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- UT Food Safety Workshop and Field and Packinghouse Mock Audit

Food Safety is becoming increasingly important to growers and consumers alike. Prior to the E. coli outbreak in spinach in 2006 and Salmonella outbreak in pepper in 2008, many commercial growers voluntarily complied with some or all of the food safety guidelines set forth by the FDA. Since these vegetable outbreaks, several commodity groups, state departments of agriculture, and wholesalers and retailers have made compliance with Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) mandatory, often requiring 3rd Party Food Safety Audits of farming operations.

What does a 3rd Party Audit entail? Would your operation pass an audit if your buyer requires it?

To learn more, come to the mock audit in Grainger Co. on August 20, 2009 from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, sponsored by the TDA, TBF, Tennessee Farm Fresh and AquaPulse. Beth Bland, the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association’s Food Safety Coordinator, will lead the workshop and mock audit.

This program is designed to inform and help you prepare for new safety regulations coming down the pipeline in the near future. The workshop will not only help you prepare, but will also help you be a better, safer and more productive grower, capable of complying with many buyers’ requirements.

The workshop is FREE, but pre-registration is required by August 13. Lunch will be provided. To register, please contact the Grainger Co. Extension Office at 865.828.3411.

For a workshop flyer and schedule, visit: http://vegetables.tennessee.edu/default.htm. Look under ‘News & Announcements’.

UT Vegetable Production Website Launched

This is the official unveiling of the UT Vegetable Production website (http://vegetables.tennessee.edu)! This website provides:
- Information about the UT Vegetable Production Program
- Links to upcoming vegetable events
- News and announcements related to vegetable production
- Links to UT Extension publications
- Vegetable variety trial results
- Current and archived editions of SPROUTS: Tennessee Vegetable News
- Farm profiles (coming soon)
- Grower supply sources
- Links to informational websites
- Information on how to support the Vegetable Production Program

The website will continue to evolve with your ideas, suggestions and current events. Visit us often to keep up with the latest in vegetable production in Tennessee!

Steak & Potatoes Field Day, TUESDAY, August 4 in Crossville, TN

Renowned stockmanship instructor Curt Pate will be the featured luncheon speaker at the UT Steak & Potatoes Field Day. The free event starts at 8 a.m. CDT on Tuesday, Aug. 4, at UT’s Plateau Research and Education Center in Crossville. Working with live cattle, Pate will demonstrate the low-stress cattle handling techniques for which he is famous. His methods

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support a —for profit mindset that emphasizes the economic benefits of handling stock correctly. Pate also emphasizes the impact of improved handling to sustainability of the industry as livestock production comes under more and more scrutiny. Pate’s appearance is part of a national Stockmanship and Stewardship Tour.

On the “potatoes” side, the field day will also feature fruit and vegetable production talks, including wine making, home gardening, and weed and disease control — especially biofumigation for prevention of weeds and soil borne pathogens in pumpkins.

An additional tour during the field day will update visitors on switchgrass production, farm pond management, and forest owner opportunities.

The event includes a sponsored lunch and will be held at the PREC located on U.S. Hwy. 70N west of Crossville. A map and directions are available at http://plateau. tennessee.edu/location/. For more information, call the Center at 931-484-0034.

Money Available for Southern Appalachian Farmers

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is making matching funds available to farmers in Blount, Bradley, Carter, Cocke, Greene, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Monroe, Polk, Sevier, Sullivan and Washington Counties in Tennessee through a program funded by the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. Farmers can apply for matching funds that will enable them to conduct promotions and develop materials that identify their products as local. ASAP will offer approximately $50,000 total to Southern Appalachian farmers to help them market and promote local foods.

Individual farmers can apply to receive up to $1500 of assistance. Farmers’ tailgate markets are eligible for up to $2000. As much as $5000 is available for groups of farmers.

Matching funds mean that ASAP will pay for up to half of accepted applicants’ costs for promotions and marketing materials. Current and former tobacco farmers can receive up to 75% of these marketing costs.

Funds can go towards advertisements in print, on the radio, or in other media; product labeling; graphic design; materials such as posters and business cards; signs; and more.

