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What Do We Need For Our Farming Communities?
This is the question I am attempting to answer both for myself and for you. As the Small Farms Agent, I have been trying to put my face in front of you so you can tell me what you need in the realm of education opportunities to help you maintain your farm as a viable, successful enterprise. I have met many of you and still have many more to meet. With your help I hope we can come up with some solutions to this very important question.

Currently, I am working with fellow agents on several workshops that will be offered in the next few months. A few examples are: The Business Side of Agritourism, Mushroom Inoculation, Landscape and Nursery Management, Starting a Small Food Business, and Internet Marketing. In addition, I am personally working on a Poultry Production Workshop, an informational conference on Ideas for Value Added Enterprises, and scheduling community center meetings for an overall introduction of myself, my program, and to hear your ideas and concerns.

Here at the Extension Office, we are also working towards developing some means of connecting folks interested in farm leasing opportunities. I want to help farms stay working farms even if the owners are unable to do it themselves and there are no family members there to intercept the opportunity. There are constantly people asking me where they can find grant money to buy a farm. Well, grants for purchasing land are just not available, but leasing options are.

I also want to help connect people interested in acquiring a conservation easement for their farm with the appropriate person and organization, such as the Soil and Water Conservation or Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy. In addition to land leasing and conservation easements, I am working with the North Carolina Farm Transition Network trying to see if transition programs are something that could work in our area, where a farmer puts land in an easement, giving up development rights, possibly providing a long term lease to an aspiring farmer, with the option to buy at Agriculture Value. Will this work? I do not know. There has to be farmers interested.

So, with all of this said, please communicate with me what you think our farming community needs. Beef production, poultry production, more vegetables, preservation, better understanding of regulations? Please let me know your thoughts.

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“The first farmer was the first man. All historic nobility rests on the possession and use of land.” ~Ralph Waldo Emerson
General Safety Instructions for Pesticide Use

- Use pesticides only when needed.
- Use the correct pesticide for the problem.
- Know any hazards that the pesticide might present.
- Read and follow the label.
- Commercial pest control operators, farmers, and other applicators of organophosphate and carbamate pesticides should contact their physician at the beginning of the season. At this time, you should inform the physician of the types of pesticides you will be using. The physician will determine the level of enzymes in your blood that may be affected by the use of certain pesticides. While discussing the pesticides to be used, review the signs and symptoms of pesticide poisoning.
- Know what you are to do in the event of an accident. Plan ahead. Call your physician or 911 immediately in the event of an accident.
- Have your physician’s phone number programmed into your phone. In an emergency, time is extremely important.
- Take time to explain the safe use of pesticides to employees.
- Check your application equipment for leaks or clogged lines, nozzles, and strainers.
- Calibrate your equipment frequently for proper output, using water.
- Check respirator for cleanliness, clean filter, and proper fit.
- Check gloves and other protective clothing for holes and cleanliness before each use.
- Make sure plenty of clean water, detergent, towels, and a clean change of clothing are available.
- Do not permit delivery of pesticides unless a responsible representative is on hand to receive and properly store them.
- Make sure that people have been warned and livestock and pets that may be exposed have been removed from the area to be treated.
- Notify beekeepers who maintain beehives in the vicinity of a pesticide application.
- Cover food and water containers.
- Never eat, drink, or smoke when handling pesticides.
- Wash your hands before eating, smoking, or drinking.
- Make sure the time intervals between date of application and reentry, harvest, slaughter, or milking will comply with those given on the label.
- Rinse pesticide containers before recycling or disposal. (Put rinsate in sprayer tank.)

This information can also be found online at: http://ipm.ncsu.edu/agchem/1-toc.pdf
Featured Farmer
Frank & Jeanette Wilson of Hominy Valley Farms

Frank and Jeanette Wilson are 3rd generation farmers at Hominy Valley, a place where tobacco, tomatoes, peppers and beef cattle were the mainstay for many years. In 1994, tobacco production ended and beef production increased in order to keep the farm profitable. Now, with the need for diversification, the Wilson family has taken on many new endeavors such as adding value to their pure breed Gelbvieh herd operation. They are doing this by incorporating a farm based finishing beef operation. Their finished beef products, along with other products grown and produced on the farm and other locally grown meats and vegetables will be available at a year-round market stand called “The Loco-Motive” opening at the WNC Farmers Market in late spring. You will also be able to find their products at the Asheville City Market.

Get Your Produce Scales Calibrated Through NCDA at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension

All tailgate market vendors: This is a chance for you to make sure you have your scales certified with NCDA. Jerry Roberts, the Weights and Measures Inspector will be in our office on March 17th and March 23rd from 9am – 12 noon. If you have any questions, please contact Melinda Roberts at 828.255.5522 or melinda_roberts@ncsu.edu.

Rain Barrel Sale!

