Fall High Tunnel Meeting
by Joe Hannan, Commercial Horticulture Field Specialist

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will host a series of meetings this fall for growers producing crops in high tunnels. Three meeting sites will offer the beginning “High Tunnel 101” workshop to current commercial fruit or vegetable growers and traditional farmers interested in diversifying their production. Topics to be covered at the workshop include site and high tunnel selection, construction, soil management, irrigation, pest management, bed design and cropping systems. A high tunnel manual is provided.

A second set of workshops, “Advance High Tunnel Tomato Production,” will be offered for growers already using a high tunnel structure in their production system for advanced high tunnel training. Topics to be covered include environmental control, nutrient management, foliar sampling, hands-on grafting practice, production budgets, and succession plantings for maximum efficiency.

Pre-registration is required for all workshops by calling site of participation. Fees for each workshop are $55 per person or $90 per couple (or employees of the same farm), and includes a resource guide, lunch and refreshments.


Diana Cochran Names Fruit Specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach
by Pat Howard, ANR Communications Director

Diana Cochran is the new fruit specialist for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She brings expertise in nursery management, plant propagation and horticulture plant materials to this position, which serves the state of Iowa.

In her role, Cochran will focus on commercial fruit production and provide support to Iowa producers. Horticulture Extension and Outreach provides research-based information to aid in making their operations more efficient and profitable. Cochran’s research emphasis is in fruit production and viticulture, with a focus on evaluating sustainable production systems, cold hardiness, season extension, nutrient management and environmental variables such as light, temperature and water use efficiency on growth, development, and establishment.

Cochran has a Ph.D. in agricultural science from Mississippi State University, and her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in horticulture from Auburn University. Cochran can be reached by email at dianac@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-6764.

“I look forward to getting to know the great state of Iowa and working with Iowa growers to help produce quality fruit crops without reducing crop quality,” Cochran said.
Extension Program Aims to Empower Americans to Make a Smart Choice about Health Insurance

Open enrollment for individuals who must purchase health insurance in the open market begins in November. Research shows the vast majority of people in this country are uncomfortable, overwhelmed and intimidated when it comes to making decisions about health insurance coverage.

That’s why a team of experts from across the nation, led by the University of Maryland Extension developed Smart Choice Health Insurance—a comprehensive, research-based, unbiased curriculum designed to equip people with the tools they need to make the best decision possible for their families when choosing health insurance.

Smart Choice is a workshop where participants will learn how to analyze what they need and want from health care providers, compare plans, calculate how health insurance will affect their financial budgets, and ultimately, apply the information and knowledge gained to make a smart choice during the open enrollment period.

“As the local Extension educator, I’m pleased to offer this workshop. I know people want to select insurance that will serve their needs and fit with their finances. This workshop can help them do just that” says Joyce Lash.

Smart Choice will be held in the following counties:

Wayne - October 23
Monroe - October 28
Lucas - October 29
Appanoose - November 3
Wapello - To Be Determined
Jefferson - To Be Determined
Van Buren—November 17

Pre-registration by October 21st to ensure a minimum number of participants is required. Call your local Extension Office to reserve your seat.

Contact: Joyce Lash, Family Finance,
Human Sciences Extension & Outreach
641-464-5003

October is National Apple Month

October is National Apple Month! National Apple Month is the only national, generic apple promotion in the United States. Originally founded in 1904 as National Apple Week, it was expanded to the entire month of October.

Land Grant Universities lead the way in developing new varieties. The University of Minnesota led by Luby and Beford, Cornell University run by Susan Brown and most recent the Washington State University directed by Kate Evans.

The University of Minnesota was truly placed on the map when it introduced the Honeycrisp in 1991. In 2006, the Honeycrisp was ranked as one of the top 25 academic or research innovations that changed the world and soon after was named Minnesota’s state fruit. The explosively juicy, crunchy Honeycrisp apple that helped revive a declining apple-growing industry and brought much needed revenue to small family-run orchards has no peer.

In just 25 years the Honeycrisp has become the fifth most popular apple (bushel sold) and growing in popularity each year. Many grocery store managers will tell you it is the most desired apple. It is presently being grown in seven countries.

