Soils and Crops Conference on March 26th

You’ve waited all year and it’s finally here!! The 87th Annual Jefferson County Soils and Crops Conference, the Jefferson County Social Event of the Year, will be Saturday, March 26th at 6:00 p.m. at Hillsboro High School in Hillsboro. Please find your registration form in this newsletter. Spectacular highlights from the 2011 Conference are:

- Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting
- Video of Jefferson County Farm Families where three generations are still working on the farm, Stanley Bonacker Farm and Weber Dairy
- 2011 Jefferson County Farm Family
- Presentation of a Century Farm Award
- Buffet meal

There will be displays by businesses and other agencies serving agriculture and it looks like we could have more displays than ever!! So rest up for the Social Event of the Year, the 87th Annual Soils and Crops Conference on March 26th!

Dean Wilson—Agriculture & Rural Development Specialist

Spring has got to be around the corner

Everyone I talk to is more than ready for spring! Me, too!! Here are some questions that routinely come in to the Extension Center each spring:

1) When is the frost-free date? April 15th is the frost-free date for this area. There is nothing magic about the date. It is just the average date after which we shouldn’t get frost.

2) Can I put leaves and other organic matter on my garden? Leaves, bark, sawdust, and other organic items can be applied to the garden, AFTER they have gone through the composting process. If applied prior to composting, they will tie up nitrogen and result in yellow, unthrifty garden plants.

3) When do I apply my crabgrass preventer? Before April 15th, (remember that magic day above?). Crabgrass preventers stop germination. Warm season annuals like crabgrass won’t germinate until the soils warm up.

4) How much fertilizer should I put on my lawn this spring? My personal opinion is NONE! Each year I visit lawns where nitrogen fertilizer has been

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applied in early spring and brown out occurs due to lawn diseases and poor soil conditions. Wait until fall. September and November are the ideal times. Unfortunately, nearly all the crabgrass preventers contain some nitrogen. So, go ahead and apply the crabgrass preventer as instructed on the label. Don’t apply additional fertilizer. You will be glad you listened to me!

5) Do I need to dry my soil test before bringing it to the Extension Center? Naw, if you can get the soil here, we can dry it. There are lots of days when my red S-10 pickup has paper plates of soil setting out on the hood!

6) How long does it take to get a soil test back? The lab continues to decrease the turn around time to get an analysis. We mail the samples to the lab at Portageville and the lab emails the results to me. That can take as little as 10 days. Lots of time, I’m the holdup! I have to get the samples boxed and in the mail and then take a look at the results and make comments. My goal is to get it back to you in two weeks. So, if your soil test results are slow returning, you only have me to blame!

7) I have this tree that looks bad. Is it going to die? Probably! The old saying is “a sick tree is like a sick sheep, a sick sheep is a dead sheep!” Wait until it leafs out. Then we can evaluate it. Many times the problem with trees are vascular in nature. For various reasons, disease, poor soil conditions, problems with the site, or injury prevent the tree from getting the necessary water and nutrients from the roots up in the tree. These issues are very difficult and expensive to treat.

8) What should I do about moles in my lawn? Offer your lawn as a nuclear testing site! Buy a Sherman tank to run over the mole hills! Consider concrete! Of all the questions I get, this is the toughest! Traps will work if you know how and where to set them. There is a new bait that has the smell and taste of earthworms. Call the Extension Center to get our mole packet. Good luck!
MISSOURI NUT GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Missouri Nut growers Association (MNGA) is a Missouri non-profit Association to promote the growing of nut tree cultivation for good health and Value-Added industry. Consider joining the membership of the Missouri Nut Growers Association!

We consist solely of volunteers dedicated to serving our members to the best of our abilities. The membership consist of experts in nut tree cultivation, farmers, amateur and commercial nut growers, experiment station workers, horticultural teachers and scientist, nut tree breeders, nursery-people, forester’s and beginning nut culturists. Our primary goal as an organization is to provide an educational and networking body to promote and enhance the growing and use of temperate nut species, as well as other tree/bush crops such as persimmons, paw-paws and elderberries.

Our members are our most valuable resource!

Looking forwards to visiting with numerous curious/enthusiastic CITIZENS that have a interest in nut meat as a alternative healthy food source for human consumption. We will have a information booth display at the SOILS & CROPS CONFERENCE in Hillsboro on March 26, 2011.

Grant Glatt—Missouri Nut Growers Association

Urban Homesteading: Returning to the Lost Art of Sustainable Living

By Lynn Heins, Agriculture Business Specialist, Washington County Extension

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about homesteading? Do you think about canning tomatoes with your grandmother? Often times, sustainable living comes to mind. Sustainable living is not just for rural people: Even with limited or no space, you can take steps to become more self-reliant! In light of turbulent economic times, many Americans are turning to the lost art of self-sufficiency.

The mission of University of Missouri’s Urban Homesteading Program is simple: To empower urban and rural individuals to take steps to become more self-sufficient by providing tools and education on basic homesteading practices. Class topics include container gardening, food preservation information, stretching your food dollars, and tips to help you live on less. No, we’re not going to ask you what kind of vehicle you drive or whether you use paper, plastic or reusable bags. This program will help you determine what's important to YOU, and provide tools and information to help you incorporate those sustainable behaviors into your everyday life.

