Kentucky growers interested in crop diversification should make every effort to attend the 2014 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference and Trade Show, scheduled for January 6-7 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lexington.

For a registration fee of only $30, growers can attend sessions on vegetable, small fruit, tree fruit and organic production; a high tunnel workshop; farmers markets; direct marketing, including Community Supported Agriculture and a Good Agricultural Practices update; agritourism; and the Grape and Wine Short Course.

Pre-conference sessions on the evening of Sunday, January 5, will feature small fruit and tree fruit round table discussions. The $30 registration fee includes a membership to the Kentucky State Horticultural Society, the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association, or the Organic Association of Kentucky. Meeting registration covers the Grape and Wine Short Course, but a separate fee is required to become a member of the Kentucky Vineyard Society.

The program will feature speakers from the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky State University, agriculture organizations and growers, as well as specialists from Ohio State University, West Virginia University, and the University of Tennessee.

The program and registration form are available at http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/2014KFVCprogram.pdf. Advance registration must be received by December 20th. The program includes information on hotel reservations and meal costs.
KY Women in Agriculture
2013 Conference in the books

By Sharon Furches, KWIA president

What a fantastic Kentucky Women in Agriculture Conference held recently in Lexington! Thank you to so many who supported and attended. Our mission is to empower women through education, involvement and action. I think our conference did just that. Through several educational sessions we talked about Next Generation Farming, existing programs that are available as resources, the role of social media, and even some women’s health issues. We obviously want to fulfill our mission and provide a good learning experience while we’re away from the farm but we want to have fun, too. I think our Taste of Kentucky Proud reception was enjoyed by all while showcasing some wonderful food from around the Commonwealth.

We were also fortunate to have two outstanding guest speakers join us. At our opening luncheon, the 2012 Monsanto Farm Mom of the Year Debbie Lyons-Blythe spoke to us about life on the farm, raising a family there, and being a woman involved full-time in agriculture. Our national affiliate is American Agri-Women and they partner with Monsanto for this contest each year. Debbie is from Kansas and was certainly a deserving winner and a treat for us.

We were also privileged to welcome Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao to our conference. She was very inspirational to our own membership and the many guests who attended her session as well. Secretary Chao spoke about her own family’s adversity in achieving the “American dream” and her hopes for rural America today.

Our Board will meet in January to start planning for 2014 and we would love to hear from you. We will hope to have our next Annual Meeting a little farther west to be more accessible to that area of membership as well. Our broad goals include: promoting Kentucky women in agriculture; promoting agriculture in Kentucky; creating a cooperative feeling among women in agriculture and striving for good fellowship and integrity of the membership as a whole; protecting the best interest of our members; and communicating with one another and with other consumers to promote agricultural products and services for the benefit of Kentuckians and the world. Please let us know how we can better reach the goals and visit our website at www.kywomensinag.com for more information. And as always … we want you to be a part of Kentucky Women in Agriculture!

Meet the Center’s Matt Ernst

Matt Ernst was born into a family of farmers and teachers in Western Maryland, where the seventh generation of his family still raises row crops, pork and lamb. In 1998, he graduated from Iowa State
University with a degree in Agricultural Business and moved to Kentucky, where he started as a part-time student worker for Dr. Tim Woods in the Department of Agricultural Economics at UK. He then worked as a UK Extension Associate until 2006, providing market analysis and profitability estimates for new crops and developing ag entrepreneurship educational materials.

Matt is now a farm writer, based near St. Louis, where he lives with his wife and son. “It’s a real privilege to now make my living by writing and researching about agriculture,” he says. His customers include non-profit centers like the Center for Crop Diversification, as well as farm periodicals and businesses. “Even though I live in Missouri now, it’s great to be able to keep working on projects with UK and to see some of the crops that were newer 15 years ago now benefiting more Kentucky farms.”

When he’s not writing, Matt enjoys time with his family, gardening, and playing the string bass.

