

## **ASK THE AG TEAM, for the week of January 20, 2008**

Meetings for alternative farmers and vegetable growers –*by Tim Baker, Horticulture Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Daviess County*

University of Missouri Extension conducts many educational meetings for farmers every year, and many of them come in the winter. This week, I would like to tell you about two upcoming meetings that I am working on which may be of interest to area farmers.

The first event is actually a series of classes which will be held in St. Joseph. This is a new course, called "Grow Your Farm", which will be held on Monday evenings, starting on February 11th. The course runs for eight weeks. There will also be three Saturday farm tours. Grow Your Farm is aimed towards entrepreneurial-minded prospective farmers, beginning farmers with limited experience, and experienced farmers who want to make a "new beginning" with alternative methods.

The course is designed to help participants identify a mission for their farm, set goals, plan for profitability, build networks, and study practical legal issues. Those who are thinking about alternative agriculture enterprises will appreciate the course's encouragement of ideas outside the mainstream as well as sustainable practices. Finally, course participants will learn of resources for technical and other types of advice for their farming enterprise.

The cost is \$300 per farm business for 2 people, which includes course materials. Each additional person is \$25 per person. The deadline for registration is February 6th. For more information, contact Tom Fowler at 816-279-1691, or Randa Doty at 660-582-8101. Complete information and a registration form can also be found on our web site at:

<http://extension.missouri.edu/nwregion/hort/index.html>

The second meeting that I wanted to mention will be held in Jamesport on February 27th. This meeting is for vegetable growers, especially those who sell at produce auctions. The Jamesport meeting is one in a series of four meetings. Other locations include Rich Hill, Lamar, and Barnett, Missouri.

This is a back-to-basics meeting. We will be covering topics such as soil testing, irrigation, greenhouse and high tunnel production, variety selection, plant diseases, weed control, insect pests, and produce harvest and handling.

Growers may optionally stay after the main meeting for an additional class if they wish to obtain a private applicator's license for applying pesticides to their crops.

The registration deadline for the meeting will be Friday, February 15th. The first 50 people to register will receive a copy of the Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers. The workshop and production guide are free. For more information, please give me a call at 660-663-3232.