



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes

November 2018

With Thanksgiving just past, many of us are looking forward to a break before the next growing season. In this issue, we offer up some suggestions to spark ideas as you spend the cooler months planning your next farming and gardening projects.

But first, some exciting news: the **Kerr Center is hiring a new horticulture program manager**. Please spread the word to anyone you think might be a good fit for the job.

David Redhage leads off with an excellent resource for monarch butterfly habitat projects: **Okies for Monarchs**.

Our friends at Southern SARE recently shared the story of a producer grant project trying to find a **new way to combat parasites in small ruminants**.

We share some **outside-the-box ideas** on how to get the **most nutritional punch from your produce**.

For anyone contemplating a foray into agroforestry, SARE has just launched an **online index of the agroforestry projects** it's funded.

In this season of thanks, we're especially grateful for your [donations](#) in support of our work. [Thank you!](#)

In this issue:

President's Note: Okies for Monarchs

Position Announcement: Education / Horticulture Program Manager

A New Strategy to Control Small Ruminant Parasites?

Unlikely Paths to Nutritious Produce?

Find an Agroforestry Project Near You

Fall Events: Conference Season Begins

President's Note: Okies for Monarchs



The Kerr Center works with [other organizations](#) to promote **education** on topics related to **sustainable agriculture**.

I am currently working with a **new organization** in Oklahoma, the **Oklahoma Monarch and Pollinator Collaborative**.

Their main initiative is the [Okies for Monarchs](#) project. [Visit the website](#) and see what is being done in Oklahoma to **protect and enhance monarch butterfly habitat**.

Position Announcement: Education / Horticulture Program Manager

The Kerr Center is hiring a Horticulture Program Manager, based at the Center's headquarters in Poteau.

Position Description:

- Responsible for design, development and delivery of educational programming related to sustainable horticulture and organic horticulture. Educational programming will be hands on, written and web-based.
- Design, development and on-going management of the eight acre Cannon Horticulture Plot site and its projects.
- The horticultural program focuses on production systems with specific emphasis on cover crops, rotations, compost and perennial crop demonstrations. In addition, the horticulture program may include heirloom vegetable evaluations, season extension, and related activities.
- Responsibilities and tasks will include writing, speaking, conducting tours, developing educational events, grant writing and other activities. Also may supervise temporary employees/interns.



Minimum requirements:

Bachelors' degree in an applicable agricultural field, U.S. citizenship and valid driver's license. Position also requires physical exertion and working outdoors about 50% of the time.

Compensation:

Salary commensurate with education and experience plus health, dental, vision and life insurance and 401K.

[Click here for application information and detailed position description.](#)

A New Strategy to Control Small Ruminant Parasites?

[via Southern SARE:](#)

Jo Ann Harris calls out to a flock of Dorper sheep in a pasture: "Sheep. C'mere sheep." Almost immediately the animals come running to her side, head bumping her leg and begging for a head scratch before moving on to the food pellets Harris has laid out for them in containers.

With black faces and friendly dispositions and perhaps too plump for their own good, the sheep are downright cute. And that's the type of agricultural animal many of Harris' customers are looking for. Harris, along with her husband, breed and sell sheep and goats as hobby livestock; the excess they take to market.

"When we bought this property back in 2010, my husband wanted to get into raising cattle. Wouldn't it be great, he told me, to look out our kitchen window and watch our animals on the rolling hillsides?" recalls Harris. "But we didn't know anything about raising cattle. And when I saw a post on Craigslist for goats, we thought it would be easier to manage a smaller animal, and so that's what we went with."

Turns out, the couple didn't know much about raising small ruminants either. In fact, they were brand new to farming when they moved from the suburbs of Huntsville, Alabama, to 50 acres of pasture, woods and hills in rural Tennessee just across the Alabama border. And they quickly discovered how devastating gastrointestinal worms (*Haemonchus contortus*) can be for sheep and goats.

"We started out with two goats and when one of them died, we were shocked to learn it was from worms. It was completely new to us," said Harris. "That's when we started using sustainable farming practices to control parasitic infections: FAMACHA scoring, rotational grazing, administering copper as a bolus."

The Harris' were facing the same problems most small ruminant producers face: It's hard to raise a flock if you can't get the parasites under control.

[Continue reading....](#)



Unlikely Paths to Nutritious Produce?

Want to know how to **make sure your fruits and vegetables are as vitamin-packed as possible**? It isn't buying [organic](#), or even buying [locally](#) - though those can both help. Rather, the best bet is simply to **eat them as soon as possible after they're harvested**, wherever and however they were grown.

