Like cole crops?

New crop profiles feature
Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi

By Miranda Hileman Combs, Senior Extension Associate

The Center for Crop Diversification at the University of Kentucky is pleased to announce the release of two new vegetable crop profiles. Over the past year, we received many questions about resources for growing crops for which research was limited or lacking. So be sure to check out our new crop profiles.

The Brussels sprout is a cool-season cole crop that is related to broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. The sprouts are buds or small heads produced in the leaf axils (the space between the base of the leaf and the stem above it). Sprouts mature starting at the base of the stem and working upward. In Kentucky, Brusselssprouts do best as a fall crop because sprouts maturing in hot weather are more prone to be bitter. To read the entire profile, visit http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/introsheets/brusselssprouts.pdf.

Kohlrabi is a cool-season annual cole crop that is related to broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts. Kohlrabi, which originated in northern Europe in the 16th century, is grown for its stem. It forms a round globe just above the soil line with leaves emerging in a spiral from the stem. The edible portion is actually an enlarged stem, not root tissue. Kohlrabi can be eaten raw or cooked. Its flavor is like a mild, sweet broccoli stem or turnip. Once the thick skin is peeled off, the crisp flesh can be eaten like a carrot, often with a dip or in salads. It can be boiled, braised, used in soups and stews, made into home fries and even pies. In Kentucky, kohlrabi does well in the spring, but is best as a fall crop. To read the entire profile, visit http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/introsheets/kohlrabi.pdf.
Beginning Farmer Conference among November meetings

By Lee Meyer, Extension Professor, UK Agricultural Economics

Beginning and early career farmers have an opportunity to bump up their business and technical skills, network with other farmers and connect with key resource providers at the second annual Beginning Farmer Conference on November 14-15 at the Leestown Road campus of the Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Lexington.

Last year, about 150 farmers participated in a one-day program. They overwhelmingly asked for a longer program, so this year the annual event will take place on a Friday and Saturday.

Participants will choose between one of three sessions for Friday, all starting with farm tours in the morning before returning to the conference site for lunch and further training. One option is artisan cheese making, starting with a visit to Bleugrass Chevre. The second track will help farmers learn about running a CSA and they’ll get to see how Elmwood Stock Farm does it. Folks interested in pasture-based meat production will start with a visit to Clark Farm. After returning to BCTC, participants will have lunch followed by classroom sessions on their chosen topics. The day will end with a local foods/networking reception at UK.

KyFarmStart participants are learning about season extension and other benefits that come with high tunnel greenhouses.

CCD Feedback Survey shows value of crop, marketing info

By Miranda Hileman Combs, Sr. Extension Associate

Funding for the Center for Crop Diversification for the past year has come from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund. Among the things we were able to do during the year was to create and implement a Feedback Survey. In the survey, we asked regional technical support professionals (mostly Extension and related agency professionals) who work with specialty crops to evaluate the Center for Crop Diversification’s resources and website. We received 119 responses, the majority being from county-based Extension agents in Kentucky and surrounding states. Interesting things we found include:

• Respondents indicate the Center for Crop Diversification offers resources that are both high-quality and easily accessible.
• Survey respondents expect regional programming to increase in the next three to five years.
• Crop profiles, budgets and price reports are the Center’s website categories most frequently rated as the “go-to” place for specialty crop information.
• Production and marketing training for producers, as well as additional crop profiles, were most frequently listed as future programming desired by respondents.
• Website and hard copy resources are most popular among those surveyed.
• A total annual impact of 3,500 regional agent-to-specialty crop clients who are now using information from our site.
• From respondents, the website rates above average for ease of navigation. The survey also indicates that the Center is fulfilling a key need for providing specialty crop educational materials and enterprise analysis to Extension and agency educators in Kentucky and surrounding states.

Based on this information, we will be offering future webinars, videos, and production and marketing programs for Extension educators and producer clientele in the coming year. Thanks to all the specialty crop support professionals that responded to our survey. To learn more about our survey, please visit http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/CCDsurvey.pdf.
The Saturday program includes a large array of panels, mostly made up of successful farmers, but also including local experts. Topics range from financing to land access and branding to managing high tunnels.

