

# In your community

July/  
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## JACKSON COUNTY FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR HONORED

The Ericka Wright Family of Kansas City has been selected as the Jackson County Farm Family of the Year and were recognized at the 2006 Missouri Farm Family Day at the Missouri State Fair on August 14.

Troostwood Gardens, a half-acre organic garden, in a downtown Kansas City, Missouri neighborhood is not your typical small farm in the making. Ericka Wright is no typical farmer. Disabled from muscular dystrophy, Wright motors around her gardens in a motorized scooter. In

## *a Family Affair*

roughly four years the Wright family has managed to educate themselves, and their urban neighbors, on the production, risks and rewards of vegetable farming. Year by year empty lots near their Paseo Boulevard home have been sewn in colorful vegetable gardens of tomatoes, okra, greens, beans, cucumbers and more. Passers-by can shop from their farmstand on Saturday mornings or learn about the family's environmental stewardship at their annual Earth Fair celebration.

Ericka, nephew Justin, nieces Gina and Jessica, and her mother and aunt use high tunnels for early season plantings, educate the neighborhood on the importance of food production both in urban and rural settings, often play host to neighboring school fieldtrips and intern on local organic vegetable farms. In addition to their busy gardening, school schedules, and farm internships, each of the children are involved in 4-H programs. Niece Gina will be studying Agriculture at Lincoln University this fall.



For more information, please contact  
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## FARMER'S MARKETS CONTINUE TO INCREASE

The number of farmers' markets in the Kansas City area continues to grow according to Crystal Weber, Regional Community Development Specialist with University of Missouri Extension. Of only a handful of all-organic farmers' markets that exist in the Midwest, Jackson County boasts THREE. In addition there are numerous neighborhood markets throughout the county.

## FEEDING KANSAS CITY CONFERENCE

The 2006 Feeding Kansas City Conference aims to assist in developing marketing connections for local farm products in the Kansas City area. The program's day-long format includes 30 presentations on direct marketing successes and ideas, hurdles to overcome in local food sales, a forum for producers, chefs and grocery stores to network and roundtable discussions addressing Kansas City's increasing demand for local food. The conference is scheduled for Saturday, December 2, 2006 from 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center. University of Missouri Extension is one of the organizers of this annual event.

## GROWING GROWERS KANSAS CITY

"Growing Growers" is a program in Kansas City to train farmers in local food production. Their goal is to increase the number and effectiveness of small farms that grow food organically and/or sustainably for the Kansas City Metro Area. Growing Growers is a collaborative effort of University of Missouri Extension, K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas Rural Center and the Kansas City Food Circle. The program offers paid and volunteer apprenticeships on local farms and educational hands-on workshops related to local food production.

"We desperately need more market growers in the Kansas City area. We don't have enough growers to supply all of the need now," said Mary Hendrickson, an assistant professor of rural sociology with University of Missouri Extension and a Growing Growers board member. "We are trying to help them discover how to get into farming and figure out what the best markets and niches are for them."

For more information about any of these programs contact  
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