



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
CM Extension

**COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS &
 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM**

**Eat Well, Do Good
 In Missouri!**

Issue 4

August 2005

Farm to School Programs Explored

*Special from Jim Thompson, Agriculture Business Specialist,
 University of Missouri Extension, LaClede County*

This summer, I joined fellow Missourians Crystal Weber, Darla Campbell, Judy Soper, Alma Hopkins, and Lisa Magliano, representatives from MU Extension and state agencies, at the Second National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, held at Kenyon State College in Gambier, Ohio. The setting for the conference was mid-central Ohio Amish country, a beautiful campus with 350 people from all over the United States and Canada in attendance. The experience of those attending ranged from educators to producers, food service individuals to expert nutritionists, marketing specialists to Amish farmers. Even with this wide range of experiences and expectations, the central theme was that good food should be provided to the young people in our schools.

My interest in this conference stemmed from my work with a group of producers who explored the concept of farm to school in 2004, through our “Options for Small Acreages” program. At that time, we came up with lots of ideas, but no real solutions. Therefore, I was looking forward to this conference to provide some direction in finding some of those solutions. While I did not find the pot of gold, I did find some good ideas and contacts.

The first item of interest was the Department of Defense. It is the purchasing agent for commodities in schools. The DOD purchasing agent for the East Coast, in particular the state of North Carolina, has tried and been successful in purchasing locally grown, in-season produce for the commodities program for school lunches. In less than four years, the purchases of produce (pumpkins, apples, watermelons, and strawberries) has gone from \$192,000 to almost \$500,000. The important thing is this program was developed by a group of individuals who worked together toward the common goal of better food and nutrition for children in schools. With their success, the program has served as the guidepost for other programs to follow.

Another item I picked up was the reason Amish farmers use horses. I have worked with Amish and Mennonite farmers, and have been fascinated with their ability to work and produce with very few inputs. David Kline, an ordained Amish Minister, was one of the keynote speakers. He explained, in a way that I could understand, that Amish farmers use horses so their farm enterprises do not get too big. His farm consisted of 120 acres, on which two families lived, with 35 Jersey milk cows, organic chickens for egg production and all the produce from gardens that the families could eat and put away for future consumption. Even though they could have farmed with tractors and gotten bigger, adding more cows and land, that was not their solution. They were selling milk to Organic Valley for \$24 per hundred, and selling organic eggs for two dollars per dozen. They were using what they had and making it work for them; the horses were just the incentive to stay closer to those things that make the most money.

The other eye-opener for me was the documentary, “Super Size Me.”

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Tour Highlights Opportunities for Missouri Value-Added Agribusiness

BLUE SPRINGS, Mo. – Operators of five Missouri value-added agribusinesses shared their successes and challenges with more than 30 participants during a recent tour, sponsored by the University of Missouri Extension Food Circles Networking Project and Agriculture Future of America.

Many who attended the July 29 tour were interested in starting their own businesses, said Crystal Weber, MU Extension community development specialist who coordinated the tour. The tour began in Higginsville, at the retail outlet of Alma Meats, a new generation meat cooperative, where participants learned how the cooperative processes and markets its products. The group then traveled to Knob Noster, where they visited Jordon Foods, a minority-owned company that manufactures and distributes a line of gourmet popcorn and seasonings, coffees, homemade apple butter, barbecue sauce, steak sauce, cooking oils and pure honey.

“It appeared to me that the biggest epiphany (for tour participants) was that these value-added agribusiness owners had pride in their product,” Weber said. “Before, they were only involved in one link in the chain of production and now, the value-added producers had the advantage of seeing their product grow to maturity and then experiencing customer’s reactions to it.”

Other stops on the tour included the award-winning Montserrat Vineyards, where a lunch of locally produced foods was served, and then to the Hen House Market in Lee’s Summit, Mo.

“Participants asked questions that ranged from employment statistics and business structures to brand positioning and advertising,” Weber said. She added that the reaction to the tour was very positive, with most participants indicating that they would attend future tours. “Each noted that they wanted more information focusing on their particular products and value-added production practices.”

For more information about the MU Extension Food Circles Networking Project, which promotes consumption of safe, regionally grown food and encourages practices that sustain farmers and rural areas, please visit foodcircles.missouri.edu or call the University of Missouri office in Columbia at 573-882-3776.



Tour participants listen to Jerry Bublitz, CEO of Alma Meats.



Owners Vern & Denise Jordon market products in several KC area supermarkets. Pictured with them are Representative Wes Shoemeyer and MU Asst. Dean Ken Schneeberger.



Hen House Markets train store employees on how to market and stock locally grown products. Summer grocery ads feature local producers.

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It shows the changes that Morgan Spurlock goes through, when he exists on a diet of only McDonalds' food for 30 days. He has doctors and a nutritionist monitor his physical changes as the diet progresses, with dramatic results. He gains weight, has what he thinks is a heart attack and experiences withdrawal problems very similar to alcoholic addictions. The important idea of the whole movie is that we have control of what we eat, and it is important to have good nutritious food.

The six from Missouri went as individuals, but came back as a team, ready to put our ideas to work. We have contacted the Department of Defense purchasing agent for Missouri, held a phone conference to refresh our ideas, and are planning a face-to-face committee meeting this fall to plan our next step. This is an exciting group to work with and I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Travel funding was provided through NCR-SARE. Please contact Jim Thompson (ThompsonJO@missouri.edu) or Mary Hendrickson (HendricksonM@missouri.edu) for more information.

