



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
January 2016

Happy new year from the Kerr Center!

We're ringing in 2016 with a note from our new President and CEO, David Redhage - and a range of reading to help you get your farming, gardening, ranching, and/or conservation projects off to a solid, sustainable start.

In this issue, you'll find links to updated resource lists for all aspects of native pollinator habitat conservation, pointers on organic production and certification, and an outline of the basics of grazing management.

As always, if you value our work, please also consider supporting it!

In this issue:

Note from the President's Desk

Pollinator Resource Guides Updated

Organic Know-How: Free Online!

Grazing Management Basics

Late Winter Events Around the State

Note from the President's Desk

Having worked at the Kerr Center since 1993, starting as an agricultural economist and now in the role of President, I have seen many changes both here and in agriculture across the United States.

Some farming practices once talked about only in sustainable agriculture have become mainstream. Rotational grazing, farmer's markets, CSAs, the local food movement, and, of course, certified organic production, are just a few examples of now-accepted practices.

While many of these practices and marketing methods have helped agriculture move toward what we see as more sustainable, there are many challenges remaining. There is a newly emerging recognition in all of agriculture about the importance of soil health, not just how to prevent soil erosion.

Cover cropping is taking on a new importance in light of the interest in healthy soils. Researchers are beginning to realize that how we manage soil microbial life can have both positive and negative effects on our cropping and livestock systems. The goal is to identify what traits are found in a healthy soil and learn how we can manage our cropping and livestock systems to achieve and maintain a healthy soil, which ultimately moves us toward a truly sustainable agriculture.

Other issues include the constantly changing marketing landscape and how new technology affects the way we interact with customers; concerns about new food safety regulations and how these affect producers of local foods; season extension; recruiting and retaining the next generation of farmers and ranchers; and, of course, new pests and diseases. All of these are affected by the climate extremes we are experiencing.

While the Kerr Center can't answer all of these questions, my goal as president is to make sure we continue to provide educational programming and information for those interested in producing healthy food to ensure the future sustainability of agriculture for the next generation and beyond.

David Redhage
President/CEO



Pollinator Resource Guides Updated



Three of the Kerr Center's [pollinator resource guides](#) have been updated with new information and links. They are:

[Native Plant Identification Guides](#),
[Native Plant Seed Catalog and Nursery Sources](#), and
[Native Pollinator Books](#).

There are six different pollinator resource guides on specialized topics available free from the Kerr Center website. In addition, a master [Resource List for Native Pollinators and Plants](#) compiles all the information in a single document.

Organic Know-How: Free Online!



Congratulations are due to one of Oklahoma's home-grown organic farmers, Emily Oakley of Three Springs Farm, who has just [begun a term on the National Organic Standards Board](#).

The NOSB "considers and makes recommendations on a wide range of issues involving the production, handling, and processing of organic products" - meaning that those who serve on it had better have a firm grasp of the ins and outs of the USDA's organic regulations.

For those of us who aren't quite that well versed, the Kerr Center's [free online library](#) contains a number of [publications on organic agriculture](#), from the nitty-gritty details of production practices and certification standards all the way up to the big-picture view of the philosophy and history behind both the movement and the federal standards. Here are a few of the most popular:

[Elements of Organic Farming: Putting Your System Together](#)

[Are We Organic Yet? A Quick Overview of Certification and What It Means to be Organic](#)

[Small Scale Organics: A Guidebook for the Non-certified Organic Grower](#)

Grazing Management Basics



People new to ranching can easily find themselves bewildered, wondering how and where to start. Even seasoned ranchers can often benefit by taking a step back and looking at their overall management program - especially in comparison to someone else's.

This free online presentation offers insights to both groups. Given by Kerr Livestock manager Will Lathrop for the October 2015 grazing workshop, "[Grazing Management Basics](#)" gives an overview of grazing management as practiced at the Kerr Center. It covers grazing systems and their benefits, grazing terms and calculations, pasture design, and grazing strategies.

This is only one of many free and informative publications in the Kerr Center's [online livestock library](#).

Late Winter Events Around the State

JAN 27 Wed	Southern SAWG Annual Conference @ Lexington Convention Center Jan 27 – Jan 30 all-day	+
FEB 6 Sat	Oklahoma Native Plant Society 2016 Indoor Outing @ OSU-OKC Feb 6 @ 9:00 am – 4:00 pm	+
FEB 9 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Feb 9 all-day	+
MAR 3 Thu	Organic Oklahoma 2016 @ OSU-OKC Student Center Mar 3 – Mar 4 all-day	+
MAR 8 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Mar 8 all-day	+

The Kerr Center's schedule of educational programming for 2016 will be coming out soon. In the meantime, there are plenty of chances to catch a Kerr expert in another venue.

The Kerr Center's online [events calendar](#) contains details these opportunities. It 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 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.

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

