November 1, 2011
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News Release
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Leopold Center Publishes a New Growers Manual

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and GROWN Locally have developed a “Grower’s Manual” to help local food cooperatives improve their handling practices and meet food safety standards. The 24-page manual can be downloaded from www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/2011-10-growers-manual.

GROWN Locally, a producer cooperative in northeast Iowa, originally developed the manual to establish standards for pre- and post-harvest handling and meet the specifications of local foodservice establishments.
The Leopold Center revised and expanded the manual for other cooperatives to use as a model.

“We have already had some inquiries from producer groups regarding this manual,” said Craig Chase, Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative leader. “It will allow new groups to adapt this resource to their particular needs rather than create one from scratch.”

Cooperatives might adopt the manual’s recommendations to help them meet voluntary standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Handling Practices (GHPs). Farms and facilities that pass a GAP or GHP audit and become certified are recognized for food safety practices that minimize risk.

The Grower’s Manual describes requirements for personnel procedures, general handling, cleaning, sanitizing, packaging, labeling and transporting, and offers information for planning a mock recall. It also includes detailed tables that describe how to prepare and package a variety of crops.

Joanna Hamilton, a master’s degree candidate at Tufts University and summer intern at the Leopold Center, prepared the manual with assistance from the Leopold Center’s Marketing and Food Systems Initiative, GROWN Locally and Iowa State University Extension.

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News Release
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu
Hermans to Host Practical Farmers of Iowa Pasture Walk

NEW ALBIN - Practical Farmers of Iowa announces four pasture walks to be held in November and December 2011. One walk is planned in northeast Iowa at the Ryan and Eugene Herman farm, New Albin.

The pasture walks will showcase innovative grazing practices, cattle genetics, marketing strategies, winter grazing challenges and fescue toxicity as well as provide networking opportunities for graziers.

Ryan and Gene Herman have 190 cow-calf pairs. All calves are grazed as yearlings and sold to a grass finishing program. The Hermans have not made any hay since 2005, relying instead on stockpiled pasture and purchased hay.

The walk will feature the following discussion topics: use of holistic planned grazing and fall rest periods, winter water, cattle genetics for year-long grazing, mob grazing to enhance grass density and feeding in deep snow.

The walk will take place on November 15 from 1-3 pm. To get to the Herman farm, take Hwy 76 out of Waukon north for 21 miles, then turn right on County Road 2/West Main Street, which crosses into Eitzen, MN, then back into Iowa, continue on this road and it turns into Pool Hill Drive. The farm will be on the right at 1137 Pool Hill Drive.

All of the pasture walks are free and open to the public. For more information, call Kevin Dietzel at the Practical Farmers of Iowa office, 515.232.5661; email kevin@practicalfarmers.org or visit www.practicalfarmers.org/events.

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News Release

Fearless Farm Finances Training to be Held December 9 & 10 in La Crosse, WI

SPRING VALLEY, WI – The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) announced today that it is offering a two-day training session titled “Fearless Farm Finances” for farmers interested in learning about farm financial management on Friday and Saturday, December 9 & 10, In La Crosse, WI. The cost for the two-day training is $95. An organic lunch will be featured on Friday and organic breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

Those who love to farm may not also love the record keeping and accounting that is so important to managing their farm’s success. But careful tracking, analyzing and understanding the numbers are critical in helping producers assess how their farms are doing and where improvements can be made. The Fearless Farm Finances training is planned for both beginning farmers and for established farmers who desire to better understand the financial aspects of their farms. The training will help attendees become comfortable with the basics of farm financial management and understand how it can help them achieve and increase profitability.

This program is planned and hosted by MOSES and will be a dynamic, interactive session led by three experienced teachers with diverse farm finance backgrounds: Chris Blanchard, owner/manager of Rock Spring Farm, a vegetable market farm and CSA; Craig Chase, farm management program specialist at Iowa State University Extension; and Paul Dietmann, director of the Wisconsin Farm Center at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.
“Farm financial management isn't as tough as it may seem but many farmers are intimidated by tracking and working with numbers,” says Paul Dietmann. “Learning the basics in this training will take away the fear and uncertainty and help farmers make more informed decisions about their farm businesses.”

Topics covered over the two days will include: setting your farm financial goals; understanding your farm through the standard reports of income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flows; using enterprise budgets; data collection, budgeting and monitoring; and understanding profitability. There will be significant time allocated for questions and discussion. Participants will receive a copy of the companion book, “Fearless Farm Finances,” to be published by MOSES in 2012.

The Fearless Farm Finances training will be held at the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse, WI, 200 Harborview Plaza. MOSES is offering a limited number of reduced-rate scholarships for attendees. Details and an application can be found on the MOSES website. To view the program schedule and register, go to http://www.mosesorganic.org/farmfinances.html, OR call the MOSES office at 715-778-5775 for questions and to receive a mailed registration form.

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Photos & Captions

Teachers Sharpen their Skills
Family and Consumer Science (FCS) teachers are responsible for teaching students about skills they will need to be successful adults. Sixteen local teachers recently accepted the challenge to sharpen their own skills—literally.

The teachers attended a food safety and knife skills workshop taught by Cindy Baumgartner, Iowa State University Extension Service and Outreach Nutrition and Health Program Specialist and hosted by the Area Education Agency (AEA). The workshop also covered healthy recipes in classroom settings and the shared many resources that can assist teachers in their classrooms.

“Knowledge and skills to keep food safe is absolutely critical in any FCS foods class,” said Baumgartner. “Integrating food safety principles and knife skills into the FCS curriculum prepares students to enter the job market. I am pleased these teachers place a high value on learning the latest information regarding healthy and safe methods of preparing food.”

At the conclusion of the workshop, all the teachers were going to add, update, or emphasize more food safety concepts in their existing FCS curriculum.

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FCS teachers who participated in the ISU Extension and Outreach food safety and knife skills workshop were: Front row (l to r): Cindy Baumgartner (instructor), Eileen Bergan, Ed-Co; Dana Einck, Clayton Ridge; Hannah Steiber, Eastern Allamakee. Row 2: Lauren Adams, West Central; Deb Obermann, Howard-Winnesiek; Tammy Aldrich, N. Fayette; Liza Walke-Pollitt, W. Dubuque; Elaine Lore, Decorah; Jan Murray, Starmont. Row 3: Debra Walz, Central; Karla Downs, Maq Valley; Donna Schmeidel, New Hampton; Dixie Nederhoff, Oelwein; Jane Knepper, W. Dubuque; Tamara Butikofer, MFL MarMac, Elaine Hanson, N. Fayette.

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Teachers intensely concentrate on developing their knife skills. From left, Dana Einck (Clayton-Ridge Schools); Cindy Baumgartner (instructor); Cherie Casey (Keystone AEA); Lauren Adams (West Central Schools); and Debra Walz (Central Schools-Elkader).
This information has been sent to you by Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Communications Coordinator for Region 4 ISU Extension, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599.

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