

Horticulture Summary Agricultural Advisory Council, 2006

New Crop Opportunities Center

Eighty-seven crop profiles are available on the New Crop Opportunities Center Web site (www.uky.edu/ag/newcrops). These profiles offer information on marketing, market outlook, production considerations, and economic considerations on a variety of horticultural and specialty grains crops. The New Crops Web site also offers profiles on eight types of marketing, from farmers' markets and produce auctions to marketing to restaurants and through Community Supported Agriculture. Prices from produce auctions and from a selection of farmers' markets around the state are available to Extension agents and growers through the New Crops Web site. There are 29 ongoing New Crops research projects ranging from sweet sorghum improvement to organic production systems.

On-farm Demonstrations and Consulting

One-hundred and sixteen on-farm demonstrations, 20 on-farm trials, 80 field days and more than 2,800 farm visits have been conducted in the first three growing seasons of the Kentucky Horticulture Council's project funded by the Agricultural Development Board. Of the farmers cooperating in on-farm demonstrations in the past three seasons, 90% are still engaged in a horticultural enterprise.

County Agent Training and Resource Materials in Horticulture

Twenty-seven County Agent In-service training sessions were offered in 2004-05. Total attendances at these training sessions were 275. Seventy-five percent of the attendance total was represented by Agriculture and Natural Resources Agents. Five Powerpoint presentations were developed and introduced to County Agents in 2003-04 and 70 were developed in 2004-05, many of which will be introduced to County Agents in 2005-06.

Applied Research Conducted and Reported

Information from 60 field experiments was reported in the 2005 Fruit and Vegetable Research Report and the 2005 Nursery and Landscape Research Report. This information is directly applicable by the industry in production and marketing system management. The Research Reports were distributed in hard copy at the Fruit and Vegetable Conference and the Kentucky Landscape Industries Conference and are available on-line at:

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Horticulture/commercialB.html>.

Organic and Sustainable Horticulture

Eleven acres of the Horticulture Research Farm in Lexington were devoted to organic horticultural crops research and outreach in 2003; national organic standards have been met and the land awaits state certification in 2006. An organic production system for bell peppers was developed and several multidisciplinary projects are ongoing including research by one Ph.D. student and two M.S. students. We also hosted a regional AATRA (National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service) workshop on organic and sustainable horticulture in the Fall of 2005. Horticulture is taking the lead in developing an undergraduate curriculum in Sustainable Agriculture.

Annual Statewide Conferences and Other Education Programs

The number of participants approached 300 for both the 2006 Fruit and Vegetable Conference and the 2006 Kentucky Landscape Industries Conference, which are two-day events with four or five concurrent sessions each day. The first Mid-States Horticulture Expo (nursery/landscape) at the KY Fair and Exposition Center was a strong success with 450 exhibitors and 2,300 attendees.

Grape and Wine Education and Research

Drs. Tom Cottrell (enologist) and Kaan Kurtural (viticulturist) were hired in the summer of 2005 with funds from the Agriculture Development Board through the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council for a two-year term. In 2005, three pruning workshops, four field days, and six educational meetings including the Grape and Wine Short Course in Lexington were conducted for the grape growers and vintners in conjunction with the Kentucky Vineyard Society. The acreage of commercial vineyards continues to grow and had reached 451 acres in 2005 with over 100 commercial growers. A new cultivar trial is under way at the Horticulture Research Farm in Lexington to provide yield, quality, cold hardiness, training system, rootstock and wine quality information to interested parties.

Gardendata.org

Development of this database of frequently asked questions (FAQs) in consumer or home horticulture began in 2004 and a prototype was launched for use by county extension agents in February 2005. Gardendata.org was made publicly available in summer 2005 although there has been little marketing of the site. The site currently has nearly 600 questions and answers available with an additional 600 questions awaiting review by extension specialist. In November 2005, Horticulture and Agriculture & Natural Resources County Agents were provided marketing materials to promote Gardendata.org to their counties during the spring 2006 gardening season. With little external promotion, the Gardendata Web site received over 1300 hits in December 2005. These hits resulted in over 200 interactive sessions, over 110 searches, and over 400 answers viewed. In addition, users have the option to submit a question if a suitable answer can not be found. Seven such questions were submitted during this period. There are currently 8 state Extension specialists and 5 Horticulture County Agents who are designated to answer such questions. Users of the system receive prompt feedback by way of an answer or need for clarification, and once answered, such questions are added to the database. On-line searchable databases, such as Gardendata.org, provide users with quick, reliable information, and provide an additional conduit through which the public can access Cooperative Extension information.

Farmers' Markets

We continue to partner with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture in support of farmers' markets. John Strang (Horticulture) and Tim Woods / Matt Ernst (Agricultural Economics) are the primary contacts at UK for farmers' market education and support. Janet Eaton is the primary contact with the KY Department of Agriculture. Sales from 94 farmers' markets are expected to have exceed \$7 million in 2005 and provided income to more than 1,500 farmers. There will be more than 100 farmers' markets in 2006. One of the concurrent educational sessions at the 2006 Fruit and Vegetable Conference once again focused on farmers' markets.