Local.com. It is exclusively for small, local and independently owned businesses of all sorts, including farms, tailgate markets, etc. As a starting point, they are serving Buncombe, Henderson, Rutherford, Yancey, Madison, Haywood and McDowell counties. Not only is this an online directory for the general public to easily find local businesses, it also features money saving tips, timely articles (if you are interested in submitting an article, please feel free to do so!), local area events and more.

Cool sites

For an updated list of ginseng buyers in NC, go to http://www.ncplant.com and click on ginseng. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on “List of NC Ginseng Dealers”.

Check out the Fall 2008 Natural Product Classes at A-B Tech (Enka campus) at: http://tinyurl.com/5kgwm2 Courses are alphabetical—scroll down to "Natural Products Business".

Organic Fertilizer Calculator:
http://tinyurl.com/6xmujk
**Upcoming Events**

**September 18**  Small Egg Production in a Range Setting Field Day, Salisbury, 8:45 am—3:30 pm. More information and registration at [http://tinyurl.com/6asxlw](http://tinyurl.com/6asxlw)

**September 23**  Second Annual Food Ventures Marketplace, Blue Ridge Food Ventures, 3:00-5:00 pm (trade only), 5:00-7:00 pm general public. Register now at [www.blueridgefoodventures.org](http://www.blueridgefoodventures.org)

**September 24**  Getting Started in the Nursery Business, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station, Mills River, 9:00 am-2:00 pm. $10 Registration fee includes lunch and educational materials. Contact Jean Harrison or Amanda Stone at Buncombe County Extension for more info at 255-5522. Deadline for registration September 17.

**September 26-28**  True Nature Country Fair, Deerfields, Mills River. For more information, go to: [www.organicgrowersschool.org/events.html](http://www.organicgrowersschool.org/events.html)

**September 27**  Chemical-free Weed Control Methods, Jafasa Farm, Mills River, 3:00-5:00 pm. $20 fee, educational materials provided. Presented by the Organic Growers School. To register, contact Meredith McKissick at 828-450-2026 or meredith@organicgrowersschool.org

**October 2**  On-Farm Demonstration: Medicinal Herb Production, Van Burnette Farm, Black Mountain. 4:00-5:30 pm. Free program. For more information or to register, contact Jean Harrison at 255-5522.

**October 4-5**  Micro-hydro Workshop, Appalachian State University. For more info and to register, go to [http://tinyurl.com/6qzrso](http://tinyurl.com/6qzrso)

**October 8-9**  Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference, Shenandoah Valley, VA. See agenda and brochure at [http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/upevent.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/upevent.htm)

**October 16**  Specialty Cut Flower Workshop, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station, Mills River, 9:00 am-12 noon. Free program supported by the NC Specialty Crops Program and the Buncombe County Small Farms Initiative. Call 255-5522 to register.

**October 16**  Pumpkin/Gourd Field Day, Mountain Research Station, Waynesville, 2:00 pm. For more information, contact the Department of Horticultural Science Extension Specialist Jonathan Schultheis at [Jonthan_Schultheis@ncsu.edu](mailto:Jonthan_Schultheis@ncsu.edu).

**October 31-November 2**  Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Anderson, SC. For more information, go to [www.carolinafarmstewards.org](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org)

**November 6-8**  Southeast Strawberry Expo, Hilton Charlotte University Place, Charlotte. See the brochure and registration form at [http://www.ncstrawberry.com/](http://www.ncstrawberry.com/)

**December 3-5**  5th Annual NC State University Hands-on Farmstead Cheese-making Short Course, Raleigh. $550 fee. For more information on course content or how to register, contact Gary Cartwright at 919-513-2488 or by email at the following: Gary_Cartwright@ncsu.edu
Buncombe County Small Farms Initiative

More and more farmers have been sharing with our agents that they desire to continue to farm, but are desperately looking for ways to increase the income from their farming operation to preserve the farm. With the support of our Buncombe County Commissioners and County Management, Cooperative Extension is initiating a program to aggressively work to help farmers diversify their operations, add value to their products or market products differently in order to increase the income from their operations.

Individuals with disabilities who would like to participate in any program mentioned in this newsletter, but who need special assistance to do so, should call the Extension Center at 828-255-5522 at least five days prior to the event.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Jean Harrison
Extension Agent
Agriculture-Small Farms

http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu