

on the move

small farms week
special edition

registration form inside

Preparing. Finding. Implementing solutions.

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Food safety concerns setting new tables for small-scale agriculture

Enough food crises have occurred in the past 10 years for even the most casual grower to be on point about how food is produced and harvested. With each report of bad meat, tainted spinach or suspect tomatoes, comes a renewed focus on how food gets from the field to the table, and it is that journey that frames the thrust for the 23rd Annual Small Farms week.

“Farm to Fork” is the theme of this year’s Small Farms Week, set for March 22 to 28 and sponsored by The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T. The experts who will work with farmers during the Small Farms Week activities include food, nutrition and farm experts from Cooperative Extension as well as faculty with the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Both departments are part of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at A&T.

Presenters will discuss ways farmers can improve their farming and handling practices with a safer food supply as the goal, and the potential to attract more business as further incentive. Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, administrator of The Cooperative Extension Program, says farmers who adapt to standards for how produce is developed in the field and to what happens to it after it’s harvested, can likely expand their market.

“To get a contract with a major vendor — such as Marriott’s Diversity Outreach Initiative — what it boils down to is being able to engage in a certain set

of standards and criteria,” McKinnie says.

“If you are growing produce and selling direct-

ly to consumers, or you’re trying to sell to other vendors, then there’s a lot of information you need to know about safe food handling and how you handle produce and product.”

Known as Good Agricultural Practices, the standards suggest methods for protecting food sources in the field, and ways to protect it after



Dogwood Nursery Farms, owned and operated by Nelson and Mary James, brought the 2008 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year Award to Pender County.

harvest. Many such good practices involve shielding field crops from runoff, keeping produce clean, controlling pesticides, maintaining good record-keeping, maintaining good hygiene and sanitation in employees and ensuring that harvested food is stored in clean, pest-free areas before it is transported.

Traditionally, some farmers have focused so much on producing crops that they haven’t fully recognized the benefits in adopting Good Agricultural Practices. Consumers and retailers alike want the assurance of a safe food supply, free of pathogens, bacteria and other hazards that can cause illness and in extreme cases, even death. Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not mandate producer adherence to its standards, the agency does have voluntary guidelines. Retailers, such as independent and large grocery chains, hotels and in some instances, even restaurants, initiate their own farm inspections to ensure safety standards.

“As we move more and more to a local food-system economy, we’re going to have more local

consumers trying to make those direct links to producers, and more grocery chains who want to carry locally-grown products,” McKinnie says. “Even in the toughest of times, there are economic opportunities and we at The Cooperative Extension Program are here to help farmers find them.”

Past recipients of the Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year Award

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2008 | Mary and Nelson James, <i>Pender County</i> |
| 2007 | Gary Morrell, <i>Alexander County</i> |
| 2006 | Ann and Harold Wright, <i>Bladen County</i> |
| 2005 | Kirby and Nathaniel Maram, <i>Watauga County</i> |
| 2004 | Stanley Hughes, <i>Orange County</i> |
| 2003 | Amy Locklear-Cummings and Ellery Locklear, <i>Robeson County</i> |
| 2002 | James A. Davis III, <i>Halifax County</i> |
| 2001 | Burnice Blanks, <i>Robeson County</i> |
| 2000 | Willie Woolard, <i>Martin County</i> |
| 1999 | James Dunn, <i>Wake County</i> |
| 1998 | Barbara and Lesker Loyied Norris, <i>Wake County</i> |
| 1997 | Barbara and Larry Pierce, <i>Halifax County</i> |
| 1996 | Jackie Garner, <i>Bladen County</i> |
| 1995 | Betsy and Alex Hitt, <i>Alamance County</i> |
| 1994 | Harold Davis, <i>Yancey County</i> |
| 1993 | Elton Smith, <i>Halifax County</i> |
| 1992 | Charles D. Sneed, <i>Franklin County</i> |
| 1991 | Linda Woody, <i>Yancey County</i> |
| 1990 | Robert Edmonds Jr., <i>Halifax County</i> |
| 1989 | Lonnie Harrison Jr., <i>Warren County</i> |
| 1988 | Kenneth Tobler, <i>Surry County</i> |
| 1987 | Roy Robertson, <i>Stokes County</i> |

Small Farms Week
it's a growing business ~ food safety from seeds to shelves
March 22 - 28, 2009

Small Farms Week Schedule of Events March 22 – 28

Monday, March 23

10 a.m. – Kickoff

POPLAR GROVE PLANTATION
(10200 US Highway 17 N., Wilmington)

The Poplar Grove Plantation will be open for visitors at 9 a.m. (admission is \$6: at the door) and everyone attending the Small Farms Week Kickoff is invited to arrive early to take in some of the exhibits. Once one of the largest peanut plantations in the state, Poplar Grove is now a museum complex devoted to the history of farm life on North Carolina's coastal plain.

