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

Bread may be the ancestor of all prepared foods; the first bread was made in Neolithic times nearly 12,000 years ago. Why not? It did and still does provide society with a reliable food source which would keep though the winter months then increase in the summer.

As we consider ways to increase profit for WV farms, wheat is seldom seen as a solution. It’s a logical crop to grow as it represents the food crop that is eaten in greatest quantity by US citizens. Before the days of sliced (store bought) bread, nearly everyone baked with flour grown by a local farmer. Today, if all the wheat West Virginians consumes (including that used for pasta) was grown in the state, the total acreage required to supply this amount would exceed 75,000 acres. Now we let others farmers grow our wheat; this year WV has only 7,000 acres under cultivation. The mills are gone and so are the home bakers and the small local bakeries. But this is changing as several small bakeries are re-emerging across the state. And there is the opportunity. The wheat that our locals used to eat is different than what they demand now. Our farms produced a soft red winter wheat that would be planted in the fall and harvested the next summer. The flour milled from that local winter wheat lacks the traits that today’s bakers demand. Many artisan bakers like Brunetti’s Italian Bakery in Huntington and New Day Bakery in Morgantown have learned how to use the local flour in their bread products while others have continued to use the low-protein and low-gluten flour in other products. A baker in the Pullman Plaza Hotel in Huntington has been very successful making a delicious cracker from the local stone-ground flour, and Puglioni’s Restaurant in Morgantown uses it to make noodles. These small successes alone cannot translate into a several thousand acre wheat industry. Nor CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

2012 SMALL FARM CONFERENCE
BY CARRIE SEE, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, WV SMALL FARM CENTER, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE

The largest and most successful West Virginia Small Farm Conference garnered nearly 800 attendees during the three-day event at the Morgantown Conference Center March 1-3, 2012 hosted by the WV Small Farm Center. With over 70 workshops offered and a variety of special events and activities for attendees, the event continued to grow in reputation and attendance.

Meals were once again sourced locally and prepared by renowned chefs throughout the conference.

Workshops were led by experienced and knowledgeable farmers, state agency and Extension Service specialists, and organizational leaders from across West Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio.

Keynote speakers joined us to share their successes in agritourism, cooperative development, and youth agriculture education.

To help kick off the annual conference, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture held an all-day agritourism workshop on February 29. Official conference classes began Thursday with seven intensive day-long workshops covering youth entrepreneurship, cheese making, high tunnel production, grant writing, poultry production, alternative energy, and food business (commercially sold food safety.) While a small-scale high tunnel was constructed and toured on-site, other groups held field trips and hands-on activities for attendees. New to this year’s conference was the overwhelming attendance of youth agriculture students.

Sporting their FFA jackets, eleven students... CONTINUED ON PAGE 3
Grains continued from page 1

will selling flour just because it is grown locally carry the industry very far.

For a locally grown wheat industry to emerge, farmers will have to make several changes.

We have learned thought trying to market farm products, don’t try to persuade your consumer, but give them what they want. Our bakers need a high protein, high gluten flour to bake to attain results they were taught to expect and their customers demand. Making flour from the low protein, stone ground, whole wheat flour that we grow is not the answer to increasing wheat production and farm security.

There are options or at least areas to explore to find a solution for this unparalleled opportunity. One area to investigate is the use of Hard Red Spring Wheat instead of our typical Soft Red Winter Wheat. This class of wheat is grown primarily in the Northern Plains of the US and constitutes 25% of the national harvest. It is noted for having high protein and gluten levels. Understandably there was never any “push” from industry of research facilities to consider wheat production for Mid-Appalacia so the HRS wheat culture never moved in to our state. Now, of course, there is no infrastructure to encourage our farmers to consider this crop. This is a crop that requires equipment, specifically a combine, so if a farmer lives in a community that has custom harvesters, the decision is much easier and logical.