This workshop is part of the KyFarmStart program, an effort of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and Community Farm Alliance to help beginning farmers achieve success, and is funded by the USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program and other sponsors. Registration cost for the two-day event is $80 or $45 for Friday and $35 for Saturday. For more information and to register, please go to the Community Farm Alliance website (www.communityfarmalliance.org), or contact Sarah Lovett (sarah lovett@uky.edu) or Carolyn Gahn (carolyn@cfaky.org).

More conference opportunities

The 2014 North American Biodynamic Conference, Farming for Health, is coming up November 13-16 in Louisville. Join the Biodynamic Association to explore the intimate connections between the health of soil, plants, animals and people during their biennial conference opportunity. Biodynamics is a spiritual-ethical-ecological approach to agriculture, food production, and nutrition that encompasses thousands of successful gardens, farms, vineyards, and agricultural operations of all kinds and sizes. At the conference, through more than 60 workshops with over 70 presenters from across the continent and overseas, you’ll learn more about biodynamics along with innovations from organic, permaculture, and ecological agriculture. On-farm field days and pre-conference workshops are also available. Keynote speakers include Daphne Miller, MD, author of Farmacology; Patrick Holden, director of the Sustainable Food Trust and former director of the Soil Association; and Jean-Paul Courtens, CSA farmer at Roxbury Farm and co-founder of CRAFT, who will be featured in a keynote panel. Pre-registration ends on October 31st and on-site registration will be available. To learn more and register, visit: http://www.biodynamics.com/conference.

Kentucky Women in Agriculture will be hosting their 15th Annual Conference on November 5-6 at the Cave City Convention Center. This year’s theme is “Faith-Family-Farming,” and the keynote speaker will be Bobby Smith Bryant, who is a native Kentuckian, born in the Black Patch of Calloway County where her family has a long heritage of producing tobacco. Conference sessions include such topics as health, grant opportunities, farm bill updates, Kentucky hemp updates, bees, blueberries, and social media. Pre-conference tours to a great selection of agricultural businesses in the area surrounding Cave City will be offered on November 5. To register, visit http://www.kywomeninag.com/conference.php. Registration deadline is October 24; there will be no registration at the door.

The 2014 Small, Limited Resource/Minority Farmers Conference will be held November 18-20 in Frankfort. The conference will offer success stories, tours, information on the new farm bill, the Third Thursday Thing on AgrAbility, and recognition of the Kentucky Small, Limited Resource/Minority Farmer of the Year. The theme of the conference is “Celebrating the Past; Looking for the Future.” Tour destinations are Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Center (Lexington); Food Chain (Lexington); JITA Snacks LLC (Louisville); and Wild Turkey Distillery (Lawrenceburg). The registration fee is $50, and must be paid by October 15. For a registration form and information on lodging, please go to www.uky.edu/ag/CCD/kysconference.pdf, or call Louie Rivers at 502-597-6327.

Forestry webinar series offered

Adapted from UKAgNews article by Carol Spence and the Department of Forestry Webinar Series website

In October and November, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service is offering a forestry webinar series designed for woodland owners, farmers and others interested in woodland, timber and wildlife topics.

“The Forestry Fall Webinar Series is an excellent and convenient opportunity for busy woodland owners and those with an interest in forestry to get a significant amount of information in a relatively short time, without having to drive great
distances to attend,” said Billy Thomas, UK Extension forester and one of the coordinators of the series.

