Special Small Farm Activities Issue

The Green Machine

Dedicated to improving the quality of life for future generations through education.

July 2008
Volume 3 Issue 3

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/

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Promoting Local Agri-Business In Bradford County.

During the last twenty years an unimaginable amount of our cash has gone to buy goods produced elsewhere. This seemed like a good idea at the time. After all, who can argue with thirty dollar DVD players? But there has been a hidden cost. Outsourcing jobs has transformed us into a nation of consumers instead of being producers, leaving us with fewer options for gainful employment. It is better to purchase items produced locally so our cash stays here, plus we keep a trained work force.

Our economy has problems and we cannot wait for any institution to fix them. Instead, the solutions need to come from local citizens who work together to turn this situation around. Three areas that may stimulate our local economy are for people to develop additional income streams by producing local goods, change spending habits so that incurring debt is eliminated and by making the decision to buy local products whenever possible.

A major factor that prevents many of us from starting businesses is our habit of going into debt. We must realize that we should live on less than what we make or we won't save the extra cash it takes to invest in a business. What has this got to do with local agri-business? Everything. Debt not only eliminates start up capital, it steals the creative energy needed to build a business since our time is pledged to working our way out of debt. Following good financial principles is critical to the success of any home or business. If you need information regarding help managing you finances come by your local extension office or visit the following UF/IFAS web page:

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Money_Matters

The following pages will discuss what is being done on a local level to help farmers help themselves. Read on to learn about opportunities for farming, selling produce and other agricultural related topics.

Agricultural Advisory Board to Step Up Efforts

The Bradford County Extension Agricultural Advisory Board has voted to meet more often in order to increase their involvement in promoting agricultural profitability in our community. The role of the advisory board is to identify community needs and to devise strategies to meet those needs. Board members are selected so that all members of the community are represented. Current University of Florida rules require advisory boards to meet at least twice a year. It was decided at the last meeting that the board will meet more often in order to accomplish all that needs to be done. The Agricultural Advisory Board has representatives from all my program areas including agricultural interests, horticultural programs and the Buzz Buster Mosquito Control program.

Farm Service Directory To Be Published

In an effort to promote agri-business in our community, a farm service directory will be published so that farmers, vendors of agricultural products/services and consumers can list, reference or advertise on a local level. The concept of the directory is in the formulation stage. Call your 904-966-6299 office to place a listing in the directory.

Preparations For Fall Crop Check List

- Turn under the soil as soon as summer crop is finished to reduce weeds and diseases.
- If you experienced problems with nematodes or soil borne diseases in the last cropping cycle you might consider rotating to another crop or using a soil sterilization prior to planting.
- Get the soil tested so that there is enough time to add lime if needed. Do NOT add lime without testing the soil first.
- Use the soil testing results to customize a fertilizer plan. Fertilizer costs have increased dramatically. It is critical to apply it in amounts plants need when they need it.
- Make plans to use drip irrigation.
- Submit pecan leaves for nutrient analysis during July and August.

The Bradford Farmers Market to Re-open on October 4th — VENDORS NEEDED

The Bradford Farmers Market finished it's first season in June. MANY THANKS to all of those who worked to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to our community. The market also provides a unique opportunity for farmers to market their products in a non-traditional setting. If you are interested in building your own business, plan on selling products you make, bake or grow at the market this fall. Call the Extension office or visit the Bradford Farmers Market website for more information.