The other area that must be addressed is wheat processing. At this point all the milling is being done by stone burr mills- some new and some old- that grind just like the nearly extinct mills of the past. The point all the milling is being done by stone burr mills- some new and some old that grind just like the nearly extinct mills of the past. The grown locally carry the industry very far.

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The $7.2 billion WV food fortune is out there for us all-one farmer at a time!

Never have WV farmers had more opportunity. And as you read this edition of the WV Small Farm Advocate, you will learn that more farmers, groups, and agencies are working to use this opportunity to help themselves and each of West Virginia’s 23,000 farm families become successful.

Annie’s Project has arrived in WV. Learn how this program that was designed to empower farm women to manage information systems used in critical decision making processes will be delivered across the state. Annie was a woman who grew up in a small town in Northern Illinois. She spent her lifetime learning how to be an involved business partner with her farm husband. This is Annie’s Project – to take her experiences and share it with farm women living and working in a complex business.

Many of us are affected by drought this year. The USDA announced July 26th that the condition has improved some, upgraded to “abnormally dry”: improved from “moderate drought” and in places “severely dry”. Of course, much of the rain that has fallen in the last week has been spotty and some of the damaged pastures will require some management. This publication includes sound advice offered by Extension Forage Agronomist Dr. Ed Rayburn. Also in this edition, Extension Agent Alexandria Straight will discuss ridding pastures of buttercups.

Dr. Lewis Jett, Commercial Horticulturist for the WVU Extension Service, shares his vast horticultural knowledge in an article about an opportunity for increased sales by including fall fruit and vegetables in your plant varieties. This opportunity allows farmers to stretch their marketing season.

Learn how Hard Red Spring Wheat and dry beans can become an important part of many farms. West Virginians per capita eat more than 7lbs. of dry beans annually and that equates to over 6,000 acres of production needed. This crop will yield the grower a higher percent of the consumer price. The wheat story is also one of potential as the reader/farmer considers bread, pasta, and now some flat products like crackers. The number of acres needed to satisfy our appetite for wheat is staggering.

Don’t miss the article from Mineral County Ag-Science teacher Julie Sions discussing how her students and fellow faculty are working to change the local food climate in their community, one farmer at a time. There is a lesson in there for each of us as we read how they have transformed students into avid market gardeners simply by supplying them some equipment and some education to use at home.

The 300,000 people who live in the greater Huntington community have more food potential than most in West Virginia and they are learning how to market it. Even more opportunity has come to area farmers with the new venture called “The Wild Ramp” local food store. Read how the new market is progressing and what it means to the producers.

It is important to read what Mandy Zickefoose, a University of Pittsburgh anthropologist attached to the WVU Ext Small Farm Center, has to say about her quest to learn why farmers farm. We all agree that taking advantage of the unimaginable potential for producing and selling food locally will require more young farmers joining the movement. Since we haven’t studied why farmers choose this calling, we need a better understanding of those who stick with it.

We hope you enjoy.
MONROE FARM MARKET

BY JENNIFER JONES, MONROE FARM MARKET

Monroe Farm Market Cooperative is a market of nearly 30 farms located in Southeastern West Virginia. It began over 6 years ago as an online and on-site market, with the online market running 12 months a year. The early years were a combined effort of a handful of very dedicated individuals who took seriously the task to provide dependable, farm fresh food to households in Charleston, WV. Monroe Farm Market has grown in leaps and bounds since its launching online. The original inception had a designated location for aggregation on Thursday mornings. Monroe Farm Market (MFM) began packing and shipping to Charleston on a regular basis. The tales of the early days are told at annual meetings in an effort to share the history of the market with the new vendors. MFM has a very vibrant board that meets several times a month attending to the needs of the markets and to the individual farms that produce. MFM is very committed to keeping a strong connection with its customer members, restaurants and producers. MFM is a producer based cooperative, with an annual membership for producers and customers. Unlike a farm market stand where customers and producers meet each other eye to eye, MFM customers shop from the comfort of their computers as they place orders online. Shopping is enabled for 36 hours the beginning of each week, product is then picked and assembled for individual orders, aggregated at one location and then shipped that same day to be in the homes of MFM customers that evening. The relationship with the customer is unique, and the market manager has a pivotal position in bridging both worlds, rural and urban, listening to the needs of both. The advent of high tunnels has greatly strengthened the volume and variety of product. MFM is comprised of a group of grower/producers that make an effort to work together. This is not limited to produce; it also includes meat and protein producers, taking into consideration each farm and its need to market when product is ready. Our producers help each other as a community, understanding the importance of each farm and what it brings to the market, as well as to the rural and urban communities it feeds. The desire of the producers to work together is the fuel that keeps the market alive. There are numerous people, foundations, centers and business interests who support MFM, all with the intention of supporting locally grown foods. The time ahead for MFM is exciting, as much change is stirring in the world of growing foods to serve our communities, schools and urban centers. West Virginia has a wonderful opportunity ahead of herself.