The 80 gallon barrel measures 37 inches high and 28 inches wide. It is made of 20% recycled high density polypropylene. The heavy concave lid channels water flow into the barrel. The screened entry blocks leaves, debris and insects and the dark green color discourages algae growth. It has two overflow ports to move water away from your home. It comes complete with fittings and installation instructions.

80 gallon barrel $110
Payment by March 22, 2010
to Rain Barrel USA

Pick Up Day
Saturday, March 27, 2010
9:00 – 1:00
WNC Farmers Market

To order your barrel, mail your payment to: NC Cooperative Extension, 94 Coxe Ave, Asheville, NC 28801. An order form can also be found on our web site at buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu.
### Summer Cover Crops Suitable For North Carolina

The following information was taken from:

*Summer Cover Crops*

Written by:

N. G. Creamer, Assistant Professor, Extension Horticulture Specialist, Department of Horticulture Science and K. R. Baldwin, Extension Associate, Department of Horticulture Science

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**Introduction**

There is growing interest in the use of short-season summer annual legumes or grasses as cover crops and green manures in vegetable production systems. Cover crops can provide a significant source of nitrogen (N) for subsequent crops; reduce erosion, runoff, and potential pollution of surface waters; capture soil N that might otherwise be lost to leaching; add organic matter to the soil; improve soil physical properties; impact insect and disease life cycles; and suppress nematode populations and weed growth. There can be potential drawbacks, such as cooler soils in the spring, and the additional cost of seeding the cover crop. These factors must be considered depending on the particular cash crops and cover crops being grown.

Land does not have to be taken out of production in order to incorporate cover crops into cropping systems. Cover crops are usually grown in the off-season to provide benefits to the subsequent cash crop. In North Carolina, summer cover crops can be planted in the production window immediately following spring harvest and prior to fall planting of vegetable crops. The best use of cover crops maximizes the benefits described above without reducing the yield or quality of commercial cash crops.

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**Species Suitable for Use as a Summer Cover Crop in NC**

**Non-legumes:**
- Buckwheat (Fagopyrum esculentum)
- Sorghum-sudangrass (Sorghum bicolor XS. Sudanense)
- German (foxtail) millet (Setaria italica)
- Pearl Millet (Pennisetum glaucum)
- Jananese Millet (Enchinochloa frumentacea)

**Legumes:**
- Cowpea (Vigna unguiculata)
- Soybean (Glycine max)
- Velvetbean (Mucuna deeringiana)
- Sunnhemp (Crotalaria juncea)

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**Single Species vs. Mixtures**

Mixtures can be planted to optimize the benefits associated with cover crop use. Mixtures which include species that establish quickly can reduce soil erosion. Above-ground biomass, and consequently N in the above-ground biomass, can be increased by a mixture that can utilize more below-ground and above-ground niches for nutrients, water, and light. For example, a deep rooted cover crop can be combined with a shallow rooted cover crop to utilize water and resources in more of the soil profile.

Competition for soil N in mixed stands results in increased biological nitrogen fixation by the legume. Cereal crops usually germinate and establish effective
Summer Cover Crops Suitable For North Carolina
Continued...

root systems more rapidly than legumes and effectively lower soil N concentration. Since nodulation of legume roots and fixation of atmospheric N\textsubscript{2} by legumes is generally greater when soil N concentration is low, nodulation and nitrogen fixation is increased in mixtures. Nitrogen cycling can also be manipulated with mixed cover crop species. Combining plants with high C:N ratios (mature cereals) with plants that have low C:N ratios (legumes) can influence mineralization of cover crop residues. The release of nitrogen from residues can be more properly timed with subsequent crop uptake; that is, both nitrogen immobilization and large flushes of nitrate can be moderated. This can help to optimize the efficiency with which fixed nitrogen is used by subsequent crops. Planting mixtures of cover crops can take advantage of the allelopathic potential of the cover crops to suppress weeds.

Allelopathic suppression of weeds has been shown to be a species specific phenomenon, therefore a broader spectrum of weed control may be possible by growing a mixture of cover crop species, each contributing allelopathic activity towards specific weed species. Mixtures can also be planted to influence insect populations. Cover crop species, regardless of biomass or biomass-N production potential, could be included in a mixture if they were known to attract important beneficial insects into the cropping system.

Methods of Mechanical Kill
Cover crops that will be left on the surface as a mulch for no-till production need to be killed, either with chemicals or mechanically. In systems where the goal is to reduce chemical use, mechanically killing the cover crops is desirable. Three methods for mechanically killing cover crops were evaluated in a study in Eastern North Carolina: undercutting, mowing, and rolling. The effectiveness of the various methods of mechanical kill were evaluated 3 weeks after cover crop kill. Mowing was accomplished with a flail mower which leaves the finely chopped residue evenly distributed over the bed. Rolling was accomplished using the same flail mower, but with the mowing tines disengaged. The undercutting was performed with a single blade that severed cover crop roots, approximately 2 inches deep, and an attached roller laid the undercut cover crops flat.

