Hoosier Harvest Market “in-between” marketing channel

By Matt Ernst, independent writer

The Hoosier Harvest Market, hoosierharvestmarket.com, is helping Indiana producers capture dollars from a market niche “in-between” traditional direct market channels. Initially funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, the online market is now entering its second year of operation, expanding its reach among Indiana consumers and producers.

The market operates from noon Friday through noon Wednesday. Customers can select from inventories maintained by the producers, who also set their own prices. Producers deliver their products to a central location, and products are then distributed to about 15 locations, mainly in Hancock County, Indianapolis and the eastern half of Marion County. More than 20 pickup sites will be running by the end of this season, and a winter market pickup will occur at the Indiana Statehouse Farmers Market from mid-October to mid-May.

The market, with more than 600 registered customers, is powered by its initial core of about 30 regular customers. “It is not necessarily designed to be a high-volume market,” said Roy Ballard, Purdue Extension Educator for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Hancock County, Ind. “What it does is fit the producer who either may not be ready or does not want to set up at a farmers market, or is not big enough to open a roadside or farm stand,” Ballard said. “It will likely be a good transitional market for those who are scaling up to add wholesale to their market portfolio.”
The market’s offerings reflect that mix. More than 100 preserved foods are regularly offered; the next largest category is frozen meat and poultry. Producers update their own inventory weekly. “We’ve been pleased with how well that system (of inventory management) is working,” says Ballard. Producers also set their own prices, changing prices as needed. Shoppers are able to choose the farmer or farmers of their choice who have the products and the production system that match their values, and there is currently no minimum order.

The market’s strength is based on its location. “We definitely are targeted to an Indianapolis market,” said Ballard, whose base in Hancock County is east of Indianapolis. “We’ve seen growth west and northwest of Hancock County, into north central Marion County.” Still, the market retains its local roots. “It is important to note that we have important and very loyal local shoppers as well,” he said.

Establishing the distribution and delivery system has provided an initially unanticipated part of the market. Two farms are delivering their CSA shares at Hoosier Harvest Market pickup sites this season. “The CSA has been a nice addition,” Ballard said. “We’re looking at adding some smaller wholesale delivery, for local restaurants, in the future.” Synchronizing the production and market sides of the operation is always a challenge with this kind of effort, Ballard noted.

The market is set up as a cooperative. Members pay $150 annual membership dues and must carry a $1 million general liability insurance policy. During the first year of operation, specialty crop producers were assessed a 10 percent fee of gross sales. Non-specialty crop producers were responsible for a 15 percent fee. A sliding scale of percentage is being devised so that larger sellers can receive some break on the final percentage fee.

“Most successful distribution networks and food hubs we’ve seen will charge producers somewhere between 20 percent to 30 percent,” said Tim Woods, UK Agricultural Economics. “These are retail businesses, and retail works based on the principle of markup.”

Larger producers can also benefit by involvement in these markets. Selling products at retail prices can make it worthwhile for a larger producer to drop off an order to a distribution network such as the Hoosier Harvest Market.

Starting this sort of food hub or marketing network should not be done without thorough planning, advises Purdue’s Ballard. “The idea started about two years before the market,” he said. “We formed
an exploratory committee and hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study before we wrote a business plan to fit the idea to our market. This works because of our distance from Indianapolis, no doubt about that.”

**USDA to offer new support for beginning farmers, ranchers**

*Adapted from USDA Press Release, June 23, 2014*

The USDA has announced the implementation of new farm bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden unveiled [www.usda.gov/newfarmers](http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers), a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

“New and beginning farmers are the future of American agriculture,” said Deputy Secretary Harden. “The average age of an American farmer is 58 and rising, so we must help new farmers get started if America is going to continue feeding the world and maintain a strong agriculture economy. The new policies announced today will help give beginning farmers the financial security they need to succeed. Our new online tool will provide one-stop shopping for beginning farmers to learn more about accessing USDA services that can help their operations thrive.”

**Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden**

USDA’s New Farmers website has in-depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations. In the near future, USDA will also announce additional crop insurance program changes for beginning farmers and ranchers - including discounted premiums, waiver of administrative fees, and other benefits. To read the complete press release, No. 0131.14, go to [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2014/06/0131.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2014/06/0131.xml)

**USDA program can take your conservation efforts to next level**

*By Christy Morgan, Program Analyst Natural Resources Conservation Service*

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced in late June the opportunity for first participants in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to renew their contracts for an additional five years. During the first few weeks of July, Kentucky CSP contract holders who are among this group will receive letters offering them the opportunity to renew their contracts. The contract renewal opportunity affects only about 170 landowners in Kentucky, but it gives NRCS a chance to talk about what a great opportunity the CSP is for landowners.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner. An annual payment is available for installing new conservation enhancements and maintaining existing ones. The program pays participants for performance, so the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Continuous sign-up for USDA programs is available with announced cut-off dates for ranking and funding applications. The funding deadlines for new enrollments this year have passed, but landowners can continue to submit applications to be eligible for the next funding opportunity.
**Who is eligible?**
CSP is available for private farmers, ranchers and forest landowners who are already using conservation measures and are ready to take their efforts to the next level. A Conservation Stewardship Self-Screening Checklist is available online to help you determine if CSP is right for you.

**Is this a competitive process?**
Applications are evaluated and ranked relative to other applications that address similar resource concerns in the State. In the ranking process, producers get credit both for conservation measures they have already implemented and for new measures they agree to add.

Ready to take your conservation efforts to the next level? If you answered “yes,” then contact your local USDA service center to find out more.

**UKREC open house features horticulture research projects**
On June 19, the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton hosted its 2014 Horticulture Open House to share recent findings in nursery crop trials, irrigation systems, and peach and apple rootstock trials. Commercial growers and home gardeners from western Kentucky visited the trial gardens and orchard research plots to learn from UK researchers and Extension specialists.

The next UKREC Field Day will be held on July 31 for Corn, Soybean and Tobacco Crop Research. Contact Colette Laurent for more information at 270-365-7541, extension 264, or visit their website at [http://wkrec.ca.uky.edu/](http://wkrec.ca.uky.edu/).

**Growing Farm Profits now online**

*From Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group*

Have you been hearing people mention the great things they learned at one of Southern SAWG’s Growing Farm Profits trainings, and the useful tools they got for free, such as the amazing Veggie Compass? Been wishing you had access to this to help you improve your farm profits?

Have you participated in one of our many GFP trainings around the region and wish you could take a refresher course now that you’ve gotten back to the farm and started concentrating on increasing your farm profits?

Well, aren’t you the lucky one? Our new Growing Farm Profits online course is the next best thing to attending a live training. Many of the GFP training materials are now available to you on our website.

Meanwhile, we have created eight short video tutorials to demonstrate how to use the free Veggie Compass Whole Farm Profit Management tool. Ellen Polishuk, a vegetable grower in Virginia, walks you through Veggie Compass, using her own farm numbers to demonstrate how you can use this tool to determine the profitability of each of your crops in each of your market channels. She shows how Veggie Compass can be used to help locate your farm’s inefficiencies and profit centers, and how you can use this information to manage for profitability.

Click here to access the Veggie Compass videos; all of the Growing Farm Profits online course materials can be accessed at [http://www.ssawg.org/growing-farm-profits/](http://www.ssawg.org/growing-farm-profits/). It’s all FREE! Let us know what you think by emailing jean@ssawg.org!
Spotted wing drosophila control

By Ric Bessin, UK Extension Entomologist

During the last week of June, spotted wing drosophila (SWD) was detected in two additional counties (Webster and Daviess) following the previous detection in McCracken County. Producers of blueberries, blackberries, red and black raspberries are advised to begin monitoring for SWD if they haven’t already begun. This article addresses some of the issues producers need to consider when spraying during the harvest period. While we address chemical control of SWD, producers are also strongly encouraged to use an integrated approach to SWD management that includes SWD sanitation through clean harvest, post-harvest refrigeration, and canopy management.