Pumpkin Facts

•The top pumpkin production states are Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California.
•Around 90 to 95% of the processed pumpkins in the United States are grown in Illinois.
• Colonists sliced off pumpkin tops; removed seeds and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. This was baked in hot ashes and is the origin of pumpkin pie.

Whimsy - 2015 Garden Calendar

Gardens bring tasty food, delightful color, refreshing fragrance, rustling leaves, and enervating prickles and tickles. Sometimes they even tickle the fancy.

This year’s calendar captures the sense of playfulness found in many gardens. Take a whimsical journey through the seasons in photography, verse, and quippy garden quotes.

Makes a great gift and a handy garden journal too!
You can pick up your 2015 Garden calendar at your county Extension office. The cost is $6.00.
Iowa Organic Conference to Help Producers Meet Growing Demand for Organics

AMEs, Iowa -- The 14th Annual Iowa Organic Conference will be held Nov. 16-17 on the University of Iowa campus in Iowa City, as a joint effort between Iowa State University and the UI Office of Sustainability. Producers and experts from across the country will share tips for transitioning into organic production and methods to enhance organic operations.

“The U.S. market for organic products reached $31.3 billion in 2012 and the demand for organic grains and produce continues to exceed supply,” said Kathleen Delate, ISU organic agriculture specialist. “Growers everywhere are encouraged to consider the potential for organic production.”

The conference keynote speaker is Mary Berry, daughter of Wendell Berry, novelist, poet, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer. Ms. Berry speaks all over the country as a proponent of agriculture of the middle, in defense of small farmers, and in the hope of restoring a culture that has been lost in rural America. Her works promoting soil conservation and an ecological agriculture are echoed in one of her sayings: “A society that is satisfied with short term economics while destroying the source of its own survival [the soil] cannot last.”

A reception, featuring local and organic food and drinks will kick off the conference on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 6 p.m. in the UI Memorial Union, followed by the movie, “Fresh” at 7 p.m., which explores the growing influence of local and organic markets in the U.S. The conference lunch on Monday afternoon highlights local and organic produce, meats and dairy products assembled into a gourmet meal by UI award-winning Executive Chef, Barry Greenberg.

Sessions for those interested in learning about the latest techniques for transitioning into organic farming, or improving organic operation, will include lessons on weed management, nutrient management, pest management and livestock integration. The conference also includes information on how to begin farming, soil and water quality initiatives and government programs, crop insurance, compliance with food safety regulations, alternative energy projects, and markets for organic grain, vegetable and fruit crops. Organic farmers, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach specialists, government agency staff and others with unique experience related to organic agriculture and sustainable living also will be speaking at the conference.

“The Iowa Organic Conference is the largest University-sponsored organic conference in the country,” said Delate. Last year’s conference brought 50 exhibitors, ranging from organic seed sales, to local food system nonprofits, to government offices working with transitioning and certified organic farmers. Despite the challenges of extreme weather this year, organic farmers are anticipating successful organic yields with organic soybean prices currently averaging $17 per bushel.

The cost of the conference is $95 on or before Nov. 7 and $115 after Nov. 7. Conference information is available online at http://sustainability.uiowa.edu/2014-iowa-organic-conference/ with the link to registration at https://www.signmeup.com/site/online-event-registration/102901

For additional conference information and directions to the conference, visit the webpage or contact Delate at kdelate@iastate.edu.

Conference partners include Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, New Pioneer Co-op, Organic Valley and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

---

Jeff & Deb Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center

The Jeff & Deb Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center opened for classes & events in the Spring 2014 semester.

Recently the 2014 4-H/FFA State Livestock Judging Contests were held at the Center on August 23rd. Eighty-five youth participated.

The objectives of the Iowa 4-H Judging Contests are for the 4-H’ers to learn modern livestock and meat evaluation methods, practice decision-making and communication skills and develop the ability to select livestock appropriate for a defined production purposes.
Register for October, November Good Agricultural Practices Workshops

AMES, Iowa — Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will conduct Good Agricultural Practices workshops in Indianola on Oct. 4 and 18, and Sioux City on Nov. 19 and 25. The one-day workshops are important for fruit and vegetable growers who want to better understand how GAPs can be used to meet buyers’ food safety requirements.