For more information or to apply for these matching funds, visit: http://www.osapconnections.org/.

Community Supported Agriculture Educational Tour

The UT Center for Profitable Agriculture GROW-10 program will be sponsoring a community supported agriculture (CSA) educational tour to help you learn the ins and outs of operating a CSA.

The tour will feature two successful CSA growers in Middle Tennessee and will be held on Tuesday, September 8, meeting at the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center in Spring Hill, TN.

The early registration deadline is August 28 and space is limited, so sign up today. For more information, contact Amy Ladd (aladd4@tennessee.edu or 931.486.2777) or download a registration form at: http://cpa.utk.edu/tours/CSA2009.pdf.

GAPs On-line Produce Safety Course

Cornell University will be offering an on-line food safety course starting August 5th and running through August 25th.

About this course: Implementing Good Agricultural Practices is a 3-week web-based course offered through the National GAPs Program. Most of the cost of the current section of the course is covered by a grant from the USDA that also was used to develop the course content, so it will only cost you $50 to participate. Once you enroll, we hope you will complete the course. The true cost of the course is approximately $350. Class so if you register but do not participate you will be taking someone else’s chance to take part in the course and spending grant funds. Please help utilize these funds responsibly by completing the course once you register.

Time Commitment

Within the 3 weeks you are expected to:
1) Complete two online surveys
2) Read all course materials
3) Turn in 4 assignments for evaluation
4) Complete 2 self-tests
5) AND contribute to the discussion boards.

Most students spend 15 to 20 hours on this course, but depending on your knowledge, more or less time may be required. If this is more than you can manage at the moment, please do not take the course at this time, but sign up at a later date when you have the time to complete the program.

Topics to be covered include: the shared responsibility of food safety, worker training, hygiene & health, water use, postharvest water use, soil amendments, cleaning & sanitation, traceback & recall, crisis management, and building the plan.

To register, follow this link www.ecornell.com/gaps, check the Add to Cart Checkbox and click the Add to Cart Button. There will be another class offered in September.
Question of the Week

Q: I have heard that late blight has been found in Tennessee. Is this true and, if so, as a home gardener what should I do? -F.Z.

A: Yes! Dr. Steve Bost, Extension Plant Pathologist, reported last week that Late Blight has reached Tennessee. He has posted an article that should help you ID and control the disease in the July 29th issue of the fruit and vegetable IPM newsletter, Fruit Pest News, available at [http://extension.ag.utk.edu/Extension/fruit/fruit.htm](http://extension.ag.utk.edu/Extension/fruit/fruit.htm).

Home gardeners need to be vigilant in scouting their tomato and potato plants as spores from home gardens can serve as a source of spores that could infect commercial farms, as late blight spores are easily dispersed by wind.

Here are some additional recommended steps for gardeners to take from the University of Massachusetts Extension (http://www.umassvegetable.org/LateBlightAlertforTomatoand-Potato.html#Home):

1. Inspect your tomato and potato plants frequently! If symptoms are already appearing on plants in your garden, these plants should be removed. Plants should be placed in a plastic bag, secured and discarded in the trash or completely buried 2’ or so underground so plants decompose and will not re-sprout. Plants should not be composted, put on a cull pile, or left outside. Your neighbors, not to mention commercial growers, will appreciate your taking this action immediately.

2. If you want to try to control late blight with fungicides, you need to begin spraying fungicide now – even before you see symptoms – and you need to continue spraying regularly. Use a product that contains chlorothalonil. Even here, these products are only effective if used before the disease appears and should be reapplied every 5-7 days if wet weather persists. Chlorothalonil is a protectant fungicide, with no systemic movement in the plant, so thorough coverage is necessary. For organic farmers and gardeners, the options are very limited, since only copper fungicides can be used, and copper is not very effective on late blight. It is easily washed off by rainfall.

3. Consider growing more of the other vegetables instead of tomatoes and potatoes this year. Enjoy your lettuce, eggplant, peppers, squash, carrots, green beans and broccoli!