Wayne Batten, Pender County Cooperative Extension director, will be presiding; **Danny Shaw**, director for Cooperative Extension's Southeast District, will bring greetings; and **Jimmy Tate**, Chairman of the Pender County Board of Commissioners will issue the official welcome.

The 2008 Small Farmer of the Year Video

Dr. Shirley McNeill, program coordinator for The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T's Eastern District, will introduce the video, which features Nelson and Mary James of Pender County, winners of the 2008 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year Award.

10:30 a.m. – Panel Discussion: Marketing Sustainable Agriculture in Eastern N.C.

Moderator: David Jones, Extension associate, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T
Panelists:

- **Wade Cole**, a small-scale pork producer who has found local gourmet and specialty marketing niches amid globalization of the swine industry
- **Harold and Ann Wright**, whose Happy Land Farms in Bladen County was honored with the 2006 Dudley Award for innovations in marketing, distribution and farm management
- **Dr. Niki Whitley**, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T's animal science specialist, who is the author of a number of articles on small ruminant production, and a pastured swine and poultry specialist
- **Dr. Ralph Noble**, chair of the Department of Animal Sciences at A&T, whose research background in reproductive physiology underpins Extension outreaches in livestock management enterprises well-suited to smaller farms

Noon – Lunch on site

Luncheon speaker: U.S. Representative **Mike McIntyre**, who represents North Carolina's 7th Congressional District and is Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Specialty Crops, Rural Development, and Biotechnology, has been invited to discuss "Emerging Agriculture Trends in Eastern North Carolina."

1:30 to 3 p.m. – Tour of Mary & Nelson

James' Dogwood Nursery Farms
(18108 NC Highway 53 East, Maple Hill)

The production mix at Dogwood Nursery Farms includes free-range hogs, turkeys, rabbits, corn, soybeans, flowers, ducks, Cornish hens, free-range chickens, brown eggs, and mushrooms. The marketing niches include organics, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and cooperatives.

Tuesday, March 24*

1 to 4 p.m. – Educational Forum:

The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Approach from Farm to Fork

A&T UNIVERSITY FARM
(3136 McConnell Road, Greensboro)

GAP encompasses the basic environmental and operational conditions — and the growing and harvesting practices — that are necessary for production of safe, wholesome fruits and vegetables.

The GAP forum will be led by The Cooperative Extension Program's horticulture specialist, **Dr. Keith Baldwin**; **Dr. Jimo Ibrahim**, farm safety and environmental specialist; **Rickie Holness**, an Extension associate; and **Diane Ducharme**, a horticulture and food safety Extension associate with the N.C. State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Forum topics are:

- GAP Audits and Certification — What It's All About
- Personal and Employee Hygiene
- Field and Water Quality Practices

There will also be a mock GAP audit of the A&T University Farm's Horticultural Unit.

5 to 8 p.m. – Roundtable on

"Standards for Good Agricultural Practices: Does One Size Fit All?"

CLARION HOTEL
(415 Swing Road, Greensboro)

Panelists:

- **Joe Belyea**, Quality Assurance Manager, Food Lion
- **Sandi Kronick**, Managing Partner, Eastern Carolina Organics
- **Phillip Barker**, Director of Prize of the Harvest
- **Fred Miller**, Owner of Hilltop Farms

Wednesday, March 25*

Small Farmers' Appreciation Day at N.C. A&T

8:30 – 10:30 a.m. – Safe Produce Handing from Farm to Fork

CLARION HOTEL
(415 Swing Road, Greensboro)

- **Dr. Keith Baldwin**, program leader and horticulture specialist with The Cooperative Extension Program, will be discussing the production and post-harvest food safety procedures recommended for fruit and vegetable growers.
- **Dr. Patricia Lynch**, assistant professor of Foods and Nutrition in the A&T Dept. of Family and Consumer Sciences, will be discussing food safety considerations in prepping fresh produce for direct marketing.
- **Dr. Ipek Gotkepe**, assistant professor of Food Microbiology/Safety & Toxicology with the A&T Dept. of Family and Consumer Sciences, will be discussing the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) approach to addressing food safety through preventive analysis during packaging and distribution.