**Contracting webinars a success**

*By Miranda Hileman, Senior Extension Associate*

The Center for Crop Diversification hosted its first webinars on November 21. The topics were Grape Contracting, geared more toward growers and vineyard owners, and Winery Contracting, geared more toward winery owners and grape buyers. Both webinars featured our own Dr. Tim Woods and Dr. Jack Schieffer from the Department of Agricultural Economics; Clint Quarles, an attorney with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture; and Vicky Scharlau, the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers who has extensive experience with wine grape contracting in Washington. Participants learned about the importance of contracts and how contracts can help both growers and buyers be clear about quantity and quality issues before the growing season begins. Sample contracts were provided as examples for producers to get started, along with more information from Quarles, who provided in-depth information that growers and buyers need to think about from an attorney’s perspective.

Grants from the Southern Risk Management Education Center and the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund made this learning opportunity possible for Kentucky growers, and we greatly appreciate their support. The webinars were recorded, and will be archived and available on our website soon.

**KYFarmStart hosts Dairy Course**

*By Sarah Lovett, Senior Extension Associate*

The KyFarmStart Beginning Farmer Program is hosting a beginning Dairy Short Course March 11-13th at the University of Kentucky Dairy Farm near Lexington. This program is focused on current dairy farmers with less than 10 years’ experience as primary operators of the dairy business. The Dairy Short Course is being led by UK Extension professors Dr. Jeffery Bewley, Dr. Lee Meyer and Dr. Donna Amaral-Phillips.

Over the two and a half days a variety of topics will be covered including:

- Missions and visioning for your farm business
- Calves and heifers
- Improving milk quality
- Health care diagnosis
- Technology at the dairy
- Managing feeding programs for milking herds
- Improving cow comfort
- Working with nutritionists
- Business management
- Reproduction
- Whole-farm management and benchmarking
- Dry cow management
- Forage resources
- Using production records
- Working through family dynamics

Producers of various ages and experience levels will be at the short course. There will be time for networking and group activities scheduled
throughout the course. The majority of the pro-
gram will take place at The Coldstream Dairy
Research Farm Complex, located at 2810 George-
town Road, Lexington, KY 40511. Program regis-
tration is $100 per person due February 26th, 2014.
Things will get started at noon on Tuesday, March
11th, and will wrap up with a graduation at 4 p.m.
on Thursday, March 13th.

This program is open to the first 25 people who
register. The non-refundable registration fee will
cover the hotel and meals for the program. Lodg-
ing is available at the La Quinta Inn and will be
handled by Sarah Lovett.

If you would like to register, please contact Sarah
at sarah.lovett@uky.edu or at 859-218-4382.

The URL for the KyFarmStart program website is
http://www2.ca.uky.edu/kyfarmstart/ The Cen-
ter for Crop Diversification profile of the program
is available at http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/
introsheets/KyFarmStart.pdf

Farm Incubator Toolkit available

By Eva Agudelo Winther, National Incubator
Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) Coordinator

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project’s Na-
tional Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) is
proud to release the first edition of “The Farm In-
cubator Toolkit,” a comprehensive guide to plan-
ning and operating land-based beginning farmer
training programs.

This 170-plus-page document brings together
current data on incubator projects, checklists for
project development, case studies from farm incu-
bators across the country, and links to dozens of
documents and resources to help make your farm
incubator a reality or improve your existing proj-
ect’s operations.

NIFTI now also offers a searchable database with
more than 175 documents including sample curri-
cula, lease templates, application forms, business
planning and record keeping tools, and much,
much more. If you have resources you would like
to add to the database, please email eagudelo@
comteam.org.

To find out more about the National Incubator
Farm Training Initiative and how we can support
your work, visit our website at www.nesfp.org/
nifti.

Happy Holidays!

CCD wishes you and yours a happy holiday sea-
son, and we’ll catch up with you again in January!

Subscribe!

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

The Center for Crop Diversifi-
cation is supported by a grant
from the Kentucky Agricul-
tural Development Fund.