



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes

July 2022

As warm as the weather's been, any excuse to sit in the shade is welcome. How about seeing how **USDA programs can help your farm or ranch's balance sheet pencil out?**

One new one **helps specialty crop operations pay food safety certification costs.** Others **pay both farmers and ranchers for adopting conservation practices.** Some pay even more than before - but the **deadline to apply for one, the newest, a pilot program called CLEAR30, is August 5.**

Saving your outdoor activities for nighttime hours is another trick for beating the heat. What better time to go moth-ing? Maybe that's why **National Moth Week** is scheduled this month. It's a great opportunity to get better acquainted with these under-appreciated insects.

One heat-loving crop is sorghum, and one sorghum-loving pest is **sugarcane aphid.** David Redhage shares some recent news about **sweet sorghum varieties with resistance** to this insect.

Please join us in wishing the very best to **Liz Speake**, who's **retiring this month** after a long career with the Kerr Center.

We think the coolest thing of all is when you [donate to the Kerr Center](#) to support our work. If you already have, [thank you!](#)

In this issue:

- **President's Note: Sugar Cane Aphid Resistance in Sweet Sorghum**
- **USDA Cost-Share for Food Safety Certification**
- **A Face Only a Moth-er Could Love? Celebrate National Moth Week!**
- **CCRP/CLEAR Signups Ongoing; CLEAR30 Signup Deadline August 5**
- **Liz Speake Retires**
- **Summer Events: Moth Week, Women in Ag, Vegetable Crops, Water Wells, Conferences, Grants....**

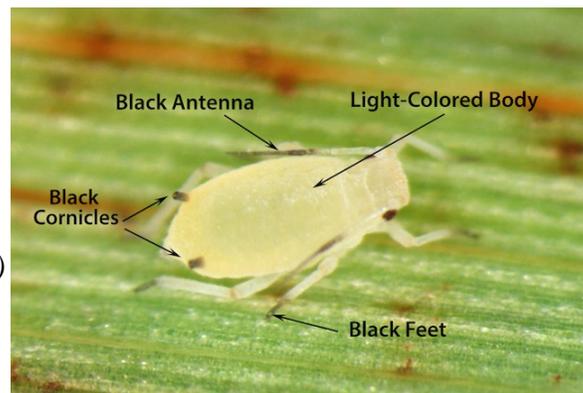
President's Note: Sugar Cane Aphid Resistance in Sweet Sorghum

I recently became aware of work being done to introduce sugar cane aphid resistance into sweet sorghum. George Kuepper wrote a brief article outlining the work for those interested.

Kuepper writes, "*The second edition of [Sweet Sorghum: Production and Processing](#) includes a discussion of the sugarcane aphid (*Melanaphis sacchari*) - formerly, a minor pest that became a major one in 2013. We address several means for controlling, or attempting to control it. Notably missing is any mention of resistant or tolerant varieties. At that time - spring 2019 - there weren't any available.*

More recently, however, we've reason for optimism. USDA plant breeding research has released new sweet sorghum lines that carry resistance to sugarcane aphid...."

[Learn more....](#)



USDA Cost-Share for Food Safety Certification

Has your specialty crop operation recently spent money **obtaining or renewing a food safety certification**? You may be eligible for financial assistance through USDA's [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops \(FSCSC\)](#) program.



The FSCSC program provides **financial assistance for specialty crop operations** that incur eligible **on-farm food safety program expenses** related to **obtaining or renewing a food safety certification** in calendar years 2022 or 2023. This program helps offset costs to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements.

For each year, **FSCSC will cover a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing their certification**, as well as a percentage of their related expenses.

Eligible expenses include developing, maintaining, or updating a food safety plan, food safety certification, certification upload fees, microbiological testing, and training expenses.

For more information or to apply, visit the [FSCSC program webpage](#).

A Face Only a Moth-er Could Love? Celebrate National Moth Week!

[National Moth Week](#) shines a spotlight on both the daytime world of leaf-loving, crawling moth caterpillars and the nighttime realm of flying, winged moths. The 11th Annual National Moth Week runs **July 23-31, 2022**.

The organizers encourage “moth-ers” of **all ages and abilities to take part in this international citizen science project**. Anyone - individual, group, or organization - can **register Moth Week events free** at nationalmothweek.org.

Caterpillars and moths are perhaps both best known as crop-devouring, clothes-destroying pests. But Moth Week tries to dispel this notion by encouraging people to observe and learn about these creatures' **important roles in ecosystems around the world**.

“Caterpillars are the larval form of adult moths and come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and a rainbow of colors,” said ecologist Dr. Elena Tartaglia, professor of biology at Bergen Community College and founding member of the NMW team.

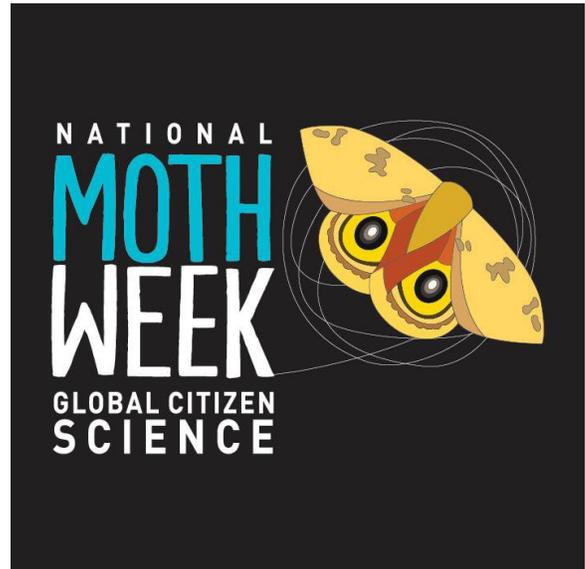
“They are fun to look for and there is no need to stay up late because they can be found during the day.”

