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What's inside

2017 Vegetable budgets 2
Marketing for All trainings ... 3

Coming up

Jan. 4 - Illiana Vegetable Growers Symposium, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST, Schererville, IN. Brought to you by Purdue University and University of Illinois Extension. For more information, [click here](#).

Jan. 8-9 - Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Embassy Suites, Lexington. For program and registration information, [click here](#).

Jan. 10-12 - Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference, Springfield, IL. For details, [click here](#).

Jan. 15-17 - Ohio Produce Network, Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Sandusky. [Click here](#) for details.

Jan. 17-20 - SSAWG Conference, Chattanooga, TN. [Click here](#) for details.

A place at the table

Farm to table programs help farms find buyers

By Matt Ernst, independent writer

From new farmers market customers to institutional foodservice buyers, Kentucky's farm to table programs are helping Kentucky farms find higher-volume food markets.

Kentucky has three farm to table programs: Louisville Farm to Table; Bluegrass Farm to Table, in Lexington; and Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table. The Louisville and Lexington programs are hosted by local governments. Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table operates as a project of Community Farm Alliance.

Louisville was the state's first farm to table location. "It was created in 2009 by the City of Louisville, which matched a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board," says Sarah Fritschner, Louisville Farm to Table's value chain coordinator.

Fritschner spends much of her time helping farmers gain footholds in the Louisville food value chain. Institutional markets can be a good match for a smaller farm looking to increase production, she says. "An institution allows a farm to diversify its market," says Fritschner. "An institution is not a silver bullet solution for building farm income, but it's a good part of the market mix for farms to increase some volumes."

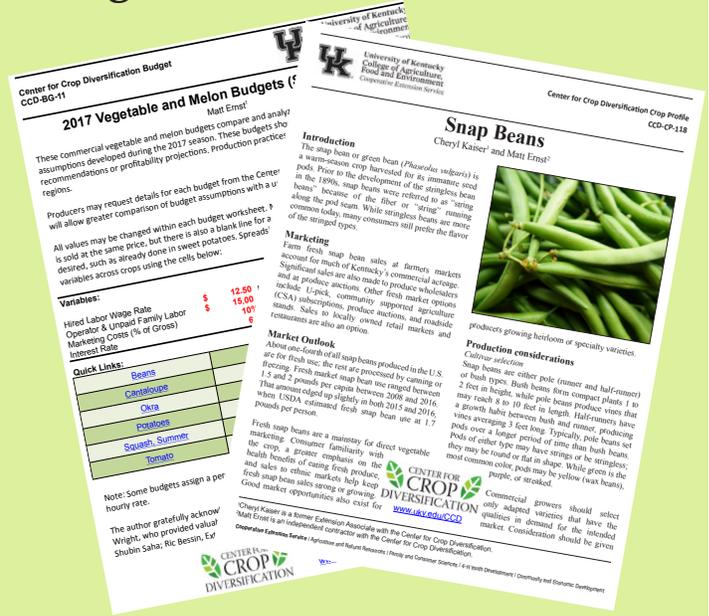
One Louisville Farm to Table success story is more access to school foodservice. "We've worked with Jefferson County schools to release produce bids in January," says Fritschner. "If public schools

Continued on Page 2



New Vegetable/Melon Budgets offer large- and small-scale versions

The Center for Crop Diversification has updated its Vegetable and Melon Budgets. Instead of a single version set up on a per-acre basis, there are now two sets of budgets, one on a per-acre basis for large-scale production (CCD-BG-10), and one set up for small-scale production (CCD-BG-11), typically based on 100-foot row or 0.10 acre. These budgets, available as interactive Excel files for downloading on the CCD website at <http://www.uky.edu/ccd/tools/budgets>, are also available as PDFs at <http://www.uky.edu/ccd/content/vegetable-and-melon-budgets-2017> for those who want to print them and fill them in by hand. Also look for our recently updated Snap Beans crop profile (CCD-CP-118), available on our website [here](#).



Continued from Page 1

need 2,000 boxes of watermelon, it helps a farmer to know that in January, not in June.” That is an example of how value chain coordinators within farm to table programs work behind the scenes to find openings in wholesale market channels.

