COOPERATIVES: WHAT WAS OLD IS NEW AGAIN

BY TOM MCCONNELL, PROJECT LEADER, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE SMALL FARM CENTER

Back in the 30’s and 40’s farmers needed cooperatives. Why not? These farms were trying to respond to their emerging opportunities to reach markets they had never dreamed of. They had the capacity to produce but they lacked the information and communications to facilitate moving their products into an efficient market that served their needs. Therefore, they formed and joined cooperatives. The one co-op I am most familiar with is the WV Wool Marketing Cooperative and its many county composed of members or pools. When that was formed when wool was being produced in every county in West Virginia and there were mills to process and spin wool in several counties. The wool industry was booming as there were more wool buyers and processors across the Northeast than any single pool could possibly work with. The logical response was to form an organization or cooperative and hire someone to monitor the market and manage the sale and delivery of the wool. Most of the cooperatives have gone away as the issues they were formed to solve have gone away too. The wool industry is now concentrated to a point of only two US firms, which don’t have to compete very sharply for the wool off the 20,000 ewes left in our state.

If you ponder our local food industry it is easy to see that we are in exactly the same situation as we were 60 years ago. We know we have demand and we know we have the capacity to produce but we can’t quite figure what structure we need to make efficient. A couple of emerging industries come to mind that make that point. The cheese industry in West Virginia is just emerging. It is interesting that states like Vermont are more than 30 years ahead of us. Farmers are reluctant to try new enterprises; being able to access farmers who have started before them and work within the protective environment of likeminded farmers and processors may just make the difference between success and failure. Preparing for this conference cheese making workshop, I have talked to every farmer planning to attend and each of them said they longed for communication and cooperation with other WV Cheese makers. A cooperative can help accomplish that.

Consider our many farmers in the state who produce poultry for sale. They were recently devas-

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WV FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

BY BEN NEMETH, SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS COORDINATOR, WESMONTY RC&D

Thanks to eager promotion from First Lady, Michelle Obama, Farm to School programs have been gaining national attention. Promoting healthful, fresh foods in schools has become a focal point for her campaign to end childhood obesity within one generation. However, Farm to School programs offer more than just healthy food in schools. Several West Virginia organizations are on the cutting edge of this new trend to place local produce in local schools while also boosting the local economy. WesMonTy RC&D, The Center For Economic Options (CEO), and Potomac Headwaters RC&D have begun work to develop Farm to School resources in WV. This work is being made possible by the recent awarding of a USDA Risk Management Agency grant.

Most WV farmers are small scale and lack the capacity to supply the quantity of produce needed by the school districts. So the WV project has to have a different approach to the Farm to School program. Typical programs simply focus on fostering connections between schools and farmers with existing capacity. The difference here is that the main goal of the WV project is to develop local farmer capacity in order to meet the demands of the school systems.

A major dilemma with Farm to School is that the school calendar operates during the farmers’ off-season. This makes it difficult for the average WV farmer to supply produce for schools because their fields lie fallow. In order to meet the demands of schools, certain key agricultural practices need to be implemented by WV farmers. Season extension techniques are use of season extension techniques, including fall and winter crop plantings, as well as the use of low tunnels (row covers). The project seeks to provide technical assistance to producers who are willing to implement season extension techniques to access local schools. By focusing on developing the capacity of farmers, the project can ensure that there will be produce available to meet the demands of the schools.

Season extension techniques are

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LGM-BEEF, ANOTHER TOOL TO MANAGE RISK

BY TOM MCCONNELL, PROGRAM LEADER, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE SMALL FARM CENTER

Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) is a Risk Management Agency (RMA)-sponsored program that insures the feeding margin on finishing cattle. Private insurance companies first offered LGM-Cattle in major feeding states in late January of 2006. It’s available in West Virginia now. This product was designed for cattle feeders and those who have retained ownership. This is why it is of interest to WV Cattlemen.

As Livestock Risk Protection insures against a drop in price, Livestock Gross Margin-Cattle insurance protects against a decline in feeding margin between feed prices and the finished cattle price as reported by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. There are two different policies available; one for feeders who start with yearlings and one for those who feed calves.

Just like LRP, this policy doesn’t cover production risk issues like mortality or poor feeding performance. It doesn’t cover anything apart from cattle- and corn-related charges. Thus fixed costs and variable costs could increase and not be protected by LGM-Cattle.

With nearly all revenue-based insurance programs, farmers with good records are better able to make good decisions about these policy opportunities. A producer who already owns yearlings and/or corn will not face the same margin risk as a producer who seeks to purchase yearlings and/or corn because the true risk management aspect of revenue products is to ensure against a catastrophe, not necessarily to insure profit.

The expected margins reflect differences in futures prices and feed amounts. The insurance premiums vary by coverage type, ending month, and deductible level. LGM-Cattle insurance can be purchased with deductibles that range in $10 increments from $0 to $150 per head. Premiums can run as high as $45 per head.

Insurance agents and producers can only obtain the official premium levels on the day that coverage is available at the RMA website. However, approximate quote levels are available in advance to help producers choose between LGM-Cattle and other tools.

After some initial interest, the usage of LGM has waned at the U.S. level and remains low compared to the number of cattle fed. In FY2006, there were 25,655 head covered across 10 states (predominantly in Iowa). By FY2010, there were only 787 head covered across four states. However, the policies paid indemnities in each of the first four years, and coverage from FY2010 is ongoing.

For more information contact your crop insurance agent. To view the agent locator, Livestock Gross Margin – Beef and other risk management information go to the WVU Extension Service Small Farm Center website at http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/cropinsurance.
Livestock risk protection, commonly referred to as LRP, provides protection against price decreases during the insurance period. This policy does not cover any other peril except a change in price, excluding: mortality, condemnation, physical damage, disease, individual marketing decisions, and price aberrations. Coverage is available for calves, steers and heifers. Price is determined by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Feeder Cattle Price Index.