The workshops are offered as Level 1: KNOW and Level 2: SHOW. Level 1 is training for growers who provide food to consumers through community–supported agriculture or farmers’ markets, or are considering retail foodservice sales. Training covers good agriculture best practices and market considerations.

Level 2 workshops guide farmers in the development of a written farm food safety plan. Farmers considering sales to retail foodservices such as grocers, restaurants, hospitals and other institutions, and those interested in adding value to fresh produce and selling products in a convenience form will have the tools to demonstrate GAPs are in place after attending the workshop.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach faculty and specialists instructing the workshops include Angela Shaw, food safety; Catherine Strohbehn, food safety and local foods systems; and Linda Naeve, value added agriculture. The workshops are funded through a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Services Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

2014/2015 GAP workshop schedule

Warren County Extension Office, 909 E 2nd Ave # E, Indianola
Level 1: Oct. 4
Level 2: Oct. 18

Woodbury County Extension Office, 4301 Sergeant Rd, Sioux City
Level 1: Nov. 19
Level 2: Nov. 25

ISU Armstrong Research Farm/Wallace Foundation, 53020 Hitchcock Ave, L
Level 1: Feb. 12
Level 2: Feb. 20

Spencer, Iowa (Location TBA)
Level 1: Feb. 17
Level 2: Feb. 24

Linn County Extension, 383 Collins Road NE, Suite 201,Cedar Rapids
Level 1: March 2
Level 2: March 24

The fee is $25 per workshop with discounts for multiple members of the same farm. Attendees will receive a certificate of completion following the program. Registration can be made directly online at http://bit.ly/12sLsxE. If you have questions, please contact Angela Shaw at 515-294-0868 or email at angelaml@iastate.edu.
**CREEP FEEDING ECONOMICS IN 2014**

By Patrick Wall, ISU Extension and Outreach beef program specialist

The cow-calf game has certainly changed in the last 12 months, and it’s no doubt been a fun ride. Our memories of a bitterly cold winter and record-high commodity prices in prior years quickly fade every time we check the markets on our smart phones. Needless to say, a number of creep feeders got pretty rusty during the $7 corn era, and it may be time to shine them up again as we enter early fall 2014.

My app today (late July) says that feeder cattle are worth $2.20 a pound and corn is $3.65 a bushel. More importantly, the futures feeder price for September, October, and November says the exact same thing: $2.20 a pound. The December corn contract is at $3.75…and goes up from there steadily into 2015. By the time this article hits your inbox or news feed, the numbers could be significantly different.

Placing the markets aside, the challenges brought forth in 2014 for many cow-calf producers may be reason enough to fill the feeders once again. Throughout much of Iowa, flooding or frequent rain events made 1st and 2nd cutting hay harvest a struggle. As a result, this winter our cows may be consuming lower quality mature hay that got “rinsed off” a time or two.

Research suggests cows can come in 20-30 pounds heavier and in better body condition if her calf has access to creep feed. A little extra flesh may help that cow endure a period of low quality hay or reduce the amount of purchased supplement it takes to get her back in a body condition score (BCS) of 6 prior to calving next spring.

On the calf side, the math can be pretty simple: >$2 a pound X >50lbs. of added gain = >$100 per calf additional revenue. If we dig in a little further and use a feed tag example: a 400lbs. calf will consume about 1% of their body weight in creep feed per day. Cost of the diet is $0.14 per pound. Total cost is $0.56 per head. If the efficiency of the creep feed is 6:1, then every day we should see a benefit of 2/3 of a pound per calf. If you offer creep feed for the last 90 days on the cow, expect to spend roughly $50 per calf for 60 additional pounds of weaning weight. All said, those added pounds are worth $130 per calf, pocketing about $80 more NET PROFIT per head this fall, adjusting a little for market slide based on added weight. A number of creep feed diets are on the market; some try to limit consumption, others assume ad libitum. Consider options like a low-starch, fiber-based creep diet versus a grain mix. Since the calf’s rumen already is processing some forage, they can more efficiently utilize a low starch supplement. If August turns hot and dry, your heavier milking and younger cows will thank you for the gesture, particularly those consuming mature and/or lower quality for-age. With the sheer value of cattle versus commodity prices, anything we can do as producers to protect our investments into 2015 is a wise decision.