Missouri High Tunnels

High tunnels, often called "hoop houses" are plastic-covered, solar greenhouses. Unlike a greenhouse with heaters, fans and other expensive accessories, high tunnels use solar energy to grow the crops. High tunnels enable many Missouri vegetable and fruit growers the opportunity to significantly extend their production and marketing season while protecting their crop from drought, pests and harsh weather. Growers surrounding larger cities where land is scarce for food production use high tunnels to increase their land's productivity.

Many vegetable, fruit and flower crops can be grown



within the high tunnel. Research at the University of Missouri has discovered that warm season (frost sensitive) crops such as tomatoes, peppers and melons can be established at least a month earlier than the field with harvest occurring when local supplies are scarce.

Growers also have higher marketable yields with crops produced within a high tunnel. Less fruit is damaged by the weather and pests, so more food is harvested per unit area or per plant. For example, tomato yields are routinely 4-5 times higher per plant in a high tunnel relative to the field.

Many cool season crops can be produced throughout the winter using a high tunnel. Soil temperatures do not freeze enabling germination of salad vegetables such as lettuce and spinach throughout the winter. Intercropping, the growing of several vegetables or fruits within the same space is widely practiced using high tunnels. If you are interested in more information about high tunnel crop production, access the high tunnel web site at hightunnels.org or contact Lewis Jett, Asst. Prof. of Horticulture at MU Extension. * Lewis will be speaking about this topic on 9/12/05 in the Memorial Union at 11:45 am.

CFSSA Announces Upcoming Workshops

The Community Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture Program continues providing services to Latino farmers and educators interested in working with Latinos in rural areas and employers of Latino agricultural workers. Please check into the following workshops: For more information or to register for the workshops contact Jose Garcia at GarciaJL@missouri.edu or 573-884-3794.

September 15th, 5:00 pm-7:30 p.m. Mount Vernon and **November 10th, 5:00-7:30 p.m.** Sedalia, MO

Human Risk Management workshops for employers and potential employers of Latino agricultural workers in SW Missouri. Human Resource Managers of Food Processing plants and farmers who use Latino workers are invited to participate.

October 14th, 10:00 am-3:00 pm. A "Cultural Competency Working With Rural Latinos" workshop will take place in Monett. The audience for this event is formal and non-formal educators and professionals who work with (or are interested in) rural Latinos. A fee of \$15 will be charged for the meals and materials and participation will be limited to 25 individuals.



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We're on the Web!
agebb.missouri.edu/sustain

What's New In Sustainable Food and Farming Series:

Each month during the 2005-2006 school year the *Community Food Systems & Sustainable Agriculture Program* will feature speakers on important topics at our "What's New in Sustainable Food and Farming" series. These informal seminars are held on the UMC campus from 11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (* unless otherwise noted) and refreshments are provided.

Monday, September 12th-Memorial Union, S206, 11:45 am—1:00 pm

Assistant Prof. Lewis Jett, Horticulture, will present on high tunnels and their use for extending the vegetable growing season and increasing yields.

Wednesday, September 21st-Memorial Union, S304, 11:45 am—1:00 pm

UC Davis agricultural economist Desmond Jolly will travel to MU to speak about the University of California's state funded Small Farm Program of which he is the director.

Friday, September 30th-Memorial Union, S207, * 4:30-5:30 pm

Pat Murphy, Executive Director of Community Service, Inc. in Yellow Springs, Ohio will travel to MU to present on how the development of Agraria neighborhood communities is a vital strategy for peak oil-forced decentralization and the renewal of small towns and farms in the post-peak oil world.

Monday, October 10th-Memorial Union, S304, 11:45 am—1:00 pm

Associate Prof. Peter Motavalli, Soil, Environmental and Atmospheric Science, will present on the management of soil organic matter for sustainable agriculture.

Copies of most past presentation may be viewed at agebb.missouri.edu/sustain

Have Questions or Need Information???

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Mark Your Calendar

Southwest Center Field Day

Sept 9, Mt. Vernon, MO
aes/missouri.edu/swcenter/fieldday/index.stm

1st Annual Bradford Farm Tomato Festival

Sept 10, Columbia, MO
aes.missouri.edu/bradford/index.stm

2nd Annual Shrimp Fest

Sept 10, Dixon, MO
showmeshrimpfarms.com
(417) 664-2307

Women In Ag Conference

September 12-14, Joplin, MO

Innovations in Organic Marketing, Technology, and Research

October 6-7, Washington, DC
www.ers.usda.gov/organicagworkshop

Community Food Security Coalition Annual Conference

October 6-9, Atlanta, GA
www.foodsecurity.org

3rd Annual Chestnut Roast

**October 29, New Franklin
Centerforagroforestry.org**

Check It Out

The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education 2005 Call for Farmer Rancher Grant proposals is now available. You can access the call on the NCR-SARE website (sare.org/ncrsare/cfp.htm). Contact the SARE office if you need a hardcopy or if you would like them to send you a copy as an e-mail attachment.

Proposals are due in the Lincoln NCR-SARE office by December 1, 2005. Proposals will be reviewed during January and February 2006, and grant recipients will be notified in March or April, 2006.

Featured Websites

farmprofitability.org
foodcircles.missouri.edu
sfc.ucdavis.edu
communitysolution.org
snr.missouri.edu