Urban Homesteading is a six-week program and will be held on Monday evenings beginning April 11th through May 16th at the Jefferson County Extension Center in Hillsboro from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Registration is $50 and includes an 18 hour workshop, the Urban Homesteading Resource Workbook, Resource CD and refreshments. Class size is limited, so enroll today by calling the Jefferson County Extension Office at (636) 797-5391 or emailing: Jeffersonco@missouri.edu. Please make checks payable to the Jefferson County Extension and mail to PO Box 497, Hillsboro, MO 63050.
Upcoming De Soto Farmers Market Grower Meetings

Snow and bad weather have resulted in a couple of cancelations of the Growers Meetings for the De Soto Farmers Market. The rescheduled dates are as follows:

**Tuesday, March 15th** – “Pricing Your Products at the Farmers Market” by Greg Tucker, Small Business Development Specialist. Greg has a lot of experience working with small businesses and helping businesses with marketing. This is an important meeting for growers!

**Tuesday, March 22nd** – “Growing Flowers for the Farmers Market” This program was scheduled for March 1st, however, Karen Davis was caught in Florida where she was attending a conference and due to stormy weather, couldn’t get a flight out. Karen is an outstanding presenter and you will really enjoy hearing her. Before coming to work for Lincoln University, Karen grew flowers for 24 florists and marketed flowers at the Boone County Farmers Market. Don’t miss the presentation!

**Tuesday, March 29th** – Annual Grower’s Meeting. This is the meeting where the rules for the De Soto Farmers Market are explained and the Jefferson County Health Department reviews health and safety regulations. Also, someone will be there to certify your scale for sales at the market.

“Bud Box” Takes Advantage of Cattle Instinct

Most cattlemen think about a crowding tub as the best method to put cattle into an alley headed for the squeeze chute, however, Bud Williams of Independence, Kansas recommends the “Bud Box” as a better method. Williams calls it his idea and certainly if you are planning to build or remodel your cattle working facilities, you might want to take a look.

The Bud Box is simple. Cattle are brought from pens into a rectangular dead end pen usually about 14 feet wide by 20 feet long. A cross gate closes off the pen. The working alley is put at a right angle to the pen next to the cross gate. Cattle come into the pen and when they realize that they can go no further, they turn to go back where they came from. The only way out is into the working alley.

The working alley must be long enough so that the cattle can’t see the squeeze chute. Also, you want to only fill the pen with about as many cattle as will fit in the alley at one time. As you bring the cattle into the Bud Box, pressure them against the back end of the box. This will cause them to turn and come back and into the alley. The cross gate should probably be solid so that the cattle can’t see through it.
My Mom sent me this joke. I think maybe I have heard a version of this before, but it is so good that I thought I’d include in Short Rows. A woman brought a very limp duck to the veterinarian. The vet examined the duck and shook his head and sadly told the woman, “Ma’m your duck, Cuddles has passed away.” The woman questioned the veterinarian, “Are you sure? You haven’t done any tests on Cuddles and he could just be in a coma!” The veterinarian thought a moment and went to his kennel and brought back a Labrador retriever. The dog smelled the duck, turned and walked away. The vet then went and got a cat. The cat jumped up on the examination table, sniffed the duck from head to foot, meowed and jumped off the table and went back into the kennel. The veterinarian said, “I’m sorry, your duck is definitely dead. He then handed the lady a bill for $150. The lady in shock asked, “You are charging me $150 to tell me my duck is dead?” The veterinarian replied, “That’s $20 for my diagnosis, and the remainder for the Lab test and cat scan!?!?”

To some market analysts, the most surprising thing about the recent Semi-annual Cattle Inventory Report was that heifers kept for breeding were down over 5% and that heifers to calve were down over 7% from last year. If you are in the cow business, then you probably are not surprised. Even with higher calf prices, it still takes nearly all the calf crop to pay for feed, fuel, and fertilizer. And if you have a farm or cattle loan or need to replace equipment, then it takes all the calves you can raise plus some more to make the payments!

I saw my first live armadillo last week. It was in Bruce Rousan’s hay field. He seemed pretty busy smelling around and moving one way and then another. For all the dead ones we see on the road, I wonder where they hang out since you seldom see one alive!

And finally, we had a speaker at the recent Grow Your Farm Class talking about his vineyard, winery, and bed and breakfast. He was explaining how that the Health Department has strict rules on how wine is made and served down to the fact that there can’t even be a “smudge of lipstick on the glasses”. He went on to say that wine is a very safe product as its alcohol content prevents the growth of bacteria. While he understands the reason for the rules, he stated that he didn’t think that any of the things he mentioned above were really very dangerous. I disagree! I don’t know about the wine, but many a good man has gone down over a smudge of lipstick!?!?!
Thank you United Mutual Insurance Co.!

United Mutual Insurance Co. in Washington, MO donated $300 for the past several years to the Jefferson County University of Missouri Extension 4-H Club program.

From L-R: Rebecca Yuengel, Rachael Ortmann, Case Nail, Grant Glatt, Kim Stewart, Rich Miller, Carli Isermann, Roman Dietz, Katheryn Miller, Katrina Pierce, Shelly Isermann, Angela Pierce, Kim Stewart and Melissa Scheer.