For an example, a feeder calf producer is able to lock in a fall price by purchasing a LRP policy in April. The producer can then sell the cattle in the fall, ensuring that regardless of the price he receives at market, he will be compensated for the difference in order to meet the original insured percentage, thus protecting his operation from unexpected market fluctuations. If the fall market prices surpass the previously secured April market price, the insured absorbs the minimal impact of the initial investment in the policy. Cow calf operations assume the highest risk of all levels of beef production, with the most time and effort invested into their yields. Most producers in West Virginia maintain fewer than thirty cows, limiting their influence in the market price. Any attempt to stabilize the volatility of the market can be a significant benefit to the producer.

Billy and Marge Burke own a cow calf operation in Gilmer County, WV. They are current LRP participants, and advocates for the program. I was able to gain some positive insight about the program in a recent phone interview.

Billy noted that in their most substantial indemnity came the year they were able to insure their cattle at the high April market prices, believed to be the highest price of the year. When it came time to sell their calves the following fall, the market had dropped significantly and unexpectedly. Due to the Burkes’ previous purchase of a Livestock Risk Protection policy, they received a stipend upwards of $700.00, compensating for the difference in commission from the seasons varying market prices.

The 2010 fall market price was higher than the market price of policy purchased price in the spring. The cattle were sold for a higher price than they were insured for. This year the Burkes did not receive any reimbursement from the policy, but continue to invest in the insurance due to the peace of mind ensured by the established minimum purchase price. Billy and Marge are able to continue their operations success by incorporating the Livestock Risk Protection Program into their farm business plan.

It is plain to see that in today’s uncertain economic conditions, any attempt to maximize and sustain profits is certainly beneficial to one’s business endeavors. Livestock Risk Protection is one of many options available to protect your business investments from these uncertainties. If you would like further information regarding participation and opportunities within the Livestock Risk Protection program, visit http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/cropin-
It was important to start a community discussion about food in the Huntington foodshed. The market is huge and the community is firmly behind a local food system adjustment. Gail Patton, Executive Director of Unlimited Future, Inc. and “conference planning partner” summed it up best when she said, “Of course we are solidly behind our local food system and this conference; it is an economic development issue.”

Our goal for the Tri-State Farm and Food Conference was to teach farmers and community food businesses new ways of producing, adding value to, and marketing what we grow on our farms. Another goal was to promote the vision that both family farms and their communities must build together to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity. We wanted to discuss and teach ways to tap into the opportunity within this $1.2 billion food market and share examples where some are already doing it. And last, we wanted to promote the local food industry in the community now and seek out new alliances for production, processing, and marketing.

Few disagree that farmers learn best from other farmers. Here, many farmers were able to network and share their experiences and advice. Like Larry Gardener, from Waverly, who produces and markets lamb and other meat products to restaurants across the state. Gardener encouraged farmers to commit to a market and never “let it down” by falling short on quantity and quality. This advice was directed to farmers just entering the market who naïvely underestimated the sheer volume required to satisfy a market and the challenges that must be overcome to offer a supply all year long. He warned about the danger of losing a market and never getting it back because a restaurant was reluctant to give the farmer another chance. Other classes were taught by university and agency professionals like Dr. Barbara Liedl from WV State University. Liedl showed her class of 30 how to build a low cost high tunnel. She and her volunteers built an 8 feet by 20 feet model on-site at the Douglass Center, so that farmers could actually walk in it, get a feel for it, and see how simple and inexpensive they are to build. She challenged the group to build their own 20 ft. by 48 ft. low cost high tunnel and surprised them when she told them the price tag would be approximately $800!

The food is always a very important part of a conference, as it instills much confidence in a beginning farmer or one contemplating a change to eat delicious food grown by his or her neighbors and prepared in the local community. The menu was sourced in the local foodshed with a few items traveling from other areas of the state. The Mountwest Community and Technical College-Culinary Arts Program, under the direction of Chef Lawrence Perry, prepared the lunch and the breaks. The food was delicious, and it was remarkable to see the young students of that program learn to use and appreciate our locally grown food. The lessons they learned with the conference will last them throughout their career and also help many small farmers along the way.

Gathering food for the conference allowed us to work with Andie Leffingwell of the Ebenezer Medical Outreach Program. She has been sourcing (finding, buying, and delivering food) a “fresh market” for her “at risk” families for years. She was invaluable to us as she knew where to find many products we needed for our menu. As we worked together to find food and, in some cases, people to prepare it, it became clear that an entire food system could be built around such a person with the leadership skills and dedication she possesses. Farmers are risk adverse. Having a person like Leffingwell who is capable of buying large quantities of food and who would raise farmers’ confidence to grow, could be the very foundation for a local food system.

The bread prepared for and served at this conference marked the most significant milestone in my 5 year long pursuit of integrating WV grown wheat flour into our state’s food system.

To offer an all local menu for the conference we had to find someone willing and able to bake with our local flour. Earlier conferences led us to artisan bakers who very patiently experimented with our white winter wheat flour to make a product we could use for local sourcing—all the time believing it would never compare to what they could do with their staple hard red winter wheat flour. Upon visiting Huntington, I contacted John Brunetti of Brunetti’s Italian Bakery in Kenova for help. I was amazed and gratified when John took one look at the WV flour, rolled some around in his hand, quizzed me about the content of protein and
bran, and said, “bring me 100lbs next Thursday”. Baking day came and I got to help Josh Brunetti mix, proof, shape, proof again, and bake 100 lbs of our flour into pizza crusts, dinner rolls, hoagie buns, and 100 loaves of WV whole wheat bread, which was used at the Tri State conference and days later at the WVU Extension Annual Conference as well. The grain was grown in Preston County, milled at WVU Jackson’s Mill, and baked in Kenova; that is the beginning of a bread pathway.

At this conference and others previously, we have treated our attendees to WV grown popcorn. The local popcorn is so much better than the national brands—people always want more and ask to take some home. The Tri State Farm and Food conference was special as the farmer who grew this treat was also our lunch keynote speaker. WV Department of Agriculture, Deputy Commissioner Bob Tabb shared his philosophy on value-added agriculture. Then he referenced the farmer’s share of the US food dollar. He explained that small farmers must learn to add value to their commodities so they can compete in this world of slim margins and huge acreages. To make his point he poured a handful of un-popped corn into a popper and compared it to the same volume popped. The analogy is unmistakable.

Our conferences are much more than a program full of production information; they are also about farmers and food-interested and food-educated people, each with slightly different agendas, networking and developing friendships. Those attending this first conference also learned that there is so much help out there for farmers. The conference attendees learned that the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and the Extension Services from the 15 counties in three states is equally interested and professionally prepared to help develop a successful local food industry. The agents as a group were excited about the conference and offered help at every step of the process. In fact, extension agents from WVSU, Ohio State University, University of Kentucky, and of course, WVU helped promote, present classes and locate food. The process of developing a vital, locally driven agricultural infrastructure will rely on these key people and resources. At this conference, it became obvious that our collective staffs are more than ready and willing to help.
BRUSH CONTROL WITH GOATS

BY TOM MCCONNELL, PROGRAM LEADER, WVU EXTENSION SMALL FARM CENTER

Farmers have been using goats to eradicate brush for many years. This practice works as the farmers take advantage of the goat’s inquisitive nature and propensity to climb upon brush and strip bark and eat leaves. Now that we have low cost electrical fencing capabilities, even in remote areas this practice is experiencing a revival. The option for many farmers if they don’t use goats is to brush hog or spray.

There are many arguments to be made for and against the use of goats to eradicate brush. And last, if a cattle farmer makes this decision to eradicate brush with goats, he or she then becomes a goat farmer also which requires an additional set of management skills.

A few points are undeniable. As the slope of the area to be treated becomes more severe, the animal option becomes more attractive. Using machines against a severe slope is dangerous and time consuming. The other is time; spraying or brush hogging grownup pasture achieves quicker results than using of goats. But brush (saplings and brush) control is more involved than a pasture in need of a clipping.

AgrAbility Project (NAP) and how

The West Virginia Small Farm Advocate             6

NATIONAL AGRABILITY CONFERENCE

BY MARY SLABINSKI, SPECIALIST, WV AGRABILITY

West Virginia AgrAbility hosted the 2010’s National AgrAbility Training Week (NATW) at the Charleston Marriott Town Center in November. This year’s conference had the highest number of attendants on record, 186. The conference also set a new record for the number of farmers who attended, thirty. Most farmers who attend are consumers of AgrAbility services. Some farmers attend for different reasons. A big draw for farmers this year was the small farmer/rancher information track; a new initiative for NATW this year.

Staff from AgrAbility’s currently funded 23 state and regional projects attended. In addition to welcoming state projects that have been awarded renewed funding, NATW was happy to welcome new state and regional projects: Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, and Texas. People looking to bring AgrAbility to their state or territory, such as Idaho, North Carolina, and Guam, also attended to find out more about the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) and how to apply for funding.

In addition to greeting old faces and meeting new friends, state and regional projects tackled new issues and persistent challenges facing farmers with disabilities, general project administration, and project outreach. Success stories were also shared. Funding sources for farm modifications; implementing assistive technology and ergonomics, and safer farming practices; and preventing secondary injuries were frequently discussed topics. Outreach for veterans, caregivers, and people who have traumatic brain injuries was a new topic of discussion. Also new to the agenda were formal discussions on small farm operations; implementing peer support networks for farmers with disabilities; and increased interest and demand for accessible gardening. Staff from WVU’s Extension Service Small Farm Center presented the small farmer/rancher information track. This track addressed unique challenges facing small farm operations and specific management techniques. Some examples of topics were: marketing, financial and business management, season extension, irrigation, and small farm risks and taxes.

As always, AgrAbility mixed a little fun with business. An auction was held during the conference to raise money for AgrAbility’s Farmer Scholarship Fund. Scholarships help pay travel and conference registration fees for farmers who are consumers of AgrAbility’s services to attend NATW. Each state project donates items to the auction. Items bids are generally generated from staff of all state and regional AgrAbility projects. This year’s auction made a record amount for the scholarship fund, $4,600.00. Traditionally, the last day is a ‘tour day’ conducted by the hosting staff.

This tour’s purpose is to highlight the hosting state. Conference attendees were treated to tours of the USDA Research Center outside of Beckley and to the Exhibition Coal Mine. They also visited Tamarack for lunch and shopping.

Next year’s conference will be hosted by the National Project in Indianapolis, November 7-11, 2011. This year marks AgrAbility’s twentieth anniversary of being federally funded through the 1991 Farm Bill. Please join us to mark this tremendous milestone.

Since 2008 there has been a small community garden project in Lincoln County that has provided thousands of pounds of produce to several county food banks. Outwardly, it may appear to be like many other community gardens in the state, but there is one big difference. This garden is planted, maintained, and harvested by low risk criminal offenders enrolled in the local Day Report Center. These individuals have been convicted of non-violent crimes, but instead of confining them to an already overcrowded prison, they are placed in a Day Report Program where community service is part of the court ordered sentence. This “win-win” court ordered sanction is designed to benefit the offender, taxpayer, and community-at-large.

“During the past two decades, the U.S. criminal justice system has responded to the public’s fear of crime by locking up more offenders for longer periods of time. But given the costs associated with maintaining large inmate populations, a ‘lock ’em up longer’ strategy – when employed indiscriminately, regardless of offenders’ crimes or level of threat to public safety, creates an extraordinary expense.” In the state of WV between 1994 and 2004, the state’s prison population went from 2,392 to 5,032, an increase of 110%. It continued further between 2004 and 2007 to 6,056 an overall increase of 153%. In March 2004, the WV Division of Criminal Justices Services projected that the prison population at the current rate of increase would be 6,774 by the year 2012. However, in a more recent forecast dated December 2008, that estimate had gone to 8,530 based on rates determined up through 2007 establishing that even the estimated prison population for 2012 has increased by 21% from 2004 to 2007. By 2017, West Virginia can expect to have a whopping 10,304 inmates in the prison population. Consider that for 2006, these same agencies have reported that 75.9% of the inmates were admitted to prison facilities for nonviolent offenses. While West Virginia has one of the fastest growing prison populations per capita in the nation, our general population has been steady or falling since the early 1980s.