11 a.m. – Premiere of *Solutions*

for North Carolina®

ALUMNI FOUNDATION EVENTS CENTER
(Bluford Street and Benbow Road on the A&T campus)

Presiding: **Dr. Celvia Stovall**, associate administrator, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T
For the first public showing of the annual multimedia report on the impacts of The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T, the guest list includes the farm families, first-time mothers and homeowners, innovative entrepreneurs and 4-H fueled teenagers whose success stories are also Cooperative Extension's stories.

Noon – Small Farmers' Appreciation

Luncheon

ALUMNI FOUNDATION EVENTS CENTER
(Bluford Street and Benbow Road on the A&T campus)

Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, associate dean and administrator for The Cooperative Extension Program, will be presiding. **Dr. Donald McDowell**, interim dean of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at A&T, and **Steve Troxler**, North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, will have a few remarks before the featured speaker is introduced. The featured speaker (to be announced) is a nationally recognized authority on small-scale agriculture, with some special insights on the fallout as well as the opportunities for small-scale farmers in the current economic crisis.

Student Research Poster

Competition Winners

ALUMNI FOUNDATION EVENTS CENTER

The Agricultural Research Program and the A&T chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta, the honor society for agriculture, sponsor a research poster contest for SAES students in conjunction with Small Farms Week each year. The three top entries in both the graduate and undergraduate competitions will be on display at the Alumni Foundation Events Center during the Small Farmers Appreciation Day luncheon.

**A \$20 registration fee is required for Tuesday and Wednesday activities. Small farmers who have registered in advance are exempt. Registration deadline is March 13.*



check the Web page for updates to the schedule:

www.ag.ncat.edu

“Even in the toughest of times, there are economic opportunities and we at The Cooperative Extension Program are here to help farmers find them.”

— Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, Associate Dean, Administrator,
The Cooperative Extension Program

Small Farms Week Registration Form

Each individual should complete a separate registration form.
Check each of the events you will attend.

Day	Event	Time/Location
Monday, March 23 <i>Small Farms Week Kickoff and activities</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Video Presentation of the 2008 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year	10 a.m. — Kickoff at the Poplar Grove Plantation, Wilmington
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Marketing Sustainable Agriculture in Eastern N.C. Panel Discussion</i>	10:30 a.m. — Poplar Grove Plantation, Wilmington
	<input type="checkbox"/> Kickoff luncheon	Noon — Poplar Grove Plantation, Wilmington
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tour of Dogwood Nursery Farms	1:30 to 3 p.m. — Dogwood Nursery Farms (18108 N.C. Highway 53 East, Maple Hill)
Tuesday, March 24 <i>*Educational Forums</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Extension specialists and associates will be covering the gamut of “Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)” that can prevent food-borne diseases.	1 to 4 p.m. — University Farm
	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Foods Supper and Roundtable	5 to 8 p.m. — Clarion Hotel (415 Swing Road, Greensboro)
Wednesday, March 25 <i>*Small Farmers’ Appreciation Day and Educational Forum</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm to Fork: SAES Extension specialists and research scientists will be leading a program devoted to food-safety precautions from on-farm production through post-harvest handling	9 to 11 a.m. — Clarion Hotel (415 Swing Road, Greensboro)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Farmers Appreciation Luncheon	Noon — Alumni Foundation Events Center, A&T Campus

**A \$20 registration fee is required for Tuesday and Wednesday activities. Small farmers who have registered in advance are exempt. Registration deadline is March 13.*

NAME _____

CITY _____ STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Affiliation (please check the appropriate box(es))

- Small farmer
- Cooperative Extension employee
- Agency representative, agency name _____
- Other, indicate name of group/organization _____
- Individual



- Fax this form to (336) 256-0810
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P.O. Box 21928
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North Carolina A&T State University School of
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Dr. Donald McDowell, *Interim Dean, School of
Agriculture and Environmental Sciences*
Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, *Associate Dean,
Administrator, The Cooperative Extension Program*
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on the *move*/flip side



Half of the Extension impact features in this year's *Solutions for North Carolina*® are small-farm success stories. The stories highlight organic production in the northwest and southeast corners of the state, a program that mentored a beginning farmer in the Piedmont, and a new approach to swine production that saved the day for a 69-year-old farmer on the state's coastal plain. The official premiere, featuring the video components, will be at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25 at the Alumni Foundation Events Center on the A&T campus.

www.ag.ncat.edu