http://www.bradfordfarmersmarket.com/

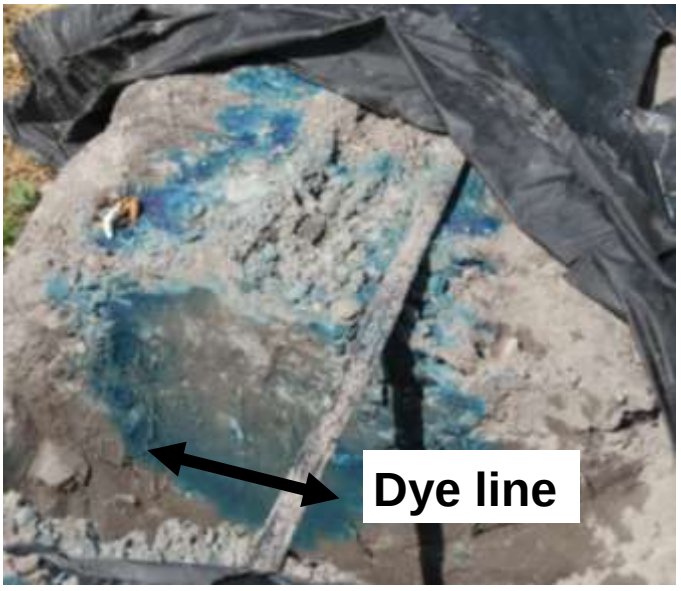
See Dates and Topics for Small Farms Related Workshops and Educational Opportunities on Page 6 Of This Issue.

Recent Workshop Follow Up

On May 6th the Bradford County Extension Service and the Northeast Florida Small Farms working group sponsored irrigation education in the form of teaching tours on two farms. The farms were different in that one uses traditional methods of using compost and natural fertilizers while the other uses formulated water soluble fertilizers. While both farms use drip irrigation to minimize water use, one farm used the irrigation system to inject fertilizer as the plants needed it.

Thanks to Robert, Ineater, Sam & Jerry for sharing their farms with us.

The workshop was attended by over 50 people and was a great success. The tour started at Robert and Ineater Franklin's farm in Lawtey where attendees could observe how they conserved water and fertilizer by converting to drip irrigation. There was a blue dye (see picture) demonstration that showed how quickly fertilizer rinses through sandy soil. The dye was injected into the top of the bed and then the crop was watered for 45 minutes. The plastic was pulled back and the plant bed was opened so the soil column could be viewed. It was easy to see the leading edge of the dye and for attendees to understand that their fertilizer investment can be rinsed out of reach of their crop's roots. Robert Franklin estimated that he used less than half the water and fertilizer that he normally uses by switching to drip irrigation.



Cognito Farm, which specializes in a variety of naturally farmed products, was the second farm toured on the workshop. Attendees were treated to observing grass fed beef production, free range chickens and a garden that is set up to yield a harvest to be sold at a farmers market. Producing food for a farmers market requires the farmer to stagger planting times so that they can harvest over a longer interval. Using drip irrigation allows the farmer to separate a garden into zones and to water each zone accordingly. Watering with drip irrigation also reduces disease problems associated with overhead irrigation which is important, since pesticide use is avoided on Cognito farm. Cognito Farm owners Sam and Jerry Williams, shared their production experiences with the group in an open discussion format.

Strawberry Notes

It is no secret. We are proud of our strawberries in Bradford County. Strawberries have been farmed in Bradford County for over 100 years and a lot has changed since that first crop. Over the years, farmers have switched from growing strawberries in beds mulched with pine straw to growing them under plastic. Using drip irrigation to deliver water and fertilizer more efficiently has also become a standard practice. Of course there are always "new" cultivars being tested that have desirable traits such as disease resistance or better flavor. I can't tell if the new cultivars really taste better but I know those old Sweet Charlie's sure were delicious! Scientist are looking to various crop covers and frost resistant varieties to stop using water to prevent frost damage on strawberries.

The 2007—2008 Bradford County strawberry crop was a good one, especially if drip irrigation was used. The relatively cool, dry spring set the stage for less disease pressure and continued flower set so the harvest lingered into May. Unfortunately we did get a lot of heavy rain just prior to the BC Fair and Starke Strawberry Festival which damaged a lot of fruit and caused a short supply for those couple of weeks. But, overall we had a good crop.

