From the Agent

Hi Folks,

Check out the events coming up this fall and next year, including the 2011 Putting Small Acreage to Work event, a Turf Weed Management and Pesticide Safety class, the 2012 Piedmont Farm School, and more! Also, read about various resources now available through North Carolina State University.

Let me know if you have questions!

Regards,

Mary Helen Ferguson
Extension Agent

Putting Small Acreage to Work 2011:
The Business Side of Farming

Even if you can grow that crop, raise that type of animal, or make that agricultural product, can you sell it? Even if you can grow/raise/make it, you can make a profit on it? Are you making a profit on the one(s) in which you’re already involved? If you’re starting a farm or other type of agricultural business, what are the steps that you need to go through to be in compliance with relevant laws and regulations? How do you know how much to charge for your product or service? These questions are central to this year’s Putting Small Acreage to Work event.

Putting Small Acreage to Work 2011: The Business Side of Farming is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, from 8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Topics to be addressed include the following: Evaluating a Business Idea, Legal Requirements for Small Farms, Fundamentals of Small Farm Recordkeeping, and Pricing Your Products. This event will be held at the Randolph County Cooperative Extension office (112 W. Walker Ave., Asheboro).

Speakers will include Extension Associate Gary Bullen, from the NC State University (NCSU) Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Cooperative Extension Agent Mary Helen Ferguson, and local farmers Larry McPherson and Brad Moore.

Pre-registration and a fee of $10 (lunch included) are due by Wednesday, Nov. 30. Checks, made out to NC Cooperative Extension – Randolph County, can be sent to 112 W. Walker Ave., Asheboro, NC, 27203. Call Mary Helen for more information.
2012 Piedmont Farm School

The Piedmont Farm School is a seven-month educational program for individuals who are seriously considering or currently involved in farming. It has been designed to provide training in production practices and business planning, in order to help people operate successful small-scale, sustainable farms. Speakers will include NCSU faculty and staff, in addition to local farmers.

Each month from February to June and September to October, the group will meet one evening (second Tuesday of each month, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., in Lexington) for business training and on another day for a field trip to local farms. Field trip topics will include the following: whole farm planning, livestock basics (beef cattle, hogs, meat and dairy goats, poultry), fruits, vegetables, specialty crops, agritourism, and marketing. Expected field trip destinations include farms in Alamance, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rowan, and Stanly Counties. Additional information about field trip dates and destinations can be found here: http://davidson.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/29/Piedmont%20Farm%20School.pdf.

The registration fee is $150 for one person, $200 for two people, and $250 for families of three or more, for those who register and pay by Dec. 16. Between Dec. 16 and Jan. 20, $25 should be added to the fee. Go to the Events page at http://davidson.ces.ncsu.edu or call 336-242-2085 for registration materials or more information.

Blueberry Grower Resources

Two new resources are available for those involved or interested in blueberry production. A Blueberry Growers Information Portal is now available: http://ncsu.edu/enterprises/blueberries/. Similar portals are also available for blackberries and raspberries, muscadines, strawberries, and tomatoes.

Also, Extension Associate Bill Cline, with the NCSU Dept. of Plant Pathology, has started a blueberry blog: http://ncblueberryjournal.blogspot.com/.

Turf, Bugs, and Rock N' Roll

Some folks in the NCSU Dept. of Entomology have stated a Facebook group through which folks can get updates about turf insect management: http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/190279357702196/.

Beekeeper Education & Engagement System (BEES)

Cooperative Extension Apiculturist Dr. David Tarpy, with the NCSU Dept. of Entomology, is offering a new resource for beekeepers. See the following link for a twenty-minute introduction to BEES: http://entomology.ncsu.edu/apiculture/BEES.html.

According to Dr. Tarpy, “Together, these first three courses [available through the website mentioned above] at the 'Beginner' level make for an excellent introductory beekeeping course for novice or beginning beekeepers, and therefore they are designed to be bundled into a plug-and-play ‘bee school’ for individuals or group audiences.”

It is anticipated that more advanced training materials will be available through the site, as well.
NCSU Distance Education Courses

Remember that you don’t have to be a degree-seeking student at NCSU to take classes through the Distance Education program. Many departments, including the Dept. of Horticultural Science, offer online courses. See the following links for more information:
http://distance.ncsu.edu/courses/spring-courses/
http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/calendars/enrollmentsprg.html

Upcoming Events

Randolph Co.

Turf Weed Management and Pesticide Safety
Nov. 28 (8:00 – 10:00 a.m.), NC Zoo Stedman Education Center (next to N. America entrance). This will provide two hours of H, L, N, D, and X pesticide credits. Registration/more info: 336-318-6000.

Pesticide Disposal Day
Dec. 1 (10:00 a.m – 2:00 p.m.), Memorial Park (800 S. Church St., Asheboro).

Putting Small Acreage to Work 2011: The Business Side of Farming
Dec. 3 (8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.), NCCE office (112 W. Walker Ave., Asheboro). See p. 1 for more information. Registration fee ($10) due to us by Nov. 30.

Garden Center Employee Training
Plans for this event have been moved to the late winter (February), to accommodate the seasonal hiring schedules of garden centers. Look for more information on the Randolph Growers e-mail listserv.

For Cooperative Extension events, for accommodations for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Wanda Howe by phone (336-318-6000), fax (336-318-6011), e-mail (wanda_howe@ncsu.edu), or in person, no later than five business days before the event.

Statewide and Regional

47th Annual Conference - North Carolina Irrigation Society

Pesticide Disposal Collection Day (Chatham Co.)
Nov. 3 (10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.), Southern States (117 Dogwood Avenue, Siler City). More info: 919-542-8202.

Rockingham County Small Farm Day
Nov. 5. More info: kathryn_holmes@ncsu.edu or 336-342-8230.

Southeast Strawberry Expo
Statewide and Regional (cont.)
Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association
Nov. 14-16, Myrtle Beach, SC. More info: http://www.cgcsa.org/ or 800-476-4272.

26th Annual Southeast Vegetable & Fruit Expo

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certification Review and Exam

Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference

NC Nursery & Landscape Assoc. 2012 Green & Growin’ Show

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference: Practical Tools & Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms

Piedmont Farm School

Other events to watch for in early 2012 (details not available yet)
NC Blueberry Council Annual Open House and Trade Show, http://ncblueberry.org/

Please contact Mary Helen (maryhelen_ferguson@ncsu.edu) if you would like to be on the Randolph Growers e-mail list, by which you can get the newsletter and more frequent updates