2012 SMALL FARM CONFERENCE continued from page 1

Hosting inspiring and innovative speakers continues to be a cornerstone of the conference, as our keynote speakers’ messages inspired cooperative working and planning to build more sustainable farms, businesses, and food systems across West Virginia. Undeniably bigger and better than ever before, the conference hosted a variety of events and activities for attendees. The Winter Blues Farmers Market offered more than 46 vendors the opportunity to sell to the excited public of Morgantown, while high school bands, crafts, and story-time entertained the entire family. Sales of the events totalled more than $18,000- a 40 percent increase from the 2011 market. Also bigger and better was the Local Food Dine Around. With ten restaurants from across the state serving us their unique and tasty dishes with local ingredients, the dinner fed nearly 150 guests.

The 2nd Annual Great West Virginia Popcorn Pop-Off recognized the Abbruzinos of Hawthorne Valley Farm as the growers of the tastiest WV popcorn. Four farmers were recognized during the first-ever WV SARE Innovative Sustainable Farmer Awards at Friday’s banquet. The banquet concluded with a plaque of appreciation to honour the Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass for his contribution to the West Virginia agricultural community. Events came to a close on Saturday as the Country Roads Cook-off hosted its state championship with samples and voting for attendees and the WV Farmers Market Association and the Aquaculture Society hosted their respective annual meetings.

In review, the conference shed light on some of the brightest stars from West Virginia’s small farms through sharing the best in education, community development, and sustainable practices.

For information on next year’s Small Farm Conference and other events by the West Virginia Extension Service Small Farm Center, please visit http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu
West Virginia women managing their own farm, or partnering with a spouse or other individual, will have the chance to connect with their peers through a six to ten weeks risk management course known nationally as Annie’s project. It provides risk-management education, mentoring assistance, and networking opportunities designed to increase the number of women leading profitable agribusinesses in WV. The WV Annie’s Project is being led by the West Virginia University’s Extension Service and Small Farm Center, in partnership with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, and Farm Credit of the Virginias. Funding for this project is provided by the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the WVU Extension Service and Small Farms Center.

The nationally renowned ‘Annie’s Project’ has grown from a southwest Illinois program developed by Ruth Hambleton, and named in honor of her mother, Annette Fleck. Annie spent her lifetime learning how to be an involved business partner with her husband on the farm. Her daughter Ruth would later follow in her mother’s footsteps as a farmer’s wife, but Ruth also worked for the University of Illinois Extension Service as a Farm Business Management and Marketing Educator. Annie’s Project is built on the learning over these two generations, and has as its mission to “empower farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information.” Today this program is offered in over 20 states and will be offered in West Virginia beginning this fall.

Dee Singh-Knights, an Agricultural Economics Specialist and ‘Women in Agriculture’ team leader for WVU Extension, said that such a program is long overdue in WV.