To gain some perspective on what this might mean financially, in October 2009 the Charleston Gazette reported that Norb Federspil, Director of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, estimated that WV taxpayers spend between $5-$15 per offender per day to support an individual in a Community Corrections Program compared to $49.25 per inmate per day to house them in a regional jail. Based on the estimated prison population for 2017, and without considering the fact that some of the non-violent offenders could be placed in a Community Corrections Program, the State of West Virginia can expect to spend an estimated $185 million to house these inmates. Community Corrections Programs such as the one in Lincoln County appear to be an avenue to address the prison overcrowding issue as well as the costs to local governments for inmate housing, and in Lincoln County, this program has dealt with these issues as well as a host of other community issues.

The beginning of the Logan Regional Day Report Center (DRC) Program, to which the Lincoln County office is a satellite, started with the 2000 WV legislative session. During that session, the legislature passed the Community Corrections Act which allowed offenders to be punished and treated in the community. The Logan Regional Day Report Center (DRC) and its satellite offices in Lincoln, Boone and Mingo Counties operate under this Act. Jerry Swanson, Lincoln County Chief Probation Officer explains, “A DRC gives the Courts another option, short of prison, to both sanction and rehabilitate an offender while reducing the ever-increasing costs of incarceration. A DRC is able to focus on the local needs of its offenders and provides many of the services under one roof subsequently holding the offender more accountable by improving communication between providers and probation officers. Our DRC not only provides community service options, but also substance abuse counseling, parenting, anger management and life skills classes. The ultimate goal of the DRC, and community corrections as a whole, is to provide the offenders with the necessary skills, structure and guidance to become productive members of society. Our participants also find the garden project rewarding. I believe they feel proud, and rightfully so, of helping feed local low-income families. Plus, we all know how satisfying it is to see the ‘fruits’ of our labor and nowhere is that more observable than a garden.”

In the spring of 2008, the Lincoln County DRC, Farm Bureau, WVU Extension Service, Economic Development Authority and County Commission collaborated to create the Lincoln County DRC Community Garden Project. Through this project the DRC receives quality educational courses on agriculture and nutrition for its clients, the clients provide labor to cultivate and harvest the produce and the local food banks receive the fruits and vegetables that are produced. The community as a whole sees a reduction in prison housing costs and the clients in the program receive the many benefits of a rehabilitation program.

All parties involved have seen the benefits of this community garden project and expect it to grow in the coming years. It is not known at this point what the overall impact of this project may be to the citizens of Lincoln County, but for now it appears to be a win-win situation for everyone. Other counties in the Logan DRC region expect to begin gardens of their own to provide the DRC clients and citizens in their counties with the same benefits. It’s easy to see that garden projects such as this one has the potential to impact spending and rehabilitative services in all counties in WV that have available Community Correction Services, not only in agricultural and nutrition programming, but community development and additional families and health programming.

For more information, contact April Roach, Lincoln County WVU Extension agent (304-824-7911; or April.Roach@mail.wvu.edu).
**SLOW FOOD WV CHAPTER**

**BY BONNIE THOMAS, WV SMALL FARM CENTER & MARION OHLINGER, OWNER OF RICHWOOD GRILL**

“The whole idea is simply to get people back into their own kitchens, gardens, and back at table with family and friends. Food should be something that’s pleasurable instead of just something you do in front of the TV or in your car,” stated Marion Ohlinger, the chef and owner of the locally-sourced restaurant, Richwood Grill, in Morgantown. As part of a national trend, Slow Food chapters are sprouting up all across the U.S. with members who are farmers, business owners, and community members alike. “Slow food aims to be everything fast food is not,” touts a USA Today article—Ohlinger agrees nothing could be more true. The food-centric organization works to promote “good, clean, and fair” food and is now re-organizing in West Virginia.

Ohlinger has set out to organize a northern West Virginia chapter, but has been urged to reach out across WV and reinstate the inactive Slow Food WV chapter. If organized as a state chapter, Ohlinger looks to eventually break into regions with respective representatives.

Future goals for the WV organization include presenting at the WV Small Farm Conference, hosting an Earth Day Picnic and Potluck, holding a restaurant symposium about sourcing locally, and eventually organizing a music, arts, and food festival that truly “gets everyone together to take some pride about all that we have in West Virginia”.

Soon the chapter will be developing a Facebook and website, but is currently being organized through Richwood Grill’s site (www.richwoodgrill.com). The group is looking for anyone else who wants to take an active role in helping to rejuvenate the chapter and work of Slow Food here in the state. “I already work 6 days a week at the restaurant and have a new baby, but I know somebody has to do this. This has to happen,” stated Ohlinger. All interested in Slow Food can contact Marion through email at info@richwoodgrill.com or 304-292-1888.

Richwood Grill sources their items as locally as possible. “We, to the best of our knowledge, percentage-wise use more local food than any other restaurant in the state. We are looking to have global cuisine with local ingredients. Our whole menu aims to be a tribute to WV culture and heritage,” stated Ohlinger. They want to join together with other businesses that have this same desire. To learn more about Slow Food, please visit www.slow-foodusa.org.

![Image](Image 279x384 to 520x460)

**“Slow Food is an idea, a way of living and a way of eating. It is a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.”**

**FARM TO SCHOOL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

By Pam Curry, Center for Economic Options, in Charleston said, “this provides not only an opportunity for healthier menu items in schools, but also holds economic potential for West Virginia farmers”. Typically, the money for food service programs goes to national distributors and goes out of state. But in this case, as food service money is spent locally, more money will go to WV farmers. With more federal money coming to schools for lunch programs thanks to the School Nutrition Reauthorization, this can be an important revenue stream for local producers.

A recent example of a successful Farm to School delivery occurred in Barbour County. With the help of WesMonTy RC&D, Mark Hollen, a local producer, was able to deliver produce to an area school. He delivered 40 pounds of sweet, white turnips to the area schools for the healthy fruit and vegetable snack program. The turnips were well received by both the students and the food service staff. WesMonTy RC&D is now preparing for a future delivery of carrots.

Most importantly, the children of West Virginia will see the most benefit from this program. Children deserve to eat healthful meals at schools and have exposure to a wide range of foods. As the health consequences of the average diet becomes clearer, it is important that children have easier access to healthful foods. Increased exposure to fruits and vegetables will not only have a positive effect on the long-term health of our children but also on the long-term health of our state.

