



Northwest Region Newsletter

March 2010 Edition

Events

Market Gardening Seminar panel interested in fresh produce

A panel at the LSU AgCenter's Market Gardening Seminar on March 6 stated that customers like to buy locally grown produce and flowers and would welcome suppliers at their businesses.

The panel included Randy Hamacker, owner of Sunshine Health Foods, Michael and Jason Brady of Wine Country Bistro and Nona Fowler-Sandlin, manager of Shreveport Farmer's Market.

The educational program was held for commercial growers at all levels, both start-up and experienced, said Denyse Cummins, LSU AgCenter horticulturalist.

Michael Brady, chef, said he had an interest in building relationships and telling customers they got their food "from right around the corner." A big trend in restaurants is knowing the farmer, he said.

"It's all about earth to plate," added Jason Brady. "Local is the trump card of all trump cards. We want our customers to meet you."

He said the restaurant has toyed with offering a farmers' dinner with "John's beets and Gary's potatoes." He would have the farmers tell how they operate at such an event.

Shreveport's Wine Country currently gets grits from Arkansas and meats from the Hill Country in Texas, he said, but would consider the items from local vendors if they were available.

Hamacker said he would welcome sales of produce and fresh flowers in booths outside of his Shreveport store.

Fowler-Sandlin said the farmers' market offers a place to sell produce. "There is a one million direct impact on the community," she said. In a recent economic impact study, 2009 was the market's biggest year, drawing 37,908 visitors. The number of vendors has also jumped and they come from the three-state area, one as far as 127 miles.

Shoppers from 42 zip codes have been recorded and almost half attend every week. Shoppers spent \$25.64 per visit to the market and an average of an additional \$60.98 at area businesses, she said. Sales tax revenues of \$27,279 were generated by total direct spending of market shoppers, the report stated.

Other topics at the seminar included weed management, vegetable varieties, soil improvement and planting for continuous production.

Dr. Jimmy Boudreaux, LSU AgCenter commercial vegetable specialist, offered the following suggestions:

- If you're going to grow eggplant, grow different colors and shapes.
- Artichokes make a beautiful purple flower that you can sell.
- The national market on watermelons is going to the dark type.
- Square or five-sided okra doesn't sell.
- The secret to growing beets is to keep them moist.
- Cabbage has to weigh two to three pounds to go to the supermarket. You want the leaves to grow upright, not flat.
- Cauliflower needs to be tall, to be able to tie the leaves together.

LSU AgCenter Forestry Forum message: keep steady, stay ready

Those attending the 26th annual Ark-La-Tex Forestry Forum in Shreveport on March 11 were reminded to persist for the long run and remain aware of what is happening in the short run to be productive in the end.

With that theme, LSU AgCenter forester Ricky Kilpatrick put together a panel to discuss market conditions, taxes and research.

Bill Hubbard, southern regional extension forester, University of Georgia, gave a national perspective of the timber market, saying that it is affected by globalization, changing demand and supplies, environmental and social issues and the Internet.

He said the United States is shipping more pellets to Europe because of its tax on coal energy prices.

Hubbard said the Internet gives the ability to connect with someone overseas to make a timber sale and communicate new products and abilities.

He said pulpwood prices are strong in the South, but that saw timber has hit the doldrums. "Saw mills are waiting on housing recovery," Hubbard said.

He said a pellet plant in North Florida is using pulpwood to supply the power generating industry for co-firing in coal based power plants.

Paul Spillers, tax attorney, said taxes can be minimized by forming a family limited partnership for business succession and avoidance of estate taxes, hiring your children at a reasonable payment for services and exercising the first-time homebuyer's credit.

"You are the captain of your ship," Spillers said. "You can reduce your taxes. You can take charge."

Buck Vandersteen, executive director of the Louisiana Forestry Association, told the group of 145 to be involved, get their family involved, stay the course and keep optimistic about the industry.

Sponsors were the LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Forestry Association, Northwest Louisiana Extension Forestry Advisory Committee and the Ark-La-Tex Ag Council.

Hanna presents at MSU

"Minimizing Cost and Maximizing Yield" was the topic of Dr. Hanna Hanna at the 20th annual Greenhouse Tomato Short Course at Mississippi State University.

The event was held March 9-10.