Louisville Farm to Table also establishes relationships with area institutions and other foodservice buyers. “It takes time to establish relationships,” says Fritschner. “But we’ve seen good progress. Farmers are now calling us, seeing real potential in these markets,” she said.

Farm to table programs also help enhance Kentucky’s consumer retail food market. In Lexington, Bluegrass Farm to Table received in 2015 a special USDA grant to pilot “Bluegrass Double Dollars,” a program providing vouchers for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients. The vouchers matched SNAP dollar purchases of fresh produce, up to \$10, at Lexington-area farmers markets and grocers.

The pilot program’s success led to Bluegrass Double Dollars merging with a similar program, created by Community Farm Alliance in 2014. The merged program, called “Kentucky Double Dollars,” extended this year to nearly 30 farmers markets across the state. Funding comes from the

USDA, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board and private sponsors.

Kentucky Double Dollars provided vouchers this year for customers at 10 farmers markets in southeast Kentucky. In that region, Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table helps farms reach institutional markets in lower population densities.

Schools in southeast Kentucky are a prime opportunity for farm to table efforts in that region, says Ashton Huxtable, Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table coordinator. “There are lot of producers selling at market and getting to the point where they can sell to schools,” she says.

Huxtable, who assumed her role with Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table in October, says her efforts will focus on value chain development. “That’s my main focus, value chain development and helping develop those relationships between farms and buyers,” she says.

Crops that seem the best fit for school foodservice in southeast Kentucky, according to Huxtable, are crops easily used with minimal processing – like salad greens – and crops easily stored, like apples. “Winter squash is a storage crop that has kept coming up in our conversations with schools, too,” she says.



Photo by Brett Wolff, UK

The CCD's social media trainings are hands-on and practical, so be prepared for a selfie or two.

CCD to offer workshop series “Marketing for All”

By Brett Wolff, Center for Crop Diversification

The Center for Crop Diversification is offering a series of in-person marketing workshops called “Marketing for All.” From talking with producers, we know that many of you find yourselves slightly too advanced for some “beginner” trainings, but you’re not quite ready for some more advanced topics on larger market channels. This curriculum is designed to smooth out that transition by offering some basic trainings and then some intermediate trainings that build on the basics. We also know that all grower groups are not the same - some are already using social media to perfection while others don’t have a Facebook page yet. Luckily, our curriculum isn’t one-size-fits-all: we have built in some customization features. There are 11 1- or 2-hour modules covering a variety of marketing topics applicable to small and medium growers. Your group can choose the modules you want and combine them into a semi-custom single workshop or workshop series. Some groups may eventually go through all the modules. If you are interested in a training, you can speak with your local extension agent and we can set up a time and date. We are now scheduling for this winter and

spring. Modules to choose from include:

- Marketing Basics
- Social Media Basics
- Basics of Web Design
- Hands-On Visual Merchandizing
- Market Signs That Work
- Identifying and Exploring New Markets
- Understanding and Using Analytics
- Using Price Data to Make More Money
- Overview of Value-Added Product Development
- How to Get Paid: Accepting More Than Just Cash
- Record Keeping for Specialty Crops

The development and delivery of this curriculum is made possible through the generous support of a Kentucky Specialty Crop Block Grant. Major thanks to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This training is based on feedback we have received from growers and agents. What you need drives what we do, so please let us know how we can serve you better.

2017 Census of Agriculture is now underway

From USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) started mailing the 2017 Census of Agriculture to the nation's producers this week. Conducted once every five years, the census aims to get

a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture. The resulting data are used by farmers, ranchers, trade associations, researchers, policy-makers, and many others to help make decisions in community planning, farm assistance programs, technology development, farm advocacy, agribusiness setup, rural development, and more.

"The Census of Agriculture is USDA's largest data collection endeavor, providing some of the most widely used statistics in the industry," said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "Collected in service to American agriculture since 1840, the census gives every producer the opportunity to be represented so that informed decisions can support their efforts to provide the world with food, fuel, feed, and fiber. Every response matters."