The Center For Economic Options can be reached through their website, http://www.centerforeconomicoptions.org/. Potomac Headwaters RC&D can be reached through their website at: http://www.potomacheadwatersrcd.org/, and WesMonTy RC&D can be reached through their blog at wesmontyrcd.blogspot.com, or e-mail inquiries can be sent to wesmontyrcd@gmail.com.
SNOW FENCING STILL WORKS
BY TOM MCCONNELL, PROGRAM LEADER, WVU EXTENSION SMALL FARM CENTER

I’m sure having grown up in Terra Alta in Preston County and still living there today explains my interest in snow fence. On a recent drive along Interstate 80 I saw miles of snow fence and I wondered why we have gotten away from that practice. Most farm lanes have a “stretch” or two where the wind delivers more snow than initially fell from the sky. A quick review of snow fence construction principles can help alleviate a drifting problem. Managing snow drifting is also an economic decision as many industry experts suggest that preventing snow drifts costs 1% of what clearing them does.

As expected, most of the snow fence research comes from agencies like the US Forest Service and Departments of Highways, and some private engineering firms working in states in snow country. But the principals of snow control are the same regardless of the location.

Wind carries snow particles. The higher the wind speed the heavier the particle it will carry. So inversely, as wind speed is reduced more snow falls to the ground. The snow that falls to the ground will bounce or jump along the surface (this is called saltating) and eventually form dunes or drifts. Snow fence reduces wind speed which allows the creeping and saltating snow to come to a rest. So if used properly, snow fence will cause the snow to drift where you want it to.

The graphic to the right (Tabler and Jairell 1993) illustrates the sequence in which a snow fence slows the wind and drops the snow. The numbers (1…7) right of the fence depict wind blowing events over time. The shape and height of the drift are estimated off the vertical axis of zero up to 1.5 times “H” the height of the fence. The horizontal graphic numbered as upwind (-15 to 0 times H) to downwind from (0 to 30 times H) the particle it will carry. So higher the wind speed the heavier the particle it will carry. So inversely, as wind speed is reduced more snow falls to the ground. The snow that falls to the ground will bounce or jump along the surface (this is called saltating) and eventually form dunes or drifts. Snow fence reduces wind speed which allows the creeping and saltating snow to come to a rest. So if used properly, snow fence will cause the snow to drift where you want it to.

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The Morgantown Farmers Market is open every Saturday morning from May until October. A previous article featured dressed and filleted rainbow trout sold in fall of 2009. This article features sales in May and June of 2010. Product diversity was increased with the addition of channel catfish fillets and smoked rainbow trout fillets.

Rainbow Trout and channel catfish were grown to marketable size at the Dogwood Lake demonstration raceway. Fish were harvested and placed on ice in the morning, processed on Friday afternoon and stored in a cooler. All fish were distributed fresh on Saturday.

Whole weight of trout was about 2 lb and channel catfish slightly larger. Dressed trout with gills and kidney in sold for $8 each and averaged about 1.6 lb. Pricing for dressed trout was based on a rate of $5/lb – a price slightly higher than the local grocery store. Channel Catfish were sold as boneless, skinless fillets in a ziplock bag. Catfish fillets from a single fish averaged 0.7 lb with price based on a $6/lb rate.

Pricing for vacuum packed hot smoked fillets was based on a rate of $16 per pound. All fresh fish were processed at the WVU meats lab. Temperature data for fresh fish from harvest through sale was collected on June 11 and 12.

Customers viewed the products, and were engaged by one of two people. A brochure describing the products and how they were produced was provided. One person handled the money, and the other person handled the fish. As fish were sold customers were asked to provide contact information for a survey later in the summer.

A survey was developed to measure customer satisfaction and to determine the interest in additional products.

Dressed trout sales resulted in just over $3,200 in revenue, averaging $360/week. When offered, catfish fillets resulted in average weekly sales of just under $80. Availability of smoked product was limited so it sold out quickly. As supply increased in June, sales of the smoked trout fillets were averaging over $500 per market or just over 30 pounds each morning.

A total of 34 customers participated in the survey conducted during September, 2010. This represents a 34% response rate. The initial survey had similar demographics of the respondents as in this survey: Mostly middle aged females as the main food buyer in the household, with a college degree eating seafood at least once per week. Smoked trout was the most popular product, followed by dressed trout and catfish fillets.

Satisfaction with freshness of the products was consistently high among all products. All customers rating the dressed trout and smoked trout rated the product in the highest two categories. All customers rating the catfish fillets were very satisfied. Customers responded similarly when asked about flavor and size of the products.

The vacuum package of the smoked product received highest satisfaction with 66% very satisfied and the remainder satisfied with packaging. The use of ziplock bags for the catfish fillets received a 46% very satisfied, 46% satisfied. The dressed trout packaging was unsatisfactory to 13% of the customers. To address this issue the use of an additional plastic bag was implemented to avoid leaky bags from the melting ice.

Customers expressed satisfaction with prices for all products. Smoked fish and channel catfish fillets ranked similarly with 38% very satisfied and the rest satisfied. 46% were very satisfied and 50% were satisfied with the dressed trout.

When asked to select the three most important criteria for increasing satisfaction with purchasing fish at the market, there was great diversity in the response. Categories concerned use of the product and categories commonly associated with issues facing aquaculture and garner an equal number of responses. There was some interest in demonstrations on how to prepare the fish. It is also notable that some interest was expressed in packaging that would keep the product cold between the market and the kitchen at home.

Customers expressed a strong interest in new products (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents indicating their likelihood to buy a new product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New product</th>
<th>Very likely (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat likely (%)</th>
<th>No opinion (%)</th>
<th>Likely not (%)</th>
<th>Will not (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Striped Bass: vacuum packed fillet</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striped Bass: fillet in a plastic bag</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striped Bass: dressed, head-on</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden trout with white flesh</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden trout with pink or red flesh</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOBILE POULTRY PROCESSING
BY TOM MCCONNELL, WVU EXT. SMALL FARM CENTER PROGRAM LEADER

Last fall I contributed an article to the Market Bulletin about the opportunity for selling processed chickens and farmstead cheese. The chicken article was a response to our state’s loss of a small poultry processing facility in the North central part of the state and its impact on the local food businesses in Morgantown and the surrounding area. This was important as we have found that as folks watch their neighbors make a profit by feeding and selling chickens, they tend to try it themselves. This is in no way a scientific analysis of the small farm flock business, but we have observed that farmers are reluctant to increase their chicken feeding businesses when they process the birds themselves. Our trips to Kentucky and Vermont hinted at that fact. The catch is that when a farmer pays to have that service performed, he or she is driving the breakeven price up and threatening the bottom line. So, as the price we charge our customers increases, the number of people willing and able to pay this higher price decreases.