Many of our local growers are trying new ways of growing a better crop. The fun thing about farming is that it is NEVER boring. Farmers don't need to play video games to get a challenge. Instead they have to battle the real world, not an imaginary one on a video screen. But that doesn't mean they don't have as many weapons (integrated pest management, new cultivars, scientific based strategies) in their inventory to battle their foes (insects, diseases and bad weather)! Two successes are highlighted below:

Tommy King of King's County Produce has farmed here in Bradford County all of his life. Last year, along with producing Camarosa and Camino Real varieties, he grew a new cultivar developed at the University of Florida. The cultivar has not been named and is simply called the "116" berry. According to Tommy, the berry plant yielded fruit sooner and produced well into the spring. He was pleased with the new cultivars flavor and marketability.

All pesticides used on crops must undergo residue testing before a pesticide label is approved. In order to change a label, say from four applications to five applications per season, the manufacturer must do more tests. A common insecticide was tested on a local farm this past season. The product was applied under very controlled conditions (see picture) so that the residue on the fruit could be analyzed. The plants and fruit that were sprayed during this test were all destroyed because they have not been approved for consumption. This type of testing is critical to having safe, effective pesticides for our crops.

Strawberry Taste Test Results

Over the past two years the Extension Service has sponsored four strawberry cultivar screening tests to see if one cultivar is preferred over another. The test is administered in cooperation with UF scientists who are certified to perform these types of tests. The taste tests have been offered at the Bradford County Fair and the Starke Strawberry Festival.

Participants enjoy taking the test. They like tasting the berries and most of the time, prior to taking the test, they were not aware that there were different cultivars of strawberries. In fact, only eight participants sampled could not list the name of a strawberry cultivar.

For the past two years the taste test results were used to decided the winning berry for the Bradford County Fair. Bradford High School Agriculture students judged the berries for the 2008 Bradford County Fair.

To take the test, participants are given one berry of each cultivar and are asked to rate them on a scale of 1 (low preference) to 9 (high preference). The test is based solely on their opinion. The data in the table reflects the average scores based on the 1 to 9 scale.

The statistical analysis has not been completed but it looks as though there is no clear winner when it comes to strawberry cultivars in Bradford County. However, it is fun to look at how each berry scored throughout the testing. The scores for the berries in the BC 2008 Fair were low due to heavy rains that caused them to loose their sweet taste. All in all, they did pretty well. The results indicate that our farmers do a good job of producing berries people like.

Test	Cultivar	# Tasted	Color	Flavor	Firmness	Overall Preference
BC Fair 07	Camarosa	22	6.1	6.1	6.7	6.3
BC Fair 07	Camino Real	22	7.5	6.3	7.0	7.0
Strawberry Festival 07	Camarosa	173	7.0	6.6	6.5	7.0
Strawberry Festival 07	Camino Real	100	7.3	5.8	6.6	6.3
Strawberry Festival 07	Festival	168	6.2	4.8	6.2	5.6
BC Fair 08	116	29	5.6	5.3	5.1	4.4
BC Fair 08	Camarosa	30	7.0	6.5	7.1	6.8
BC Fair 08	Camino Real	88	6.2	5.6	6.2	6.0
BC Fair 08	Festival	28	4.9	4.2	6.8	5.5
Strawberry Festival 08	Camarosa	279	6.6	6.0	6.6	6.8
Strawberry Festival 08	Camino Real	245	6.3	5.2	6.2	6.2
Strawberry Festival 08	Festival	331	6.0	5.3	7.1	6.4

Scheduled Workshops

Complete brochures with agendas and speaker list are available for all listed workshops from the Bradford County Extension.