The census will be mailed in several phases through December. Farm operations of all sizes which produced and sold, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural product in 2017 are included in the census. The census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

NASS revised the census forms in an attempt to document changes and emerging trends in the industry. Changes include a new question about military veteran status, expanded questions about food marketing practices, and questions about on-farm decision-making to help better capture the roles and contributions of beginning farmers, women farmers, and others involved in running a farm enterprise.



2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE
YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR OPPORTUNITY.

Coming this December

Be counted. Answers to the Census of Agriculture can help grow your farm's future, shape farm programs, and boost services for communities and the industry.

Respond Online. www.agcounts.usda.gov



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.agcensus.usda.gov

"Producers can respond to the census online or by mail. We highly recommend the updated online questionnaire. We heard what people wanted and we made responding to the census easier than ever," said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. "The online questionnaire now has timesaving features, such as automatic calculations, and the convenience of being accessible on mobile and desktop devices."

The census response deadline is February 5, 2018. Responding to the Census of Agriculture is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and only publish in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation. NASS will release the results of the census in February 2019.

For more information, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

Region's winter conferences offer range of learning opportunities

As 2017 winds down, it's time to think about the winter conference season. Kentucky and surrounding states offer a number of conferences with educational programming that can benefit specialty crop growers. Be sure to take advantage of the learning and networking opportunities offered throughout the region.

Jan. 4 - Illiana Vegetable Growers Symposium, Teibel's Restaurant, 1775 U.S. 41, Schererville, IN. Sponsored by Purdue University and University of Illinois Extension. Topics include management of tomato bacterial canker, new dicamba regulations, and updates on the federal food safety regulations. Registration fee is \$30 if postmarked by December 14 or completed online by December 20, and \$35 at the door. For more information, [click here](#).

Jan. 8-9 - Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Embassy Suites, Lexington. Sessions will include Farmers Markets, Organic Production, Commercial Fruit and Vegetable Production, Direct Marketing and Agritourism, Wholesale Marketing, a Grape and Wine Short Course, and a Produce Best Practices Training. The program will include speakers from Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Tennessee, Michigan and Nevada, as well as Kentucky. The registration fee is \$40 if your registration is received by December 15. On-site registration will be \$60. For the complete program and registration form, [click here](#).

Jan. 10-12 - Illinois Specialty Crops, Organic, and Agritourism Conference, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Springfield. Pre-conference workshops (Jan. 10) include High Tunnels, Social Media and Marketing, and Food Safety Training. Conference sessions include Fruits, Vegetables, Herbs, Hops, Agritourism & Marketing, Organic, and Value-added Products. Registration is \$65 for members of the Illinois Specialty Growers Association, \$75 for non-members if received by December 31. On-site registration will add \$15 to the fee. For complete program and registration details, [click here](#).

Jan. 15-17 - Ohio Produce Network, Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Sandusky. Educational sessions include Fruit, Vegetables, Marketing,

Food Safety, and Produce Safety Alliance Training. Registration fees vary. Additional information is available [here](#).

Jan. 17-20 - Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference, Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN. This ever-popular conference will feature day-and-a-half intensive short courses on Wednesday and Thursday, with half-day tours on Thursday afternoon. General conference sessions will be held Friday and Saturday. General conference registration is \$175 through December 20, \$205 through January 3, and \$235 on-site. Short courses and tours require additional fees, which vary by event. For more information, [click here](#).

Feb. 13-15 - Indiana Hort Congress, Marriott Indianapolis East. One-day registration is \$110, three-day registration is \$140 on or before December 31. For additional information, please visit <https://www.inhortcongress.org>.

Feb. 15-17 - Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference, Dayton Convention Center. Registration rates vary; special OEFFA member rate available through December 14; all other rates increase after January 18. For program and registration details, [click here](#).

Feb. 15-17 - PickTN Conference, Chattanooga Marriott. For more information, [click here](#).

Coming in March - [Organic Association of KY](#) (March 2-3) and [Indiana Small Farm](#) (March 1-3) conferences.

Thanks for reading!

If you know someone who would enjoy our newsletter, or you're not subscribed yet yourself, visit www.uky.edu/ccd/newsletter and click "Subscribe Now." Or call Brett Wolff at 859-218-4384, or Christy Cassady at 859-257-1477. Stay up to date with the Center on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CenterforCropDiversification/>

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