If SWD is detected on a farm with susceptible crops during the harvest period, producers must manage this invasive insect to avoid larvae in the fruit. For many producers, this may mean spraying during the harvest period. Only insecticides recommended for SWD on their respective crops should be used. Other products may not provide satisfactory control. See ENTFACT 230 for a list of recommended insecticides for the different small fruit crops.

Observing pre-harvest intervals

Because we are spraying periodically during the harvest period, pre-harvest intervals (PHIs) are critically important to ensure label compliance and safety. The pre-harvest interval is the minimum amount of time that must pass between the end of spraying and the start of picking. The PHI allows for residues to dissipate to acceptable levels. Because small fruit crops are often picked very

Farm events and food safety guides re-released by Farm Commons

From the Farm Commons blog

The beginning of summer also brings the beginning of farm events! From tours to festivals to dinners, farmers are developing new ways to show off their awesome operations. But, these events come with increased legal risk. Fortunately, many of these risks can be managed effectively. Farm Commons’ newly updated guide to “Hosting Safer, More Legally Secure On-Farm Events,” is now available. While learning about how things can go wrong, farmers and advocates will also find action points to help reduce legal risk exposure while having a great time.

Farm Commons has also just released a new, detailed guide to the legal aspects of a farm-related food safety incident. The detailed legal explanations explore the background behind the law while action points help farmers move forward with reducing their legal risk exposure. Visit http://farmcommons.org/blog/food-safety-and-farm-events-guides-rereleased to download the guides, and also watch a webinar on their Food Safety guidelines.

Free High Tunnel Hoop House Construction Guide available

From The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation website

The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation has published a High Tunnel Hoop House Construction Guide. The author, Steve Upson, has been designing, constructing and utilizing hoop houses for more than 17 years. He is an educator and consultant and has been able to create a guide that contains information on constructing many different hoop house types. The guide is intended to introduce the novice grower/hoop house builder to the various tools and techniques used in constructing a wide range of hoop house models. The various guidelines within the publication are applicable to both prefabricated commercial structures as well as homemade structures.

“It is my belief that a careful study of this publication prior to purchasing a hoop house kit or materials to custom-build a structure will save the builder time and money as well as reduce the level of frustration encountered during the construction process,” Upson says. Download a free copy of this comprehensive High Tunnel Hoop House Construction Guide at: http://www.noble.org/ag/horticulture/hoop-house-construction-guide/
frequently, it may not be practical to use materials with PHIs longer than three days. Insecticides with PHIs of one day are more accommodating of picking schedules and U-pick operations.

Preventing resistance
SWD is able to complete a generation in just over a week with favorable summer temperatures. A general rule of thumb is to switch insecticide modes of action with each new pest generation. That is, we try not to control consecutive pest generations with insecticides that share the same mode of action. Insecticides sharing the same mode of action share the same Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) group number (these are usually displayed on the product label). So each week we must switch to a recommended insecticide in a different IRAC group. The insecticides in the ‘Very Effective’ and ‘Effective’ groups belong to IRAC groups 1B (organophosphate), 3A (pyrethroid), 5 (spinosyns), and 28 (anthrilic diamides). This provides producers with enough alternatives to switch modes of action.

Obtaining good coverage
SWD prefers to hide in shaded places in the canopy during much of the day, so sprays must be able to penetrate into the dense canopy of caneberries to be effective. High pressure and relatively high volume sprays are needed to ensure adequate coverage. Producers should thin dense canopies to allow for good spray coverage.

Reapplication of sprays
Generally, it is not recommended that spray intervals be extended longer than seven days with SWD. Spray intervals of longer than seven days have been associated with poor control. Following a significant rain, I recommend reapplying SWD sprays.

Subscribe!
Thanks for reading, and please contact Miranda at miranda.hileman@uky.edu if you are interested in subscribing to our online newsletter.