Cut flowers can be produced in La.

If you can grow vegetables, you can grow cut flowers.

That was the message of Denyse Cummins, LSU AgCenter horticulture agent, who presented a talk on "Cut Flowers for Louisiana" at the monthly Lunch and Ag Discovery program at the LSU AgCenter Red River Research Station on March 23.

Cummins said to think about what you want to grow for use in flower arrangements, realizing it is best to have line flowers, form flowers and filler for mixed bouquets. Line flowers are long and linear, form flowers are round and fat and filler consists of airy, small flowers or greenery.

Cut flowers may be "rowed out" like vegetables or placed among other flowers in a bed, Cummins said. "Soil pH must be between 6 and 6.8 like vegetables."

The big three cut flowers are roses, mums and carnations, but the latter cannot be grown successfully in Louisiana, Cummins said.

“We grow roses here so well we have the headquarters of the American Rose Society here,” she said.

Mums require short day length to get them to bloom, she explained. She suggested choosing Korean mums.

All cut flowers have a specific season to plant, whether cool or warm, Cummins said.

Harvesting should only be done in the morning or evening. “If you cut in the middle of the day, the flowers could wilt,” Cummins said.

Get flowers into water and away from heat, drafts and direct sun. Even the top of a TV can create heat, Cummins said.

Cummins said you can make floral preservative solutions yourself. Use one gallon of warm water, one-half cup of sugar and one-half teaspoon of bleach or vinegar.

Other hints:

Look for seed labels that say “cut flower” or “tall.” Avoid anything dwarf or bedding.

Separate the bulb area and the perennial area from the annuals.

Most winter weeds can easily be controlled by hoeing, while summer weeds are controlled by mulches, hoeing or herbicides.

Trees planted at W.T. Lewis School



Ricky Kilpatrick planting

The 4-H leader at W.T. Lewis School picked some of her outstanding 4-H'ers to help with planting five potted bald cypress trees in a low area in front of the school on March 12.

Ricky Kilpatrick, area forester, said some were planted last year but died, so he was helping them replenish. The club and school also learned the importance of Louisiana One Call--to call before you dig, even to plant trees.

The utility company marked utility lines in the area to avoid those spots. This was an additional safety learning experience for the kids in the 4-H club, Kilpatrick said.

LSU AgCenter aiding in Census

The LSU AgCenter has agreed to help the U.S. Census Office with the distribution of information regarding the importance of the 2010 Census.

To help get the word out and encourage everyone to participate, the AgCenter has produced a 2010 Census information card with grant funds provided by the U.S. Census Office. Census announcements and information card distributions are encouraged at all AgCenter meetings.

The result of the Census count will determine the number of U.S. Congressional districts, state legislative districts and parish government districts. An accurate Census count assures that the appropriate amount of federal tax dollars comes back to Louisiana to improve roads, schools and other needed community projects.

The 2010 Census includes 10 questions and can be completed in about 10 minutes. The information they provide is strictly confidential and by federal law cannot be shared with anyone.

4-H

Williams family establishes a 4-H scholarship



Eric Eskew, Dr. Paul Coreil, Hilda Williams, Donald Williams, Rosy Bromell

A brand new 4-H scholarship is available in north and central Louisiana.

The Hilda D. Williams and Vardaman Williams Jr. Scholarship will award \$500 to an outstanding 4-H'er from central or north Louisiana.

Mrs. Williams, along with her children, Rosy Williams Bromell, Vickie Williams Phelps and Donald Vardaman Williams, donated \$20,000 to the Louisiana 4-H Foundation to create this endowed scholarship, said Eric Eskew, executive director.

The late Vardaman Williams was in 4-H and was a 4-H leader and volunteer for more than 40 years. As a youth, he raised and showed chickens and steers.

A dairy, hog and beef farmer, Williams was manager of the State Fair of Louisiana Dairy Barn and Milking Parlor from 1983 to 1997.

He was Caddo Parish Young Farmer of the Year in 1956 and was awarded the Caddo Parish Award for Outstanding 4-H Leader posthumously in 1998.

His wife, Hilda, a 4-H'er in 1940 and a volunteer leader for sewing clinics and freezing and canning clinics from 1958 to 1995, resides in Keithville. She was a member of the Louisiana Volunteers for Family and Community for 52 years and has purchased animals at the State Fair of Louisiana for more than 20 years.

Both Hilda and Vardaman were nominated for the 4-H Hall of Fame.

"Our family has been blessed in recent years, so this is our way of giving back," Bromell said. "4-H has been a large part of our lives, especially when we were young."

The three children showed livestock (dairy cows and pigs for Vickie and Rosy and Don added beef steers), and each won the Superintendent's Award and Governor's Award in high school. Each went to 4-H Club Congress in Chicago.

"We all feel fortunate to have grown up in a family that supported us in 4-H and in the other activities we participated in as youths (band, pep squad, football, baseball, etc.)," Bromell said.

"This generous donation from the Williams family will help north Louisiana 4-Her's graduating from high school continue their post-secondary education and successfully enter the workforce," said Paul Coreil, vice chancellor of the LSU AgCenter.

"For generations, the Williams family has participated in numerous 4-H projects and activities as dedicated 4-H members and volunteer leaders - now they want to give back to the 4-H program through the creation of a dedicated endowed scholarship that encourages continued educational excellence and life skill development," Coreil said.

La. 4-H youth to get boost from National Paper Clover Campaign, Tractor Supply

Tractor Supply stores in Louisiana have joined with 4-H in support of local youth with the TSC Paper Clover Campaign, a national in-store fundraising effort to benefit state and local 4-H programming in each of the 14 parishes where a Tractor Supply store is located.

Beginning March 26, through Sunday, April 18, shoppers at Tractor Supply Co. will have the opportunity to support 4-H by purchasing paper clovers for just \$1 at checkout. All funds raised through this local TSC Paper Clover Campaign will be donated to 4-H, and will support local camps, after-school programs and other 4-H youth development program activities.

"I applaud Tractor Supply Co. for selecting to partner with 4-H," said Eric Eskew, executive director of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation. "Their willingness to support the

largest youth development organization in Louisiana is a sure sign the great 4-H work that is done in the local communities is being recognized and appreciated at the corporate level.”

“Many of our stores have been involved with 4-H clubs for years. Now, Tractor Supply Co. is proud to have an official chain-wide relationship with 4-H,” said Tractor Supply Company Chairman and CEO Jim Wright. “For us, this is an outstanding way to support our current and future customers and future team members, and it’s a way to give back to the 900-plus unique communities we serve.”

Tractor Supply has stores in Ascension, Beauregard, Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Franklin, Iberville, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, Vermilion and Webster parishes.

“We are thrilled to have the generous support of Tractor Supply Co. for our Paper Clover Campaign,” said Donald T. Floyd, Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council. “This new partnership will help provide funding to 4-H programs in more than 900 Tractor Supply Co. communities across the nation, providing opportunities for youth to participate in activities that will in turn help them make positive contributions and become strong, confident adults.”

4-H is a community of six million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of 4-H National Headquarters located at the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Louisiana’s 4-H programs are implemented by the LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension System through local Extension offices.

Tractor Supply stores are focused on supplying the lifestyle needs of recreational farmers and ranchers. The company also serves the maintenance needs of those who enjoy the rural lifestyle, as well as tradesmen and small businesses.

The company offers equine, pet and animal products; maintenance products for agricultural and rural use; hardware and tool products; seasonal products, including lawn and garden power equipment; truck and towing products; and work/recreational clothing and footwear for the entire family.

Support La. 4-H with fundraising texts

On April 1, National 4-H Council will kick off the 4-H Give2Vote Challenge, a fundraising campaign that will integrate mobile and online giving technology to benefit 4-H programs.

During April you can join the challenge by texting CLOVER to 50555 to give \$10 to support 4-H. The amount appears on the donor’s mobile phone bill, recognized as a tax-

deductible donation. There are no extra or hidden fees except for any data rates that already apply to the customer.

Each mobile gift or online donation counts as one “vote” towards Louisiana. At the end of the challenge, the state receiving the most votes will receive an additional \$5,000 from sponsor, J.C. Penney.

“We are so excited to pilot this new way to support 4-H and hope the public will be, too,” said Eric Eskew, executive director of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation. “During April, online donations at 4-H.org will also apply toward ‘votes,’” he added.

AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint and Nextel are participating carriers.

Mudbugs lose but 4-H wins with donation

The Bossier-Shreveport Mudbugs lost to the Rio Grande Killer Bees, but the Louisiana 4-H Foundation was a winner with a check presented at intermission for \$2,300 in honor of the late Troy Menard, a Bossier Parish agent.

Profits from ticket and T-shirt sales benefited the Troy Menard Memorial Scholarship Fund. 4-H Night with the Mudbugs, attended by nearly 600 youth, was held March 6 in Bossier City. Festivities began with a pizza tailgate party at 5 p.m. outside of the arena.

Group makes special presentation at Cookery



State 4-H Food and Fitness Board members Greg Simmons (DeSoto Parish), Mikaela Carender (Webster Parish) and Victoria Arnold (Sabine Parish) made a slide presentation of nutrition-related opportunities in 4-H for 4-H members competing in the District Cookery Contest on March 16 at the DeSoto Parish Extension Office.

These teens shared information on contests, 4-H University, projects and other 4-H experiences related to the foods and nutrition topic in 4-H.

First place rankings in the Cookery from participants in the Northwest Region include Ayana Scott, Caddo, one-dish meal; Marjorie Bailey, Webster, egg appetizer, egg dessert and pecan (other); Maddie Saucedo, Bossier, egg main dish; Leneigh Hennigan, Natchitoches, chicken; Tyler Roberts, Natchitoches, shrimp.

There was 132 categories possible in 12 divisions with 11 parishes competing. There were 85 dishes and 60 contestants.

Red River Parish receives contribution



Red River Parish sends a thank you to the Red River Livestock Auction for its generous contributions to the Red River Parish 4-H Youth Program.

The donations that were received from the 4-H Cake Auction will be used to help send kids to summer camps, 4-H University and to help promote other 4-H related educational programs within Red River Parish.

Pictured above are Joshua Salley, agent, Michael Arnold, Chimera Stewart, Gretchen Shaver and Alyssa Woodard.

Livestock Show Team concludes season

The 67th annual Southern University Livestock Show was held March 11-13 at the Southern University Agriculture and Research Center in Baton Rouge.

Competing from Red River Parish were Bailee King, Carmen Latiolais, Alyssa Woodard and Michael Arnold.

In the Market Hog show, Bailee placed sixth with her crossbred gilt and seventh in her showmanship class. In Market Goats, Carmen received two third-place ribbons and fifth in showmanship. Alyssa's doe placed seventh in her class and ninth in showmanship. Michael's goats came in fourth and fifth in their classes and he placed seventh in his showmanship class.

Red River also participated in the Market Goat parish group and came out with a fourth-place ribbon.

Ultimate Recipe Showdown filled with delicious dishes



Jennifer Moseley explains parts of the FoodPyramid.

The Red River Ultimate Recipe Showdown, held Jan. 23 at the VFW Hall in Coushatta, included participation from 4-H'ers Aaliyah Luke, Alyssa Woodard, Erica Grant and Lauren Drabwell.

Each 4-H'er made a delicious dish in different categories and presented it to judges Katherine Smith, Judy Cannon

and Glen L. Cannon. While the dishes were being judged, the 4-H'ers learned about nutrition from Jennifer C. Moseley, nutrition educator for the LSU AgCenter of Red River Parish.

Activities included word puzzles and discussion of the Food Pyramid.

Results are:

Egg Cookery (Appetizer/Salad) – first, Aaliyah Luke with A's Deviled Eggs and second, Alyssa Woodard with Breakfast Mice

Egg Cookery (Main Dish) – first, Lauren Drabwell with Mexican Egg Bake

Beef Cookery (Quick and Easy) –first, Erica Grant with BBQ Chili

Pecan Cookery (Cookies) – first, Lauren Drabwell with Chocolate Dripped Pecans

Poultry Cookery (Chicken) – first, Alyssa Woodard with Little Piggy Pies

Each winner advanced with his dish to the 2010 Area Cookery Contest.

Employees

Joe Barrett, who worked for the LSU AgCenter for 24 years as a 4-H agent and an agricultural county agent, died March 25 at the age of 50.

He was an active member and served as a past president for the Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

He will be sorely missed and fondly remembered.

Calendar

April 4—Easter