This problem becomes even more complicated as our society becomes more mindful of the many health threats to our food in the last few years. Many may choose their chicken from a source that is state inspected.

The suggestion that a mobile processing plant may serve as a suitable alternative is a sound one. Farmers are often reluctant to try something new. Having the opportunity to have your birds processed and ready to freeze can eliminate many obstacles for a beginning farmer. So this idea of a facility coming to a neighborhood near them could help with the transition from a farm community that is missing out on the demand for barnyard and pasture raised chicken to a community where those “wait and see” neighbors give it a try. After that occurs, hopefully others will make the investment in stationary plants and be able to serve their community’s processing needs. I recently talked to one WV producer who is planning to respond to an opportunity that would cause him to increase his production to numbers at a level none of us have ever considered.

Like any other new business development, the farmers trying this new enterprise will benefit by having some guidance and “hand-holding”. The mobile unit manager will also serve as a mentor and educator. This person can talk to the growers and help them troubleshoot problems and discuss management and marketing ideas. The saying may be overused but this regular communication between the mentor and the growers will go a long way toward developing a community of producers.

And if this opportunity gains footing, the farmers feeding and marketing chickens must get organized. They must first form and then join a cooperative that will allow them to buy their inputs in larger lots and access larger markets.

There is merit in considering this mobile plant opportunity and it is imperative to join the conversation.

WHY LOCAL FOOD?
BY CARRIE SEE, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE SMALL FARM CENTER

Are you a food producer? Or are you a food consumer? If you’re both, you might notice that the prices for food in the grocery store differ greatly from the prices you receive when you sell your product. Statistics analyzed in 2010 report that a farmer receives only $0.19 for every dollar’s worth of food sold in a retail store. The remaining $0.81 is divided up between marketing, transportation of the food, packaging, and energy required to move the food from the farm to the store shelf. But farmers: what if you could receive more of the food dollar than just 19 cents? What if you could cut out those middle steps, and sell your product directly to the person who will be eating it? Consumers: what if you could pay a price that more closely reflects the value of the product and buy your food from the person who grew it?

Good news!! You can do these things! It’s called direct marketing, and due to environmental awareness and food safety, it has become hugely popular in the past few years with no sign of slowing. Farmers markets, community supported food subscriptions, local food websites, and on-farm stands all offer the advantage of knowing your food’s origin.

West Virginia has a good start on direct marketing, but there are still some gaps to fill. Did you know that West Virginians consume 67,000 acres (134 pounds per capita) of wheat annually in products such as breads and cereals? Did you know that the state of West Virginia harvested only 5,000 acres of wheat in 2009? This means there is a market- and from my experiences, a demand- for locally grown wheat in our state. Citizens of our state eat enough eggs per year to support over a million laying hens, or 2,150 500-bird flocks. Laying flocks are an excellent project for 4-H or FFA students looking to earn spending money and the experience in record-keeping and marketing.

As farmers, we need to always be looking for a market or way to diversify our operation. Freezer beef and pork are statistically becoming more popular with consumers, and the number of farmers markets has been on the rise for the past five years. In 2010 we had on record nearly 80 organized, multi-producer farmers markets in West Virginia. Value-added goods are in high demand as well, such as pickles, relishes, salsas, pasta sauces and other preserved acidified foods.

The Small Farm Center has been sourcing events with local food for a number of years. The first event the center sourced was the Small Farm Conference held at Ramada Inn in Morgantown in 2009. The process has become more streamlined as folks engage in more proactive marketing, offering product available and suitable for our needs. This includes having the proper certifications and labeling on their goods. In 2010, the Small Farm Conference at Lakeview put $10,497.35 directly in West Virginia farmers’ pockets from conference food purchases. The Center sourced four events in 2010 and looks forward to adding events in the future.
H) depicts the distance snow is dropped on both sides of the fence.

What do the experts recommend about snow fence construction? As we see from the graphic, the fence should be placed a distance of 35 times the height of the fence from the area to be protected. This means that a fence that is 4 feet high should be placed (35 times 4ft. = 140 ft). There are many applications using distances less than that as this can be dependant on wind speed, control goals, snow amounts, and individual fence placement. There is probably no better determinant for fence placement and construction details than experimentation.

They also suggest extending the length of the fence 60% longer than the length of the protected area.

Experts in the east and west recommend the fence have a porosity of 50% and be placed 10% of the height (H) off the ground.

For those who feel the need to use multiple rows of fence, the recommendation is a single row of tall fence is cheaper and more effective than two or more rows. In fact one 6-ft. fence equals 2 rows of 4-ft. fence and even more interesting, one 8-ft. fence will equal 5 rows of 4-ft. fence.

Taller fences reduce visibility issues for protection of highways.

In the 1960’s the USDA recommended and probably funded living wind barriers by planting Hemlock and White Pine seedlings and waiting for them to grow big enough to slow the wind. This control works very well after they grow large enough, and after that, they have the size and density to stop the wind and offer greater protection.

In the West most fences are erected permanently but on eastern farms snow fencing becomes an annual event. It’s a good idea to start with some of the available snow fence materials out there that include the “old standby” of the slatted fir fence. That fence material has the reputation of being very brittle and expensive. Today many companies are selling a dual purpose (construction and snow) plastic fence the price is lower but the fence needs special attention as the steel posts it is normally attached to will cut the material.

We can control our snow drifts or at least make them less severe with some science, experimentation, and thought. Pondering this management strategy can make those hours on the snow blower and plow more meaningful.