You can also download a copy of the UT Extension publication PB1215 Disease Control in the Home Vegetable Garden for more control options at: [http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1215.pdf](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1215.pdf).

Weather Report

As they say, “When it rains, it pours.” And that has certainly been the case in TN this past week.

In East and West TN, we will have a two day reprieve with sunshine and high temperatures right around 90 degrees for Monday and Tuesday, then back to scattered thunderstorms and a slight dip in temperature down to the mid-80’s for the rest of the week. It looks like much of the same on the Plateau, so it should be sunny on Tuesday for the Steak & Potatoes Field Day, with highs in the mid-80’s and lows in the mid-60’s.

Middle TN will have one day of sun on Monday and then isolated storms and scattered showers through the week. Temperatures will be steamy in the mid-80’s and lows in the low 70’s.

With the high humidity and moisture comes the need for a preventative disease control program and regular scouting. We’ve talked about late blight, but Downy Mildew is another disease that was spotted in TN last week on cucurbits and thrives in the cooler, moist weather, just like our nighttime conditions. You can track the spread of downy mildew, and learn how to ID and control it on the Downy Mildew Forecasting site: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/cucurbit/](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/cucurbit/).
Upcoming Events

UT Plateau Research and Education Center Steak and Potatoes Field Day, August 4, 2009, Crossville, TN. For more information, visit: http://plateau.tennessee.edu/dynamic/events.asp.

2009 NCSU Fresh Market Tomato and Vegetable Field Day, August 11, 2009, Mills River, NC. For more information, visit: http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agcomm/writing/Field_Days/.

Field Day at Alabama A&M’s Winfred Thomas Research Station, August 11, 2009, Meridianville, AL.

UT Food Safety Workshop and Mock Field and Packinghouse Audit, August 20, 2009, Grainger Co., TN. For more information, visit: http://vegetables.tennessee.edu/default.htm or call the Grainger Co. Extension Office 865.828.3411.

Fall Harvest Festival at Jones Valley Urban Farm at Mount Laurel, September 19, 2009, Birmingham, AL. Visit www.jvuf.org for more information.

UT West TN Research and Education Center Pumpkin Field Day, October 9, 2009, Jackson, TN. For more information, visit: http://westtennessee.tennessee.edu/events/.

2009 UT Organic Workshop Series
Workshops will be broadcast using ITV technology to 3 locations across the state:
Knoxville, UT Agriculture Campus, 156/157 Plant Biotech Bldg., 2:00-5:00pm EST
Nashville, Ellington Agriculture Center, Central Region Extension Bldg., 1:00-4:00pm CST
Jackson, West TN Research and Education Center, Ag Extension Meeting Room B, 1:00-4:00pm CST
Dates and topics include:
August 10- High Tunnel Production  October 12- Developing an Organic Plan
September 14- Identifying & Managing Diseases  November 9- Marketing Organic
There is no fee for participating in the workshops, but registration is required. Please contact Mary Rogers at 865.974.0710 or mroger30@utk.edu to register for a workshop or visit http://organics.tennessee.edu for more information.

Sunbelt Ag Expo, October 20-22, 2009, Moultrie, GA
For more information, visit: http://www.sunbeltexpo.com/index.htm.

Southeast Strawberry Expo, November 8-10, 2009, Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Research Triangle Park, NC. For more information, contact the North Carolina Strawberry Association at 919.542.4037 or info@ncstrawberry.com or visit www.ncstrawberry.com.


Tennessee Horticultural Expo, January 28-30, 2010, Nashville Airport Marriott, Nashville, TN. Come to THE horticultural meeting in Tennessee. This is a joint meeting between the TN Fruit & Vegetable Association, the TN Viticultural and Oenological Society, the American Wine Society, the TN Farm Wine Association, the TN Flower Growers Association, the TN Farmers’ Market Association and new this year, the TN Agritourism Association. This horticultural extravaganza will have an expanded tradeshow, plus the added comradery of the other associations. Mark your calendar! More information coming soon.

SPROUTS: Supporting Producers through Research and Outreach at UT
Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.