Knights said “from 2002 to 2007, WV female farm-owners/operators increased by 31 percent, compared to 11 percent nationally. Traditionally, many inherited the farms as widows and chose to continue the family business, but we find more females are also choosing farming and related businesses as a viable career to meet emerging opportunities in the region, including a growing local food system. We must do more to assist them to overcome gender-specific challenges and build successful businesses. Women have a unique learning need, and they need to have programs that meet their learning profile. Brandy Brabham, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for Roane County and co-team leader, said she has seen ‘Annie’s Project’ at a national conference and thought it would work well in West Virginia. Brabham noted that a major barrier for women is accessing the information they need to operate their farms because this is traditionally a man’s role. But with more and more women landowners, she said there is definitely a need for this course. Along with the barrier, Brabham said women feel they lack appropriate farming experience and generally feel a disconnect to traditional, male-dominated, agricultural circles.

Based on their work with women across the state, the WVU Extension’s Women in Agriculture Team have concluded that Annie’s Project is a good fit for our state because it offers an opportunity for our female farm operators to learn basic business skills from other successful women, engage in educational activities involving exchange of ideas with other women, and experience training opportunities promoting interaction and communication.

The course, consisting of six 3-hour sessions, will provide risk-management education, marketing and business planning, mentoring assistance, and networking opportunities for women, with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of women leading profitable agribusinesses in WV and the region.

Course sessions will interactive and conversational in nature. Participants will explore materials through hands-on activities, share common concerns, and converse with experienced guest speakers; giving them the tools and information they need to make informed farm management decisions. Participants will learn how to evaluate business expansion or diversification opportunities; determine their profit level; develop farm/food safety plans; develop business plans; and conduct farm financial analyses. Individual post-workshop coaching support to implement the recommended risk management strategies learned through the workshops will be offered.

Participants will meet for six sessions over a ten week period, with each session being 3-4 hours long. There will be six identical courses offered regional locations throughout WV, and participation will be limited to 15 attendees per location. We will also offer a seventh workshop as a completely online course option, with a maximum of 20 participants.

Please contact Dee Singh-Knights (Dosingh-knights@mail.wvu.edu, 304-293-7606) or Brandy Brabham (Brandy.Brabham@mail.wvu.edu, 304-927-0975) for more information on the location closest to you, and to reserve your spot for this unique opportunity.
BEANS, BEANS, BEANS
BY TOM MCCONNELL, WV SMALL FARM CENTER PROGRAM LEADER, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE

Everybody eats beans. In fact West Virginians ate over 12 million pounds of beans last year. These estimates are based national per capita figures but the USDA Economic Research Service suggests that the populations in southern states like West Virginia have higher consumption practices. Most of us agree that the pinto bean has been an indispensable part of WV diets for years. To grow that amount estimated by the USDA requires 5700 acres. Virtually none of those beans are grown in the Mountain State. That is left to farmers in Nebraska, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Michigan. Using last year’s USDA figures, the beans would gross $517 per acre on the farm but, like always, going directly to the consumer the figure grows to $1,370 per acre.

What is required to see some of this production potential realized in West Virginia? The best place to start is to access the labor requirements to harvest, package, and market a crop. Consumers usually buy their beans in 1 to 3 lb packages. Institutions will use much larger quantities; in fact, the WV County Extension Directors are required to include dry beans in the lunch menus once weekly. So, this crop will be different than traditional row crops and will require more labor to package and deliver. The idea is that the returns are much higher. As a rule, dry beans fetch $1-1.50 per pound. Farmers market vendors may be in a position to charge more than that. I saw a vendor at a San Francisco farmers market sell her dry beans sell for $5.00 per lb.

We raised dry beans at the WVU Jackson’s Mill market garden for two years by planting and harvesting them by hand and shelling them with a bean sheller. We had the benefit of pulling the vines and drying them out of the weather and shelling them at our leisure; the graduate students doing the work didn’t see it as a leisure activity but the yield was significant for a short period of time. It is easy to pull the pods from the dry vines and use a sheller rather than pick them by hand from the garden.