“This year we’re looking to increase data submissions of caterpillars, while of course still celebrating the adult life stage we all love,” Tartaglia said.

For those who do want to observe at night, it's as simple as turning on a porch light and seeing what's flying. Hanging a sheet for moths to land on, and adding black light kits or mercury vapor set-ups, can add to the number of moth species spotted in their natural habitats. (Remember that caution and correct equipment are always essential when using electric lighting outdoors, including safe use of any generators.)

Founded in 2012, NMW asks participants to share their moth photos and other data with partner organizations like [iNaturalist](#), [Project Noah](#), [Bug Guide](#), and others. Scientists can use this data to study the distribution of moth species and learn where climate change or pollution may threaten them. Amateur observers from all over the world have posted hundreds of thousands of moth photos.

[What's so important about moths?](#)



CCRP/CLEAR Signups Ongoing; CLEAR30 Signup Deadline August 5

[USDA is currently accepting signups](#) not only for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, but also for two subprograms within it - CLEAR, and CLEAR30. The **deadline for signups to CLEAR30 is August 5, 2022.**

All of these programs **pay farmers to adopt conservation practices.**

Unlike the main Conservation Reserve Program, which has specific signup deadlines for each round of funding, the [Continuous Conservation Reserve Program](#) accepts signups on an ongoing basis year-round.

Within the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, the [Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers \(CLEAR\) program](#) targets specific conservation practices aimed at **improving water quality**. Eligible practices include **grass waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, prairie strips, contour grass strips, bioreactors, and wetland restoration and buffers.**

A separate subprogram, [CLEAR30](#), is a **new pilot program** created to promote **longer-term water quality** buffer agreements. Through CLEAR30, farmers and landowners with expiring CRP contracts can re-enroll such buffers with a new 30-year contract to continue the practices.

The deadline for signups to CLEAR30 is August 5, with contracts going into effect on October 1. Farmers and landowners interested in signing up for any of these programs should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#). Detailed information is also available on the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's [blog](#).



Liz Speake Retires

Liz Speake wrapped up the last several years of a long career at the Kerr Center as the Chief Administrative and Business Officer.

Liz was raised on a cattle ranch near Wister. She started to work part-time for the Kerr Foundation while a high school student, and continued during summer vacations and Christmas breaks while attending college. She received her bachelor's degree in Business from East Central University in Ada.

In 1983, she started back to work for the Kerr Foundation, and set up the business system records for the new Kerr Center in 1985. In 1994 she took a few years off to have more time with her three children, but returned to work in 1997.

Liz has enjoyed a variety of responsibilities at the Kerr Center, including working in the education/communication department. In 2005, she began working in the business department again. She has especially enjoyed being a part of an organization that helps farmers and ranchers be more sustainable.

As the Chief Administrative and Business Officer, Liz was responsible for paying the bills, payroll, keeping up with budgets, and grant billing, as well as Human Resources, plus all the other things that fall under the administrative and business department umbrella.

Best wishes, Liz!



Summer Events: Moth Week, Women in Ag, Vegetable Crops, Water Wells, Conferences, Grants....

It's **moth week!** Learn about the critical roles these often-overlooked pollinators play (July 23-31).

If you'd like to **include a conference in your summer vacation plans**, you've got options: the **Soil & Water Conservation Society conference** (July 31 - Aug. 3; Denver, CO), the **ACRES U.S.A. Healthy Soil Summit** (Aug. 2-3; Sacramento, CA), and the **Women in Agriculture conference** (Aug. 4-5; Oklahoma City).

Workshop options also abound: a **grazing solutions workshop** (Aug. 5, Claremore), OSU Extension's latest **Beginning Farmer Market Gardening School class, on vegetable crops** (Aug. 5, Oklahoma City), and a workshop on **water well installation** (Aug. 6, Tulsa).

Upcoming **grant application deadlines** include USDA's **Urban Agriculture & Innovative Production (UAIP) program** (Aug. 2), and **Southern SARE's Education Grants** (Aug. 5). **Signups for USDA's CLEAR30 conservation program end Aug. 5.**

The Kerr Center's **tour** season is also open, by appointment only. [Come visit us!](#)

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:

- JUL 23 Sat**: National Moth Week (Jul 23 - Jul 31, all-day)
- JUL 31 Sun**: Soil and Water Conservation Society International Annual Conference @ Denver, CO (Jul 31 - Aug 3, all-day) [Tickets]
- AUG 2 Tue**: Acres U.S.A. Healthy Soil Summit @ Sacramento, CA (Aug 2 - Aug 3, all-day)
- AUG 2 @ 10:59 pm**: Application Deadline: Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Competitive Grants Program
- AUG 4 Thu**: Women in Agriculture Conference @ Oklahoma City (Champion Convention Center) (Aug 4 - Aug 5, all-day) [Tickets]
- AUG 5 Fri**: CLEAR30 Signup (deadline) (Aug 5, all-day)
- AUG 5 @ 8:30 am - 4:00 pm**: Grazing Solutions: Fact or Fiction @ Claremore [Tickets]
- AUG 5 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**: Beginning Farmer Market Gardening School: Vegetable Crops @ Oklahoma City (Oklahoma County Extension Office)
- AUG 5 @ 11:00 am**: Southern SARE Education Grants (application deadline) @ n/a
- AUG 6 Sat**: Water Well Installation (field day) @ Tulsa (Aug 6, all-day)

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