SNOW FENCING STILL WORKS
CONT FROM PAGE 9

2011 INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE IS COMING TO WV

BY JOHN JETT, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE SPECIALIST

West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Master Gardener Association are hosting the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference, October 11 -14 in Charleston, West Virginia. Master Gardeners from across the United States and Canada will attend the October conference when fall brings cool nights and colorful mountain scenery. The event will provide opportunities to learn gardening techniques that will help increase biodiversity, control exotic weeds, make the most of native plants in the landscape and improve gardening methods. Pre and post tours will help discover the splendor of the Appalachian Mountains and the beauty and history of WV.

The conference will officially open with “Taste of West Virginia” reception on evening of October 11.

Guests will be treated to the best of West Virginia cuisine, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, with locally grown foods and tastings of W.Va. spirits. This casual event will include Appalachian music and provide an opportunity for attendees to catch up with old friends and enjoy a relaxing meal.

With a theme of “Color it Green”, sessions will focus on sustainability, good gardening practices and other green topics. There will be opportunities for all gardeners, from the novice to the expert, to gain knowledge on a wide variety of topics. Over 30 concurrent sessions will be taught by industry experts, horticultural specialists and Master Gardeners.

Keynotes speakers include:
Anna Caroline Ball- President and CEO of the 105-year-old Ball Horticultural Company, which specializes in all aspects of horticulture, including breeding, biotechnology, production, and marketing of hybrid flower seeds and other floriculture crops.

Joe Lamp’l-The author of The Green Gardener’s Guide, Joe’s interest in gardening and the environment can be seen in his writings and on his website “joegardener.com.” Joe’s style of speaking enables him to present complicated topics in a manner that is easily understood by all. A nationally known speaker and environmental steward, Joe will educate and entertain conference guests.

Rick Darke-Author, photographer, lecturer and consultant focused on regional landscape design, planning, conservation, and enhancement. Blending art, ecology, and cultural geography, Darke is dedicated to the design and stewardship of livable landscapes. Darke has traveled extensively in both hemispheres, exploring diverse ecologies and cultural landscapes in search of ideas to enrich the global garden.

Conference Schedule Overview
Pre-tours will return to Charleston on October 11 in time for the “Taste of West Virginia” reception. October 12 will begin with the official conference welcome. The morning will be completed with CONTINUED ON PAGE 14
West Virginia women have always played an important role in sustaining a strong food system. However, these roles have evolved over the years. Historically, and in some cases as few as one generation removed, the women were the managers of the household, where meals were prepared and the children were raised. In addition to these responsibilities, women also were in charge of light agricultural duties such as managing the dairy and poultry operations; milking, gathering eggs and making butter and cheese. They were also in charge of disposing of any surplus through trade or commerce. As a part of the female revolution, women’s roles became that of the bookkeeper and the financial manager; and finally today they are not only full working partners in farm operations, but also increasingly owner operators. As women’s roles in agriculture have evolved, the differences in farming characteristics of women and their male counterparts have begun to be documented by the US Census of Agriculture.

Beginning in 2002, the USDA’s Census of Agriculture began recording how many women operated farms either as the principal operator or as a secondary operator. In the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the USDA found that women account for 30 percent of the total number of farm operators, which was up from 27 percent in 2002. Also, the percentage of women who were the principal operators of farms grew from 11 percent of all principal operators in 2002 to 14 percent in 2007.

West Virginia, following the national trend, as more women assumed the role as principal farm operators, reported at 13.7 percent of the total. The number of women operators in West Virginia went up from 7,859 in 2002 to 10,217 in 2007, over a 23 percent increase. The number of women as the principal operators of farms in West Virginia grew to a total of 3,219, an increase of over 27 percent. In West Virginia, as well as on a national basis, women are much more likely than their male counterparts to operate smaller farms (118 acres compared to 157 acres, on average) and farms described as “other livestock or crops” or “sheep and goat operations.” Over 75 percent of farms, where women were the principal operators in WV, had $5,000 or less in Value of Sales, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. When comparing the average age of farmers in West Virginia, there was virtually no difference between men and women, with men at 58.1 years of age and women at 58.3 years of age. In light of these statistics, WV agricultural educators and investors have begun programming efforts for women in agriculture and are exploring areas for potential growth.

West Virginia County Agent Survey Results

In 2010, West Virginia University Extension Service conducted a survey of Extension Agents that are responsible for Agriculture and Natural Resources programming in each of the 55 counties in West Virginia to determine the current level of Women in Agriculture (WIA) programming, previous efforts, topics of most interest to women in their areas and opportunities for potential growth for women in agriculture. There was a 35% response rate for our survey. Of those that responded, 48% were women and 52% were men. Thirty-eight percent had over 10 years of experience, 48% had between 5 and 10 years of experience, and 14% had 5 years or less experience. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said that they had seen an increased interest in agriculture-related topics from women over the last 5 years in their county or region, 13% said they had not seen an increase, and 19% were not sure. Respondents reported 15 WIA events planned for 2010 across the state, which shows the trend of increasing WIA events continuing in WV in the immediate future.

The areas for potential growth for women in agriculture in West Virginia included value added products, direct marketing, local food production, specialty crop production and livestock production. The top other agricultural production and marketing opportunities for women in agriculture in WV were identified as specialty livestock production, organic production, and equine management. The most common areas of interest for women involved in agriculture in West Virginia were horticulture, small ruminant production, and farm and financial management.

The WV Small Farm Conference at Lakeview Conference Center in Morgantown, WV will offer a class to further explore the opportunities and challenges for women in agriculture in West Virginia.
WHERE ARE WE NOW?
The State of the Horse Industry

By Holly Spooner, WVU Extension Service Specialist

Like all industries, the horse industry in West Virginia and nationwide experiences ups and downs. And, like much of our economy, we seem to have experienced more downs than ups in recent years. Factors influencing the horse industry, however, differ from much of agriculture. While the horse industry is certainly subjected to things like commodity prices, the fact that much of the industry is hobby-driven introduces other factors. Combined with political decisions, such as the end to horse processing, it can leave horse owners and enthusiasts asking, “Where are we headed in 2011?” And while I don’t have a crystal ball, here are my predictions.

Everyone involved in horses, as well as many others, recognize the current unwanted horse problem. Regardless of your stand on horse processing, it’s impossible to deny that the closure of U.S. slaughter facilities has contributed to the number of unwanted horses. And while there is talk of a new processing plant opening in Wyoming in the near future, horses currently must be sent to Canada and Mexico, resulting in nearly 70 percent fewer horses processed. At the same time, this increase in supply, combined with a decrease in demand as a result of less expendable income for most Americans, is a combination that has resulted in horse prices being the lowest in decades. While the market may be correcting itself some (as evidenced by lower numbers of horses being bred), for the time being, free horses have become nearly as common as free kittens. And while this introduces its own set of challenges, perhaps it introduces opportunity as well.

More affordable horses have certainly made for more horse owners. In my own rural “neighborhood,” there are at least five new horse owning families in the last few years. The initial cost of the horse is no longer an obstacle to horse ownership, but potential owners are often not aware of the high cost to adequately keep and care for a horse (in West Virginia this is about $2500 annually, not including land). Thus, education of new and potential horse owners is key, and something that we at the WVU Extension Service work hard at. It’s also an opportune time for equine groups throughout the state to reach out to this group of new horse owners both young and old desperate for knowledge and camaraderie.

At the same time, I think we’re seeing and will continue to see a shift toward or back to local events. Where as in the past, many were traveling out of state for shows or trail rides, the increasing cost of fuel combined with other economic factors, is pushing many towards events close to home. Again, this creates opportunity for West Virginians. Perhaps you’ve considered opening your farm to trail riders as a business endeavor? Now may be a great time to do it! Or maybe your local riding club may discover new-found success hosting an open horse show.

Finally, while not as bright of a prediction, I predict the horse industry will continue to be “found” from a regulatory perspective. For many years, we have “flown under the radar” when it comes to government regulation on things like the environment and animal health. While other industries have been forced to address the environmental impact of their animal husbandry practices (such as nitrogen and phosphorous leeching), the horse industry really has not. At least not yet! And I would argue that unless we are pro-active in looking at these things, we may instead find ourselves burdened with difficult to manage regulations. Again, the WVU-ES is doing our part to address this, and I challenge horse owners to become more educated in this area. At the same time, the WV Department of Agriculture continues to enforce animal health regulations, such as the requirement for an annual test for equine infectious anemia (Coggins’ test) for all equines showing and sold in WV and requirements for health certificates for horses entering from out of state. While these may seem difficult at times, recognizing the need for these regulations in protecting your animals’ health should make them seem less burdensome.

In closing, I think the horse industry will see improvement in both animal prices and number of folks involved in 2011. And while fuel and feed prices may continue to be a challenge, increasing educational endeavors and opportunities for local recreation may be the bright side. In the meantime, I encourage you to keep in touch with your local extension office for news on upcoming equine events and activities.
BRUSH CONTROL CONT FROM PAGE 6

determine a cost per ton or square foot, to be compared against other methods. But the study revealed so much more.

For the sake of comparison, it is assumed that if mechanical control were an option it would be used. It is also assumed that there is no option but animal eradication if the slope is too severe and the manager wants to practice an organic control.

There are three points that have impact on the cost comparison of animal versus chemical brush control.

The farmers in this study reported an initial brush cover of 40% with a stocking rate of 1.5 per head per acre or animal cost of $85 which equals a per acre expense of $131. The annual costs associated with feed, supplies, supplements, and medication totaled $85 per head or per/acre cost was $128.

The capital expenses (mostly shelter) per head equaled $23 or $34 per acre.

Annualizing the animal expense over 5 years and the equipment over a seven year life paints a different picture. The per acre cost includes animal cost of $131 / 5 years or an annual cost of $26 and a shelter and equipment expenses over 7 years equals $34/7 or $5.

The data reveals $6800 of livestock sold from the study that would equate to $25 sales per head and $38 per acre. Note: labor was not included in this part of the study. As stated earlier, to compare this against chemical control is difficult. It’s logical to assume that the heavier the cover the more expensive it is to eradicate it. Using a heavy rate of 4% of a local favorite herbicide would cost $46 per acre and a medium rate would require 2% or $23 per acre.

It is also important to consider the impact of the slope of the land, as spraying requires more time. This variable can cause the application expense to be very expensive as all application would be done on foot. Starting with the most recent PA Custom Rates the base line for level ground with machine is $12.30 per acre. Spraying from the ground invariably uses more material and could require 2-3 hours of labor; and at $9 per hour that would cost up to $27 dollars per acre. There is also expense associated with a sprayer and most farmers would have to buy a sprayer that will be under-utilized because of small acres to treat. This suggests that spraying by hand with the high rate could cost $73 to $83 depending on sprayer use, per acre. It’s important to note that neither animals nor chemical eradication can achieve total control.

The animal-side of the equation presents many variables too. Early work at West Virginia University studying goats for brush control suggested that goats could either be used to maximize brush control or they could be used to produce kids. This study did not clarify the farmers’ intention toward a brush or production preference. This is important, because if that were true, the brush goats would be depreciated thus increasing the cost of the brush control. In this scenario the operator would be denied the equity building or income opportunities associated with the does raising kids, although there was some off-spring income. So it might be a worthwhile management point to consider a longer eradication period that would allow the does to graze high quality pasture to enable them to nurse their kids. Another angle would be earlier kidding so the does could work on the brush after the kids are older. This dual use option would require a higher stocking rate or a longer time to eradicate brush. The husbandry skills of the manager are critical; goats are not miniature cows and they require a different set of management skills. It is important to keep in mind the potential impact of predation on these operations. Effective fencing and careful management, combined with a thorough understanding of predators will reduce losses.
## Important Websites

**West Virginia University Extension Service**
[www.ext.wvu.edu](http://www.ext.wvu.edu/)

**Agriculture & Natural Resources-**
[www.wvu.edu/~agexten/](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/)

**West Virginia Soil Conservation Agency**
[www.wvca.us](http://www.wvca.us)

**West Virginia Dept. of Agriculture**
[www.wvagriculture.org](http://www.wvagriculture.org)

**Farm Service Agency (FSA)**
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**United State Dept. of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Agency (NRCS)**
[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

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