We don’t know yet about their suitability for row crop equipment but it is logical to think there will be few problems. That is not to rule out maybe having to either dry them in a crop dryer or by using a “swather” to allow them dry in the row and use a pickup head on a combine. With this much information it seems that this locally produced food opportunity might interest farmers with some equipment more extensive than is required for a market garden operation. This revelation might seem to exclude many small growers but it is important to remember that the capability to pull the vines and shell later might make this crop more desirable, especially considering that the crop can be sold all winter long.

There are many different classes of dry beans and maybe the farmers market farmers would want to consider more exotic varieties, including yellow eye, cranberry, and the most popular class in the culinary community is the French bean called Tarbais (tar-bay). The WVU Extension Service Small Farm Center is cooperating with a WV farmer to grow some of these in hopes that we will sample them at the Small Farm Conference in early March.

The most prominent dry bean is the Pinto which commands 42% of the national production. It is followed by Navy beans at 17% and Black 11%. Next is Great Northern and Garbanzo beans at 5% each.

The Center is cooperating with farmer Dan Foglesong and Mason County Extension Agent Rodney Walbrown to evaluate the feasibility of growing Pinto and Black beans in a row crop operation. At this writing the 1 acre (half Pinto and half Black) planting is doing well and stands over 24 inches tall and beginning to bloom. The plants are vigorous and minimally affected by the dry weather.

Both studies will include yield, disease, and especially market preparation labor records. As reported earlier, our plantings were successful at Jackson’s Mill and if we obtain similar results in our two trials this summer we might have taken another step toward capturing more of West Virginia’s food expenditure for our farmers.
THE WILD RAMP: A LOCAL FOOD MARKET

BY GAIL PATTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNLIMITED FUTURE, INC

The Wild Ramp is a nontraditional farmers’ market combining the convenience of retail shopping with the benefits of shopping at a farmers’ market. Like a farmers’ market, The Wild Ramp will give consumers access to fresh seasonal goods, information about how and where the food was grown, and the knowledge they are supporting local businesses. The Wild Ramp will be open year round in an indoor location, operating normal retail hours. There will be a central point of sale where shoppers can use electronic payments including SNAP.

Farmers will drop off products at their convenience, stock the shelves, and provide consumers information about their farm, location, and growing practices. The management and promotion of the market will then be left to The Wild Ramp, so the farmer can devote more time to tending the farm. Farmers will set their own prices and receive 90% of the price while 10% will go to help support the market. Farmers will pay a yearly membership fee and shelf rental fees monthly.

The mission of The Wild Ramp is to operate a year-round community-supported market that provides a viable economic outlet for local food producers while providing consumers access to locally grown agricultural products. Currently there are over 23,000 farmers registered in the state of West Virginia and 80% of those are selling less than $10,000 a year. Much of our state’s farm land goes unused. It has been estimated that if every farmer in the state planted one more acre, West Virginian farmers could provide all of the seasonal produce that is consumed in the state. However, local producers have said that the time they must spend marketing products and the lack of a consistent customer base keeps them from producing more.

The Wild Ramp will provide these farmers with a viable and convenient market for their goods. The Wild Ramp is organized as a non-profit corporation and will use volunteers to help staff the market. This structure will keep overhead costs low and will allow farmers to receive a fair price while keeping products affordable for consumers. Current producers will have more incentive to expand their businesses. A consistent marketplace for agricultural goods will promote the development of start-up farms and a variety of food businesses.

To support the mission and goals of the market, The Wild Ramp will provide educational opportunities to both producers and consumers. Consumers will learn about year-round seasonal eating, and ways to use and preserve seasonal items. Producers will receive support in marketing, business planning, and best practices through our partnership with WVU & WVSU Extension and The WV Department of Agriculture.

The Tri-State community has shown vigorous support of The Wild Ramp. The market’s Facebook page already has over 940 “likes”. Over 3,000 volunteer hours have been logged. Those volunteers include a diverse population and background. The market has received over $40,000 in donations of time, equipment and money in a few short months. Clearly the community is supporting this market.