UK Forestry Extension is broadcasting the five-part series to county Extension offices from 7 to 8 p.m. ET, with agents serving as local hosts. The technology allows participants at each site to ask questions of the UK experts. Kentucky Master Loggers can also receive one continuing education credit for each of the webinars they attend at a hosting county Extension office. Upcoming series topics include: Woodland Certification (Oct. 14); Black Bears in Kentucky (Oct. 21); What’s Killing Our Trees and What We Can and Can’t Do (Oct. 28); and Winter Tree Identification (Nov. 11). An earlier webinar was Help for You and Your Woodlands (Oct. 7). A recording of this webinar will be available soon on the Forestry Webinars Series website at http://www2.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension/webinars.php. Interested participants may register for webinars through participating county extension offices. More information is available online at the Forestry Webinar Series website, by contacting a local county Extension office, or Billy Thomas at 859-257-9153 or billy.thomas@uky.edu. To see the entire UKAgNews article, go to http://news.ca.uky.edu/article/uk-forestry-webinar-series-brims-information-0.

New vegetable IPM publications for organic and small farms

By Ayanava Majumdar, Extension Entomologist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES)

The Alabama Organic IPM Program is now three years old and it has provided consistent focus to the needs of the small specialty crops producers. Here are new publications from ACES and Southern SARE that can be useful for a wide range of producers. Sustainable agriculture practices are not limited to organic producers; the principles of ecological and economic sustainability can be applied to many other farming situations.

Understanding NOP Standards for Pest Management in Specialty Crops (ANR-2084) provides a brief overview of the National Organic Program standards as they relate to pest management and summarizes the three approaches to IPM on small farms.

Proper Use of Approved Insecticides in Organic Farming Systems (ANR-2085) provides basic classification of approved insecticides based on EPA rules and primary mode of action. This bulletin ends with some general guiding recommendations on proper placement and timing of insecticides that can help maximize effectiveness of products.

Trap Cropping in Vegetable Production is a SARE National Publication that not only highlights the trap crop research done in Alabama for leaffooted bug management but also provides trap crop recommendations for harlequin bugs, stink bugs, and cucumber beetles based on research in other states. Trap crops, if planned well, can cause dramatic reduction in pest numbers when integrated with other control methods.

Alternative Vegetable IPM Recommendations (ANR-2190) is a unique slide chart that has illustrations and control recommendations for 21 dreaded insect pests of vegetable crops. It is a handy tool for producers and gardeners that is sturdy by design and can be carried around in the back pocket or left in the farm truck for quick retrieval.

Producers and gardeners are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the Alabama Vegetable IPM Project newsletter for keeping up with research-based farming information; simply visit www.aces.edu/go/87 and enter your email near the bottom of the Web page. We also offer information delivery via social media like Facebook (Alabama Vegetable IPM) and Twitter (AlabamaIPM). For questions about these publications, please call 251-331-8416 or email bugdoctor@auburn.edu.

EQIP application cutoff Nov. 21

By Christy Morgan, Acting Public Affairs Specialist
Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kentucky is encouraging landowners, farmers and producers to visit their local NRCS office now to receive information and ap-
ply for conservation technical assistance and possible financial funding opportunities.

The application process for NRCS’s conservation programs is continuous, but funding selections for specific programs are made throughout the year. For the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the first application cutoff period date for consideration for 2015 funds is November 21, 2014. Applications received after November 21, 2014, will be held until the next application cutoff period, which will be March 20, 2015.

EQIP is a conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land.

EQIP offers several National and State Initiatives, which include the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, Organic Initiative, On-Farm Energy Initiative, Wildlife Initiative, and Forestry Initiative. Interested land users should visit their local NRCS Office to find out what opportunities are available through each of these EQIP Initiatives.

“We’re getting an earlier start on EQIP contracts this year to give farmers more time to install practices,” said Deena Wheby, assistant state conservationist for programs.

All recipients of assistance are required to develop a conservation plan. Conservation planning is an integral part of the conservation process. Landowners should work with a conservation planner to develop the plan based on the landowner’s operational goals to improve the productivity, sustainability and profitability of their operation.

“Good conservation planning helps us identify the practices that will best address a landuser’s resource concerns,” Wheby said. The conservation plan will serve as a roadmap to a variety of technical assistance and financial assistance through EQIP as well as other options available to the landowner.

For more information, visit NRCS on the Web at www.ky.nrcs.usda.gov or contact your local NRCS service center at http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app.

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

The Center for Crop Diversification is supported by a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund.