



SMALL FARMS RESEARCH CENTER NEWS UPDATE

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



APRIL JUNE 2009

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Victory Gardens: Making a Come Back!

During World War I and II, victory gardens were encouraged and promoted by the U.S. government to alleviate the pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. Resulting in 20 millions Americans becoming gardeners, producing up to 40% of all that was consumed. Once the war ended, the government promotion of victory gardens ended as well.

Presently, victory gardens are making a come back. Throughout urban and rural communities, consumer advocacy groups and concerned citizens have started planting "victory gardens/community gardens." These individuals have joined the movement for a different reason other than of the past, "to promote healthier lifestyles, encourage healthier eating of fresh fruits and veggies, and provide a morale booster for the youth population by using victory gardens." Throughout the United States, more organizations, churches, schools, non-profit organization and individuals are getting on board to provide their communities with fresh fruits and vegetables, and taking step to improve their health. Through their efforts, there has been positive responses within these communities. There are quite a few benefits for developing a community garden; 1.) It is estimated that green vegetation reflects as much as 25% of the sun's radiation, reducing the heat island effect found in cities. 2.) Gardens also provide areas for rain runoff, minimizing soil erosion as well as recycling water back into the environment. 3. Health Benefits such as fresh fruits and veggies daily, 4.) The open space, food and water found in a garden provide important areas for wildlife inhabiting urban areas, and 5.) Garden as a way for kids to earn money by selling the fresh vegetables they have grown. For more details on starting your own community garden, contact your local county extension agent. By E'licia Chaverest



References:

Reinhart, Claudia. Victory Seed Garden. 2009.
 Victory Seed Company, 2009.
 National Garden Bureau Inc. 2009.

Sustainable Agriculture: A New Perspective

As farmers and ranchers we all know that domestic animals make a major contribution to societies' requirements for survival. These contributions come in the form of meat, meat by-products, milk, milk products, eggs, fiber, fertilizer for crops, and draught power. However, while global demands are increasing the genetic diversity of livestock is decreasing at about a rate of six breeds per month.

It is important that the diversity of livestock breeds be preserved. They serve as an important genetic resource; kind of like living warehouses for genetic material. When a breed goes extinct, its unique genes are lost forever and can never be regained. The ability to use their unique genetics to give new traits to existing livestock breeds is lost as well. Unlike industrial farms that promote a limited amount of breeds and thus a narrow gene pool, sustainable farms help to preserve native breeds and thus their valuable genetic material. Many breeds at risk of extinction have unique characteristics that may be useful in

continues 3.

Black Farmers Litigation Web Site

A Black Farmers Litigation phone bank have been established for those with inquiries about Pigford II. The site was established by the plaintiffs' counsel. If you have questions regarding Pigford II, the Web site may be able to help you. The Web site is <http://www.blackfarmerscase.com/> and the telephone number is 1-(866) 950-5547.

National Animal Identification System Listening Sessions

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will hold a series of listening sessions on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack stated, "I encourage individuals and organizations to voice their concerns, ideas and potential solutions about animal identification, by either attending these listening sessions or submitting comments online." Discussion sessions related to NAIS' cost, impact on small farmers, privacy and confidentiality, liability premises registration, animal identification and animal tracing will allow producers to provide their input on ways to make the program into something they all can support.

Listening Sessions Dates

- May 14: Harrisburg, PA.
- May 18: Pasco, Wash.
- May 20: Austin, Texas
- May 21: Birmingham, Ala.
- May 22: Louisville, Ky.
- May 27: Storrs, Conn.
- June 1: Greeley, Colo.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time, with registration one hour prior to each meeting.

Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program Ready to Begin

The training manuals are ready, a curriculum has been developed, and the trainers are ready to go! The Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program offers a statewide comprehensive training curriculum that addresses the fundamentals of meat goat production including: reproduction, nutrition, forages, health, management, marketing, economics, live animal and carcass evaluation, food safety, hands-on experience, and other relevant areas. It is designed to serve potential and existing goat producers, as well as agricultural professionals interested in learning more about sustainable meat goat production.

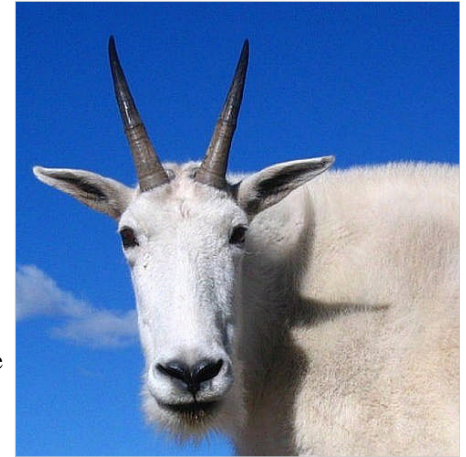
The registration fee for this program (\$35) will help supplement costs associated with implementing this program, such as food and drinks, facility usage, and printed materials. Upon completion of course requirements, participants will receive educational materials that include copies of the presentations, relevant handouts, an educational compact disk, and a certificate acknowledging completion of the program. The entire program will require a commitment of 18 hours divided into several sessions. Each applicant must be willing to make this commitment in order to receive the course materials and certificate of program completion.

Dates & Contact Information

For Northeast Alabama (May 1 & 2 and May 15 & 16) the training will take place at the Marshall County Extension Office and a local farm. For more information contact: Mr. Eddie Wheeler, Suite G21, 424 Blount Avenue Guntersville, AL 35976-1132, Phone: (256) 582-2009.

For South Alabama (May 15 & 16 and May 29 & 30) the training will take place in Butler County. For more information contact: Anthony Pinkston, 101 S. Conecuh Street, Greenville, AL 36037, Phone: (334) 382-5111.

For Northwest Alabama (June 26 & 27 and July 10 & 11) the training will take place at the Lauderdale County Extension Office (Florence) and a local farm. For more information contact: Robert Spencer, 802 Veterans Drive Florence, AL 35630, Phone: (256) 766-6223. Dates and locations are being planned for West-Central Alabama (Hale County area), East-Central Alabama (Talladega area), and weeknight classes for North-Central Alabama (Cullman or Clanton area). More information forthcoming regarding these sessions.



Alabama Women In Agriculture Inc., is represented in Portland, Oregon



Farm to School Conference, Portland, Oregon

The Small Farms Research Center sponsored two key women from Alabama to attend the Farm to School Conference in Portland, Oregon. On March 18-21, 2009, Ms. Virginia Ward and Ms. Ruqayyah Aqeel packed their bags and headed to Portland, Oregon with no reservation. Ms. Virginia Ward contacted the Small Farms Research Center expressing interest in starting a similar program to the state of Alabama, particularly to the cities of Birmingham and Bessemer. Ms. Aqeel, an educator in the science department at Wenonah High School accompanied the group to gain educational material/information to share with her students in the classroom. Each day was long day but informative and educational.

During break time, participants traveled to the local farmers market. Just imagine country-fresh lamb, smoked salmon, fresh spinach grown from a bowl, fresh cheese (goat and dairy cows), freshly grown herbs and more agriculture products fresh and ready to be consumed. The farmers market was so self sufficient, similar to a grocery store, that you were able to purchase most products already sealed and ready to store, as well as products ready for immediate consumption.



The ladies enjoyed the conference, presenters, exhibits, and the city of Portland, Oregon. During the visit, participants also met and discussed with Mr. Glenn Holmes and Mrs. Vonda Richardson about their Farm to School Network Youth Entrepreneurship Program, in Florida. Mr. Holmes highlighted his tips on working with youth and making youth entrepreneurs in agribusiness. (Pictured on the left. L. to R. Mr. Glenn Holmes, Ms. Virginia Ward (centered) and Ms. Vonda Richardson.)



Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship Day

Mark your Calendar for Saturday, May 30, 2009!

The Small Farms Research Center at Alabama A&M University in collaboration with the Hayden's Farm, will host a Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship Day, John Hayden's Farm 10774 County Road #9, Lisman, AL 36912. The workshop will begin at 10:00am and end roughly at 3:00p.m. Everyone is invited and there is no registration fee required to participate. The program will mainly focus on youth in agriculture and agribusiness, developing a product, marketing your product, pricing your product. The one-day event will also include connecting with area University officials/recruiters. If you have any question or concerns, please contact E'licia Chaverest at 256/372-4970.



Sustainable Agriculture (cont.)

confronting climate change, the emergence of new virulent livestock diseases and other challenges that farmers will face in the years to come. These traits such as resistance to disease and adaptation to climatic extremes could prove essential to the food security of future generations. Since each breed has slightly different genetic traits, different breeds are better suited for different environmental conditions. For instance, certain breeds are adapted to withstand extreme heat; others are adapted to withstand extreme cold, others are especially resistant to disease, while others are adapted to survive periods of drought, etc. It is believed that widely used breeds need to be managed more wisely. Many of these breeds are suffering a decline in genetic diversity within the breed. Within-breed genetic diversity is being undermined by the use of a few highly popular sires for breeding as well as the use of dams through the use of surrogate mothers. With awareness of a problem comes the time for action to solve it. A new change is currently taking place. Due to the education of farmers by sustainable organizations around the world, a growing number of sustainable farmers are starting to preserve what is now being called "heritage" animal breeds. The problem of genetic diversity does not only affect livestock, but also fruits and vegetables. This has led to a new trend of life style changes within the agricultural communities of the world. As responsible stewards of the land, sustainable farmers only produce as many animals and crops as the land is capable of handling, and avoid using harmful pesticides and chemical fertilizers. By making these changes sustainable farmers are refusing to give in to the industrial pressures. However these farmers by themselves cannot change about 100 years of technology. These farmers need help in standing against the pressures of the industry. They need support from consumers in the form of buying their products. Consumers can help promote biodiversity and protect valuable breeds of animals and plants from facing extinction.

By visiting websites, and reading materials to educate themselves on the decline of genetic diversity consumers can begin to help sustainable farmers turn the tide. I found during my research that The Eat Well Guide can be used to find a farm, market or restaurant near consumers that sells meat, eggs and dairy products from heritage animals. Also consumers can visit local farmer's markets to find heirloom fruits and vegetables. By buying organic foods (meats as well as fruits and vegetables) consumers can support farmer. In order for foods to be considered organic they must not be grown with chemical fertilizers or the pesticides this mean that farmers that grow organic use native varieties that are more suited for the environment. Swift action must be taken using the vast amount of information and resources to ensure future generations' food security. By *Margaret Clark*

Alabama Women-In-Agriculture Corner

"Making a Difference in the Classroom, One Day at a Time."



Ms. Ruqayyah Aqeel, an Environmental Educator, at Wenonah High School has been working with the Birmingham Educational System for almost 14 years. Since her arrival she has redeveloped the Science Department curriculum at the high school by incorporating agriculture in the program. Thus far, Ms. Aqeel has received a grant to plant citrus trees throughout the entrance of Wenonah High campus, as well as started a school community garden with her fellow teachers and students. Ms. Aqeel schedule doesn't stop there she has started her very own jewelry business and very shortly you will be able to purchase her fine jewelry in upscale boutiques. Also, she working hard and serving her community by starting a community garden in her neighborhood and her own hydroponics system at her home resident. She is definitely a women on a mission, in promoting a green thumb initiative and an greener environment. She has been sponsored by the Small Farms Research Center, AAMU to travel to various states receiving advanced training on topics/issues such as Soap and Cheese Making, Huntsville, Alabama; Domestic Violence Abuse, Kansas

City, Missouri; and Farm to Cafeteria Conference, Portland, Oregon just to name a few. She is also a member of the Alabama Women in Agriculture organization.

We choose to honor Ms. Aqeel for the Alabama Women In Agriculture Corner because of her hard work and dedication to her students, community, and her many contribution in promoting the agriculture sector. You receive two greens thumbs up. Your time and effort did not go unnoticed, the Small Farms Research Center, AAMU salutes you for your awesome work!

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.

Albert Einstein

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Quote of the Quarter

It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, "Always do what you are afraid to do."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Editor's Corner

If you would like to submit articles related to agricultural issues or to nominate a women in agriculture making an impact in the community, please forward your information to:

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Email: elicia.chaverest@aamu.edu
Office: (256) 372-4970 Fax: (256) 372-5517

Editor's Note: All the articles were compiled from the Small Farms Research Center (SFRC), Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and various other organizations. Images were obtained from all our prior SFRC events and yahoo images.

Cooperating Units: Cooperative State, Research, Education and Extension Service, Risk Management Agency, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and Alabama A&M University

SMALL FARMS RESEARCH CENTER ACTIVITIES

2009 Agricultural Risk Management & Business Development Training-of-the-Trainers Workshop, Huntsville, Alabama. The Small Farms Research Center in collaboration with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System held the first Training-of-the-Trainers Workshop on the campus of Alabama A&M University, March 12-13, 2009. The workshop attracted eighty participants, the majority from communities in Alabama as well as Atlanta, Georgia and southern Tennessee. The workshop covered a wide range of issues/topics such as Cooperative Development, Grant Opportunities, Government Programs Available, Record Keeping using QuickBooks, Business Development, and Hands-Demonstration on Making mozzarella cheese. Participants found the speakers knowledgeable and the material displayed/presented informative and educational. Many participants are looking forward to our next meeting, schedule August 20-21, 2009 in Mobile, Alabama. Entrepreneurs, extension agents, producers, and landowners in the workshops are trained and are expected to assist their fellow neighbors, community leaders, and colleagues in their localities.



SAVE THE DATES!

- **May 18, 2009.** Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) Workshop sponsored by Natural Resource Conservation Service. The (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance and financial incentive to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. For more details call 256-532-1692.
- **May 30, 2009.** Youth in Agriculture Entrepreneurship Day, John Hayden's Farm 10774 County Road #9, Lisman, AL 36912.
- **July 18, 2009.** Sand Mountain Goat Field Day. Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center 13112 Highway 68, Crossville, AL 35962. Registration fee \$10.00.
- **August 8, 2009.** Youth and Women in Agriculture Workshop, in Birmingham, AL.
- **August 15, 2009.** Dairy Goat Workshop. Blount County Cooperative Extension Office, Frank J. Green Building/415 Fifth Avenue East, Suite A Oneonta, AL.
- **August 19-21, 2009.** The Agricultural Risk Management & Rural Development Training-of-the Trainers Workshop, Mobile County Office, 1070 Schillinger Rd N, Mobile, AL 36608.
- **November 20-21, 2009. 7th Annual Risk Management & Community Outreach Conference, in Huntsville, Alabama.**