Oftentimes, that means [growing](#) (or even foraging) **your own can provide more nutrient-dense produce** than even the best that the grocery store, or even farmers market, has to offer.



[Many studies](#) show that **fruits and vegetables begin losing nutrient content from the moment of harvest**. After a week, even under optimal storage and handling conditions, as much as **half of their vitamin content can be lost**. **By the time they reach a grocery store shelf**, most of that window has already passed - and the situation is likely worse for out-of-season produce shipped over even greater distances.

Not everyone has space enough for a garden, but that doesn't have to keep people from getting fresh greens. One recent [study](#) found over 50 different kinds of **edible plants growing wild in inner-city neighborhoods** far from retail produce outlets.

Six of those "**weeds**" had **higher nutrient levels than kale**, one of the most nutritious leafy greens. Plants like dandelion, dock, and oxalis had higher levels of nutrients including vitamin A, calcium, iron, and vitamin K, as well as dietary fiber, protein, and even calories.

Lead and cadmium, common contaminants of urban soils, tested below EPA-recommended limits in these foraged wild greens, and no pesticides, glyphosate, or PCBs were detected. Perhaps most surprisingly - and promisingly - the weeds foraged for the study were harvested in the midst of a drought.

Find an Agroforestry Project Near You

The fall issue of [Sustainable Farming](#) magazine includes an article on [agroforestry](#).

In addition to providing an excellent overview or refresher on the topic, it also delves deeper into the effects of wind speed on wind chill to explain how **windbreaks of trees can help livestock keep warm in winter weather.**

The article also **profiles a Missouri ranch** that has incorporated **silvopasture** practices into its cattle grazing system.



In hot weather, the cattle are able to alternate more often between shade and grazing, **continuing to gain weight during periods when neighboring ranches saw losses** due to heat stress.

Calving rates also improved, since cows had more available shade for calving during hot weather.

The USDA has recently launched an [online index of SARE-funded agroforestry projects](#), both past and current. The database can be sorted and filtered by year, state, type (e.g. farmer, graduate student, etc.), and practice (e.g. alley cropping, silvopasture, etc.).

Each grant's entry in the index also includes a link to the **project summary** in the [SARE project database](#) for **more information**.

Fall Events: Conference Season Begins...

Conferences are cranking up to catch farmers during their down time outside the growing season. In December, you can catch **Acres USA** on the 4-7th (Louisville, KY), NCAT's **Hispanic Farmer & Rancher** conference on the 6-7th, the **Soil Revolution** conference on the 12th (Boulder, CO). The **Horticulture Industries Show** gets January rolling in Fayetteville, AR, on the 4-5th. Stay tuned for more....

You can find full details on these and many other upcoming sustainable agriculture events around

the state and region on the Kerr Center's online [events calendar](#).

The calendar also serves as a reminder for the dates of **monthly Kerr Center tours**, which run all year round, every second Tuesday by appointment.

Don't forget that you can also use our online calendar to **keep yourself and your friends up to date** on these and other upcoming events, including our tours:

- **Subscribe to our feed** and receive **updates to your personal calendar** (Outlook, Google+, etc.) as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

The screenshot displays a calendar interface with the following events:

- DEC 4 Tue:** Acres U.S.A. Eco-Ag Conference & Trade Show @ Louisville, KY (Louisville Marriott Downtown) - Dec 4 - Dec 7 (all-day) - Tickets
- DEC 6 Thu:** Hispanic Farmer & Rancher Conference @ McAllen, TX (Casa de Palmas Hotel) - Dec 6 - Dec 7 (all-day) - Tickets
- DEC 11 Tue:** Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center - Dec 11 @ 9:00 am
- DEC 12 Wed:** The Soil Revolution @ Boulder, CO (Boulder Jewish Community Center) - Dec 12 @ 7:00 am - 5:00 pm - Tickets
- JAN 4 Fri:** Horticulture Industries Show: People, Plants, & Pollinators @ Fayetteville, AR (Chancellor Hotel) - Jan 4 - Jan 5 (all-day) - Tickets
- JAN 8 Tue:** Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center - Jan 8 @ 9:00 am

Donate Now

Your donation helps
support the Kerr Center!



Join Friends of the Kerr Center

Support the Kerr Center

Since 1965 the Kerr Center has been reaching out to folks in Oklahoma and beyond. Today, the Friends of the Kerr Center help us continue this vital work! If you enjoy reading this newsletter or visiting our website, please consider [making a gift to the Kerr Center](#) today!

Quick Links...

[Kerr Center website](#)

Find us on Facebook 

Contact Information

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture
24456 Kerr Road
Poteau, OK 74953
Phone: 918.647.9123
Fax: 918.647.8712
mailbox@kerrcenter.com