July 25	Bradford County 4H Fundraiser Auction and Dinner, National Guard Armory, Starke, 6 to 9 pm, Call Kim Paul at 966-6224 for information.
July 28	Transplant Production & Seed Swap Workshop, Baker County Extension, Macclenny, Sponsored by the Northeast Florida Small Farms Working Group, 5:30 pm until 8:00 pm, call 904-259-3520.
July 29	Wildlife Feeding & Food Plot Workshop, Duval County Extension, Jacksonville, FL., 6 to 8:30 pm. Call Dianne Thomas at 904-266-0088 ext. 3, 7/25 registration deadline.
July 31	Horsin' Around, Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 5:30 until 9:30 pm, call Brad Burbaugh at 904-381-4689 to register, RSVP required for dinner.
August 16	Hobby Beekeeper Short Course, Clay County Agriculture Center, Green Cove Springs, call 904-284-6355, $10/ individual $15/couple, 8/13 registration deadline.
August 25	Home Irrigation Workshop, Bradford County Extension Service, 6 to 9 pm, Call 904-966-6299 to register by 8/22 deadline. $10 fee includes dinner.
August 26	Muscadine Grape Twilight Field Day, North Florida Research & Education Center, Live Oak, 5 pm until 8:45 pm, 386-362-1725, $15/ person includes dinner & literature, 8/20 registration deadline.
August 28	11th Annual Hay & Farm Field Day, WW Ranch, Jacksonville, 8:15 am until 3:00 pm, $5/person, call 904-966-6224 to pre-register by August 22.
Sept. 4	Florida Pecan Field Day, North Florida Research & Education Center, Live Oak, 8:30 am until 3:10 pm, Call 386-362-2771 to pre-register by September 1.
Sept 9	Beef Cattle Update: Country of Origin Labeling, Bradford County Extension, 6 pm until 8 pm, Call 904-966-6224 for to pre-register by Sept 8.
Sept. 11	Surviving Difficult Times in the Green Industry: Managing Risk & Uncertainty in a Maturing Marketplace, North Florida Research & Education Center, 8:30 am until 2:15 pm, call 386-362-1725 ext 101, 9/8 registration deadline.

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Muscadine Grape Twilight Field Day

Tuesday, August 26, 2008—5:00pm to 8:45pm

North Florida Research and Education Center—Suwannee Valley, Live Oak FL

5:00 **Sampling Grape Goodness Before Selecting Cultivars**

Cathy Rogers, Suwannee County Extension

Jacque Breman, Union County Extension

6:20 **Dinner**

7:00 **Grape Production Topics**

Softwood Cuttings: *Pete Andersen,* North Florida REC - Quincy

Trellising/Grounding: *Steve Gaul*, Nassau County Extension

Irrigation: *Bob Hochmuth*, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley

Pruning: *Pete Andersen*, North Florida REC - Quincy

Pest Control: *Clay Olson*, Taylor County Extension

Selling the Crop: *Linda Landrum*, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley

$15 per person

Registration Deadline: Aug 20, 2008
Price includes materials and dinner.
For more information call (386) 362-1725.

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
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Grape Twilight Field Day • Aug 26, 2008
Registration Form

Make Checks payable to:
Friends of Suwannee Valley Extension or FSVE

Return to:
North Florida REC—Suwannee Valley
7580 County Road 136, Live Oak FL 32060
For more information call Linda Landrum at 386-362-1725 ext 105

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

____ No. in party @ $15 each = $ _____

Payment MUST be received by the Aug 20th deadline.

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
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Northeast Florida Small Farms Working Group Presents

Transplant Production & Seed Swap

Baker County Extension, Macclenny, Florida
Monday, July 28, 2008 at 5:30 pm

Agenda

5:30 pm - Registration, Networking & Light Dinner *(bring a light dish to share with friends)*

6:15 pm - Transplant Production: Tricks of the Trade
- Tray & Media Selection
- Seeding Methods
- Fertilizing & Watering Tactics

7:30 pm - Seed Sources & Seed Swap
- Local & National Seed Sources *(bring seeds to swap)*

All Small Farmers who are interested in learning about this topic are invited to attend. There is no charge for this program and pre-registration is not required.

Directions:
From I-10, take Exit #335 (SR-121) and travel north 1.6 miles to US-90 (Macclenny Avenue). Turn left (west) onto US-90 and travel west 0.8 miles. The office is on the right at the corner of Owen Acres Drive and US-90.

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA IFAS Extension
Florida Small Farms Alternative Enterprises Conference
http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu

Baker County Extension | 1025 West Macclenny Ave | Macclenny FL 32063-9640 | Phone 904-259-3520

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