The complete article referenced above can be found at: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-37.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-37.html)

For more information contact Melinda Roberts at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension.

Another Good Resource:
Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. Published by Sustainable Agriculture Network, Beltsville, MD
The North Carolina Tomato Growers Association Presents...

The Winter Vegetable Conference & Trade Show, and 42nd Annual Meeting

February 17 & 18, 2010
Crowne Plaza Resort in Asheville, NC

Exhibits will be open continuously throughout the conference. Come visit early!
Continuing pesticide recertification credits and continuing education units for Certified Crop Advisers will be offered

Topics for 2010 Include:

Tomato Breeding Update
Combating Late Blight and Other Foliar Diseases of Tomato
Methyl Bromide Alternatives and EPA Regulation Changes
Labor Issues and H-2A Program
Fresh Produce Safety, Traceback and Recall
Insect Control in Sweet Corn
Vegetable Weed Management and New Herbicides
Pepper Production
Marketing—What are Produce Managers Looking For?
Tomatillo Production and Management
Grafting Tomatoes and Other Vegetables
Insect Control in Tomatoes
Importance of Pollinators for Vegetables

Special Session: High Tunnels!
High Tunnel Fertility and Soil Management
Economics of High Tunnels—Does it really pay?
Types of High Tunnels, Production and Management

Business Meeting will start on Wednesday at 4:30
with a social reception to follow.
Don’t miss out!

Registration opens at 9:30
on February 17th.
Educational sessions will begin at 1:00 pm.

Contact Information
Registration, Exhibitors, Sponsors & Associate Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melinda James</td>
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</tr>
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More information can be found at: www.nctomatoes.com
Links to all of the grants below are available on the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Website. Go to http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu and click on “Agriculture & Food” and then under County Extension Programs, click on “Buncombe County Small Farms Initiative”. If you do not have access to the internet, please call our office at (828) 255-5522 for more information on any of these grants.

- **NCDA&CS Food Safety Cost-Share Grants** - Given on a First Come First Serve Basis.
- **NCDA&CS Cost-Share Program for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** - Given on a First Come First Serve Basis.
- **OCIA Research and Extension Micro Grants** - Given on a First Come First Serve Basis.
- **Appalachian Grown Matching Funds** - Ongoing through June 2010.
- **USDA Small Farm Funding Resources** - Ongoing.
- **FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan Program** - Ongoing.
- **Farm Credit Financial Training Funding** - (Provided by NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Grant) - Currently Accepting Applications.
- **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** - Has several programs that offer financial and technical assistance, easements, incentive payments, cost shares and matching funds in the areas of conservation, watershed and wetland rehabilitation and protection, environmental quality, farmland protection, wildlife habitat, and grassland and grazing reserves.
- **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)** – Has several opportunities including research and education grants, producer grants, sustainable community grants, professional development grants and on-farm research grants.

Winter Apple School: February 10th, 2010 at Quality Inn in Hendersonville, NC. Contact Ivy Olson at 828.697.4891 or ivy_olson@ncsu.edu.

Landscape Management Workshop: February 11th, 2010 at the NC Arboretum, Asheville, NC. Contact Amanda Stone at 828.255.5522 or Amanda_stone@ncsu.edu.

Western NC Winter Vegetable Conference: February 17th-18th, 2010 at Crowne Plaza and Resort, Asheville, NC.

Nursery Management Workshop: February, 25th, 2010 at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center, Mills River, NC. Contact Amanda Stone at 828.255.5522 or Amanda_stone@ncsu.edu.

Edible and Medicinal Mushroom Project Workshop: March 5th, 2009 at Ray-Cort Rec. Park in Burnsville, NC. Contact Melinda Roberts at 828.255.5522 or Melinda_roberts@ncsu.edu.


Developing a New Food Business: March 30th and 31st, 2010 at A-B Tech Enka Campus, Asheville. Contact Cathy Hohenstein at 828.255.5522 or cathy_hohenstein@ncsu.edu.

"Much appreciation to Erin Bonito for her assistance in comprising the Small Farms Initiative Newsletter"
Buncombe County Small Farms Initiative

More and more farmers have been sharing with our agents their desire to continue farming, as well as the challenges they are facing in doing so. Farmers are desperately looking for ways to increase their income so they can keep their operation viable and their land preserved. Support given by our Buncombe County Commissioners and County Management has allowed the Cooperative Extension to develop a Small Farms Initiative program to aggressively work towards helping both seasoned and new farmers.

Melinda Roberts
Extension Agent
Agriculture-Small Farms

http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu

You can get this newsletter via email. Contact us either by phone at 828-255-5522 or email: Melinda_Roberts@ncsu.edu