---

**Addressing Grain Storage Issues**

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach recently released three Web-based training modules covering key aspects of grain drying and storage. Greg Brenneman and Shawn Shouse, agricultural engineering specialists with ISU Extension and Outreach, are the online course instructors.

The 20-minute modules cover -

- Aeration of stored grain
- Energy efficiency & drying capacity gains from dryeration
- Fan performance and sizing.

They can be viewed or downloaded at [www.extension.iastate.edu/Grain/Topics/GrainStorage.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Grain/Topics/GrainStorage.htm)

---

**SAVE THE DATE:**

2015 Cow/Calf Conference
January 21, 2015
Bridgeview Center in Ottumwa
Field Extension Education Laboratory (FEEL)
Providing hands-on diagnostic training for crop production & protection professionals since 1987.

The Field Extension Education Laboratory, or FEEL, is a 23-acre teaching and demonstration facility dedicated to providing a hands-on learning experience for crop production professionals. This facility is used for demonstration projects used in a variety of programs held throughout the summer months. In these plots we can show a wide range of management problems, solutions, and diagnostic challenges. Modern, air-conditioned classroom facilities complement the in-field sessions, all of which are within walking distance.

Program features
Each of the instructors at FEEL is a subject-matter specialist familiar with crops, soils, or pest problems throughout Iowa. Small classes offer each participant ample opportunity for discussion with instructors. Participants sharpen troubleshooting skills and evaluate management strategies through direct experience with actual crop problems. FEEL will help you become technically strong in all areas of crop production and protection - not just in your specialty.

Newsletter to Cover All Things Related to Small Farm Living
ARTICLE | THU, 09/18/2014 - 11:06 | BY CHRISTA HARTSOOK, WILLY KLEIN

AMES, Iowa—Many Iowans are choosing to live on small farms or acreages and they have a variety of reasons. According to the Census of Agriculture, one-third of Iowa farms are small farms with 50 acres or less. Iowans say small farms offer a quiet place to retire and open spaces to raise young families. Some are drawn to the rural lifestyle by memories of growing up on a farm or visiting a grandparent’s farm. Others want to raise their own food, make a positive contribution to the environment or contribute to the local food system.

Christa Hartsook knows about the opportunities and the challenges of small farm living. She and her husband Greg are raising three children on a small farm in Story County. She also has been involved with small farm sustainability the past 12 years as a value added agriculture program specialist for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She is a natural fit as the small farm sustainability program coordinator with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the position she began in June. She has her sights set on making sure other Iowans know of the opportunities and available resources for managing challenges of small farm living. “Living on an acreage or small farm definitely has its opportunities,” she said. “There are many things Iowans can do to earn additional income, sustainably take care of the land and the resources, and provide a rural lifestyle for their family.”

Acreage Living subscribers have a chance for Iowa State football tickets
Hartsook and the small farm sustainability program are re-introducing the ISU Extension and Outreach Acreage Living newsletter in an online format. Iowans living on small farms recently received introductory postcards encouraging them to subscribe. Hartsook even added an incentive for those that subscribe before Oct. 5 – their names will be entered into a drawing for tickets to the Iowa State vs. Texas Tech game Nov. 22.

“We want people to be excited about the newsletter and the information that will come to them every three months, so we are building on the excitement around the Cyclone football team,” she said. “Readers will find valuable information in the Acreage Living e-newsletter, regardless of why they are choosing a rural lifestyle.”

The first issue includes information about backyard poultry, fall turf grass management, well maintenance and inspection, promoting pollinators and vermin management. The newsletter will be emailed directly to subscribers and county extension offices across the state, and be available on the ISU Extension and Outreach small farm website.
Study Results Tell How to Cut Tractor Fuel Expenses

AMES, Iowa – Tractor fuel expenses can add up quickly during fall and spring field work. According to a case study conducted at the Iowa State University Armstrong Research and Demonstration Farm near Atlantic, Iowa, fuel savings of 20 percent or more can be achieved by using the "shift up, throttle back" technique.

