



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
February 2021

The Red Queen in Wonderland sometimes believed half a dozen impossible things before breakfast. We're not quite that accomplished yet, but we *can* squeeze three hard-to-believe things into one month's newsletter:

- Less than a week after most of the state was covered in ice and snow (and waiting for the power to come back on), it's already time to get seeds into pots to **start this spring's garden transplants**.
- Even in the midst of a polar plunge, it pays to **be prepared for wildfires**.
- Speaking of paying, **Uncle Sam will pay you** for practices that may help increase your farm or ranch's wildfire resilience - along with many other **conservation practices that you may already be using**.

(And speaking of Uncle Sam, the **Kerr Center is teaming up with researchers from the University of Missouri on a USDA grant** to get a better handle on the **obstacles to adopting organic farming practices in the region**. David Redhage shares the details.)

Hard as these things may all seem to believe, they're all true - and this issue of Field Notes has the information you need to learn more about them.

If you find the information helpful, please let us know with a [donation](#). [Thank you!](#)

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President's Note: Kerr Center to Work on USDA Organic Grant

The Kerr Center will be working with researchers from the University of Missouri on a new USDA grant aimed at identifying challenges to [organic agriculture](#) in the region.

Mary Hendrickson, associate professor of rural sociology in the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR), and Kerry Clark (pictured), director of CAFNR International Programs and assistant research professor of rural sociology in CAFNR, received one of twelve grants from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Organic Transitions Program (ORG).



The project, funded for more than \$420,000, is titled “Understanding and Overcoming Barriers to Adoption of Organic Agriculture in the Mid-South.” Its specific objectives include identifying region-specific economic, social and biophysical barriers to USDA certified organic adoption in the Mid-South, a region including parts of Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee.

“The goal of this research is to identify adoption challenges specific to the Mid-South, and to offer insights about specific policy supports, agricultural research, organic processing infrastructure development and market development needed in the region,” Hendrickson said.

“By identifying and better understanding these challenges, extension, university and governmental agencies will be better equipped to serve producers in the region.”

Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) has released the latest version of its [free Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP). The guide provides farmers and ranchers looking to enroll in the CSP program, or renew CSP contracts, with **helpful, comprehensive, and accurate information** about the program.



CSP pays farmers for both new and ongoing conservation practices. It provides farmers and ranchers with five-year, renewable financial assistance contracts for implementing and maintaining conservation measures across their entire operation as they work to help solve regional resource concerns.

NSAC periodically updates the Farmers' Guide to ensure up-to-date information is available. The Guide can help you **understand the steps involved in applying for and using CSP, learn more about the conservation activities CSP can help you implement, understand how your farm will be ranked, understand the way CSP payments work, and prepare for the reporting requirements** you will need to meet once enrolled. Among the key topic headings are eligibility, enrollment, ranking, and payments.

[Learn more....](#)

Free Online Fire Resilience Course

Do you want to better prepare your farm and community for fire? A new free online course can help.

Self-led, Farmers Build Wildfire Resilience offers ongoing enrollment, letting you sign up and start at any time and work at your own pace.

Learn about:

- Land Management for Fire Preparedness and Mitigation
- Emergency Response, Preparing Your Home, Family and Livestock
- Understanding Fire Ecology and Historical Context
- Community Preparedness and Organizing for Recovery
- Insurance and Finances
- Health and Food Safety: During and After Fire



The course was created by Farmer Campus in collaboration with Community Alliance. Working online with a learning network of fellow farmers, you can develop a hands-on fire resilience plan to help you, your farm and your community face a future with fire.

[Learn more....](#)

Starting from Seed? Start Soon!

It may not feel quite right to switch from shoveling snow to troweling potting mix, but seeding time for the earliest-planted starts is already passing by.

To help you keep on schedule, the Kerr Center [Horticulture Library](#) offers two planting guides. One is for an [average last frost date of April 10](#), while the other is a bit earlier, with an [average last frost date of March 26](#). (Both can easily be adapted to other dates/locations.)



Both show, for a variety of vegetable crops:

- whether to transplant or direct seed,
- for transplants, days from indoor to outdoor planting, and first and last dates for indoor starting,
- planting date relative to first frost date, and
- first and last dates for field planting.

For those needing a hand with the how as well as the when of starting seeds, the Kerr Center also offers the presentation, [Seeds, Seeding, and Growing Transplants](#), which walks through the entire process from start to finish.

[Learn more....](#)

Late Winter Events: Native History, Composting, Healthy Farms, Local Ag, Produce Safety...

The end of this month offers online learning on **Native American history** (Feb. 25) and **healthy farms** (Feb. 27), as well as an **in-person workshop on composting** (Feb. 26, Oklahoma City).

Moving into March, catch the **Oklahoma Local Ag Summit** (formerly the Oklahoma Farmers Market and Agritourism Conference) either virtually or in-person (Mar. 1-2, Oklahoma City). There's also an **in-person soil health conference** in Kansas (Mar. 5, Iola), and another installment of the **virtual Healthy Farms Conference** (Mar. 6). On March 9, catch a remote **produce safety training** that can satisfy FSMA produce safety requirements.

The screenshot displays a calendar interface with the following events:

- FEB 25 Thu:** Native American History: Then & Now @ online / Oklahoma City (OSU Conference Center) - Feb 25 @ 9:30 am - 10:30 am
- FEB 26 Fri:** Backyard Composting Workshop @ Oklahoma City (Precure Nursery) - Feb 26 @ 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm
- FEB 27 Sat:** Healthy Farms Conference @ online - Feb 27 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- MAR 1 Mon:** Oklahoma Local Ag Summit @ Oklahoma City (Farmers Public Market) - Mar 1 - Mar 2 (all-day)
- MAR 1 Mon:** Remote Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course @ online - Mar 1 @ 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
- MAR 5 Fri:** Southeast Kansas Soil Health Conference @ Iola, KS - Mar 5 - Mar 6 (all-day)
- MAR 6 Sat:** Healthy Farms Conference @ online - Mar 6 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- MAR 9 Tue:** Remote Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course @ online - Mar 9 @ 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Full details on these and other sustainable agriculture learning opportunities, as always, can be found on the Kerr Center's online [events calendar](#).

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** as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

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