



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes

December 2021

Happy holidays from the Kerr Center!

We're probably best known for our hands-on educational workshops, and 2021 was going to be the year we got back to those... but the summer COVID surge had other ideas.

Still, we haven't been sitting idle. Workshops or no workshops, we've got a farm and ranch to run. We've been continuing to try out new ideas in both the livestock and horticulture programs - and are looking forward to sharing the latest results with a return to in-person workshops in 2022!

As gifts pile up under the tree, please consider including a [donation to the Kerr Center](#) among them. If you've already played Santa to us, [thank you!](#)

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2021: The Year in Review



Horticulture

This year, we ran the [hydroponics](#) demonstration in the greenhouse, and the self-wicking containers in the hoop house. The hoop house really shone: a small space heater was enough to save all the plants, including [tomatoes](#) and [peppers](#), during a freeze, even though ice formed on the inside of the plastic!

Later in the year, armyworms found their way into the hoop house, and managed to damage the tomatoes more than the frost had. Yet another wet spring delayed our cover crop planting, obliging us to use buckwheat instead of sorghum-sudangrass. Before summer was out, though, rains had been absent long enough that we were irrigating the elderberry plantings.

After wrapping up one elderberry grant, we moved right into another, participating in a three-state variety trial. We also began work on a multi-state organic research grant.

Livestock

The rainfall patterns that plagued the horticulture farm were just what the livestock program ordered. The wet spring enabled us to put up plenty of hay, and the dry summer is exactly what our stocking rate is set for. The armyworms made an unexpected dent in the summer forage, but when precipitation returned in October, it was perfectly timed for cool-season forages, sending us into the winter in good shape.

Conception rates held steady from last year. We expect to see higher numbers next year, as we complete the transition from Angus x Simmental-sired replacement heifers to Beefmaster-sired ones.

The livestock program has been partnering with Oklahoma State University on two research projects. One is investigating the level of **resistance to livestock dewormers** in the cattle herd. The other is assessing **whether different ways of storing hay** in the field - the orientation of the rows, and whether bales are stacked - affect the amount of spoilage.

Conservation

Throughout the pandemic, we've kept up our work with pollinator conservation, both on the ranch, maintaining and expanding [pollinator plantings](#) and statewide and beyond, by continuing our active partnerships with similarly aligned organizations. 2021 has also seen planned timber harvesting as part of our sustainable [forestry](#) demonstrations.

SARE PDP Program

The Kerr Center continues its role managing the Southern SARE Professional Development Program. In 2021, that work continued in virtual mode.

2022

Our Horticulture/Education Program manager position is still open.

The in-person **workshops** we'd originally hoped to host this year are now tentatively slated for 2022, including season extension, honeybees, and elderberries.

We've been involved, as always, in organizing the Horticulture Industries Show, which returns, after missing last year, to Fayetteville January 13-14.

Winter Events: Eco-Literacy, Sustainable Ag Leadership, No-Till, Latino Farmers, HIS Returns, USDA Grants....

The first day of winter, there's a webinar on **eco-literacy** (Dec. 21). The next day is the deadline for applications to the **Native Farmer & Rancher Apprenticeship Network**, and the first day of 2022 is the deadline for nominations to the **Sustainable Ag Leadership Program**.

The **National No-Tillage Conference** is in-person in Louisville (Jan. 4), and, after a one-year hiatus, the **Horticulture Industries Show** is back, in Fayetteville (Jan. 13-14). NCAT's **Latino Farmer Conference** (Jan. 12) is virtual.

Application and signup deadlines for several different **USDA grant and cost-share programs** are coming up:

- **Community Food Projects (CFP) Grant Program** - Dec. 20
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)** - Jan. 7
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** - Jan. 7
- **Organic & Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP)** - Jan. 7
- **Farm to School Grant Program** - Jan. 10

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.

The screenshot shows a calendar interface with the following events:

- DEC 20 Mon**: Deadline: USDA NIFA Community Food Projects Grant Applications @ n/a (Dec 20 @ 4:00 pm)
- DEC 21 Tue**: Eco-literacy and Conservation: The Convergence of Research, Policy and Education (Webinar) @ online (Dec 21 @ 1:00 pm) [Tickets]
- DEC 22 Wed**: Native Farmer and Rancher Apprenticeship Network (application deadline) (Dec 22 @ 6:00 pm)
- JAN 1 Sat**: Sustainable Ag Leadership Program (nomination deadline) (Jan 1 all-day)
- JAN 4 Tue**: National No-Tillage Conference @ Louisville, KY (Galt House Hotel) (Jan 4 - Jan 7 all-day) [Tickets]
- JAN 7 Fri**: USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (signup deadline) (Jan 7 all-day)
- JAN 7 Fri**: USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) (signup deadline) (Jan 7 all-day)
- JAN 7 Fri**: USDA Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP) (signup deadline) (Jan 7 all-day)
- JAN 10 Mon**: Farm to School Grant Program (application deadline) (Jan 10 all-day)
- JAN 12 Wed**: NCAT Latino Farmer Conference @ online (Jan 12 @ 7:00 am - 10:30 am) [Tickets]

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