Using an auxiliary 12-gallon tractor fuel tank, the study measured diesel fuel consumption for different gear and throttle combinations during disking, plowing and planting with a John Deere 7420 tractor.

"Improving tractor fuel efficiency is one of many ways to reduce energy expenses on the farm," said Mark Hanna, ag engineer with ISU Extension and Outreach. "For example, using the ‘shift up, throttle back’ technique during planting shows a fuel savings of 21 percent when comparing the lower versus higher gear settings."

The study also examined the effects of tillage depth on fuel consumption during tandem disking. "As expected, deeper tillage generally requires more fuel," Hanna said. "In this case, increasing the disking depth from 3 inches to 5 inches increased fuel use by 9 percent."

A new publication from ISU Extension and Outreach illustrates the results of the tractor fuel case study from southwest Iowa. Tractor Fuel Consumption at Armstrong (PM 3063B) is available to download from the Extension Online Store, www.extension.iastate.edu/store. The study summarizes tractor fuel measurements for field work including disking, plowing and planting.

"This case study illustrates a key point about on-farm energy management," Hanna said. "Many opportunities to improve energy efficiency are tied directly to day-to-day activities such as driving a tractor. Reducing tillage depth and remembering the ‘shift up, throttle back’ technique when you’re in the driver’s seat will reduce fuel consumption."

For more tips on energy efficiency all around the farmstead, visit http://farmenergy.exnet.iastate.edu or follow @ISU_Farm_Energy on Twitter.

The Farm Energy publications are part of a series of farm energy efficiency resources developed by ISU Farm Energy. This outreach effort aims to help farmers and utility providers to improve on-farm energy management and to increase profitability in a rapidly changing energy environment.

---

Fall 2014 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training Recertification Course Schedule Now Available

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Pest Management and the Environment programs have set the fall dates for the commercial pesticide applicator continuing instructional courses for 2014. These will be offered at county extension offices across Iowa. Visit the Commercial Applicator Training page for the registration forms and for more information about each program.

**Fall Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training Recertification Courses**

**Roadside, forest, and Aquatic Pest Management**
Categories 2 (Forest Pest), 5 (Aquatic Pest), 6 (Right-of-Way), and 10 (Research and Demonstration)
10/15/14 9:00-11:30 am

**Mosquito and Public Health Pest Management**
Categories 7D (Community Insect), 8 (Public Health Pest) and 10 (Research and Demonstration)
10/23/14 9:00-11:30 am

**Ornamental and Turf grass Applicators**
Categories: 3O (Ornamental Pest), 3T (Turf Pest), 3OT (Ornamental and Turf Pest), and 10 (Research and Demonstration)
11/5/14 1:30-4:00 pm

**Commercial Ag Weed, Insect, and Plant Disease Management**
Categories: 1A (Agricultural Weed), 1B (Agricultural Insect), 1C (Agricultural Crop Disease), & 10 (Research and Demonstration)
11/12/14 9:00-11:45 am

**Fumigation**
Categories 7C (Fumigation) and 10 (Research and Demonstration)
11/18/14 9:00-11:30 am

**Pest Control Operators**
Categories 7A (Gen. & Household Pest), 7B (Termite), 8 (Public Health), & 10 (Research and Demonstration)
12/3/14 9:00-11:30 am
Would you like to receive the Ag Newsletter electronically? Call 641-872-1755 or email kmartley@iastate.edu and provide your email address!

Wayne County
P.O. Box 281, 100 N. Lafayette Street
Corydon, IA 50060

COMING SOON - Crop Advantage brings the latest crop production information from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to Honey Creek Resort in Moravia, IA on January 15, 2015. This will include key statewide topics as well as a program developed by ISU field agronomists specifically southeast Iowa.

Iowa private pesticide applicator? We have you covered. Attendance at a Crop Advantage meeting qualifies for continuing education for recertification (additional fee applies).

Certified Crop Adviser? Each location is also approved for CCA continuing education credits. Check location programs for specific credit offerings. Additional fee applies for credits.

Registration includes refreshments, lunch and a copy of the Crop Advantage proceedings booklet.