Last week The Wild Ramp had a soft opening outside on the patio in front of the shop. The market was open Wednesday – Saturday and sold over $2,500 worth of products. On Saturday alone, over 200 people came by the market. Many of them purchased items and almost all of them expressed gratitude that the market was open. It is exciting to see the potential of this market.

The Wild Ramp is looking for more producer-members who can provide fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, eggs, cheese and artisan goods that are agricultural based. If you are interested, please visit the website at http://wildramp.org/producers/ where you will find market rules and procedures, producers guidelines, and a producer application. If you have have questions you may contact The Wild Ramp at: farmer@wildramp.org or call (304) 412-3171.

SECURING YOUR PRICE IS AS EASY AS L-R-P

Livestock Risk Protection is an insurance program that insures against a decline in the national market for Fed and Feeder cattle. It provides producers an indemnity if a regional or national cash price index falls below an insured coverage price. Similar to a put option, the LRP policy is price insurance only, providing single-peril price risk protection for the future sale of insured livestock.

What is insurable?

• Swine: Market Hogs, Weight 150-225 lbs (Carcass), 203-304 lbs (Live)
• Feeder Cattle: Feeder Steers, Bulls, & Heifer < 600 lbs, Feeder Steers & Heifers from 600-900 lbs, includes Dairy and Brahman Breeds
• Fed Cattle: Steers and Heifers, Select or Higher, yield grade 1-3, Weight: 1,000-1,400 lbs

Next step?
Locate an agent using the online agent locator or call Tom McConnell for assistance.

AGENT LOCATOR: http://www3.rma.usda.gov/apps/agents/
The most profitable time to market vegetables and fruits is early and late in the growing season when supply of locally-grown produce is low. There are several productive and high-yielding vegetables and small fruits which can be grown in the fall in West Virginia.

The warm days and cool nights of early fall generally increase the sugar and nutrient content of many fruits. Some vegetable and fruits can produce high yields and revenues on a small piece of land and are perfect for growing on small farms.

Fall raspberries (red and golden fruit) produce very high yields from late August through October in West Virginia. Popular fall red-fruited raspberry varieties include Caroline, Josephine, Himbo Top and Autumn Britton. Anne and Kiwi Gold are excellent yellow-fruiting raspberries. Fall raspberries are an excellent U-Pick crop that attracts customers who desire fresh, vine ripened fruit. When grown within high tunnels, yield and quality of red raspberries is increased. High tunnels protect the fruit from rain and wildlife damage.

Everbearing strawberries obtain optimal quality during the fall and can be marketed in combination with fall raspberries. Seascape and Albion are superb varieties for West Virginia. Strawberries can be planted in the spring or fall. When planted in the spring, blossoms should be removed for four to eight weeks to strengthen the plants. Everbearing strawberries can also be planted in the fall for harvest the following spring.

Pumpkins, winter squash, and decorative gourds are in high demand across West Virginia; they can be sold from mid-September through October. Many productive and diverse varieties are available to choose from, but it is important to choose those that have resistance or tolerance to the fungal disease powdery mildew. Consult the West Virginia Commercial Vegetable Production Guide for a complete list of recommended pumpkin, squash and gourd varieties.

Cucumbers are a popular fall vegetable at farmers markets. They can be seeded in August for harvest throughout the fall. Seedless cucumbers such as Diva, Socrates and Tasty Jade can be trellised; they will produce as many as 12 cucumbers per plant. Cucumbers grown within high tunnels produce significantly high yields of cucumbers.

Salad greens reach optimal quality during the cool days of fall. Red leaf lettuce varieties are well suited to fall production. Lettuce, kale, spinach, chard, and beet greens thrive in cool weather. If seeded before early September, they can be harvested in October and November. When grown within a high tunnel, salad greens can be grown 12 months per year in West Virginia. Both kale and spinach can be overwintered and harvested the following spring. Many restaurants and institutions seek fresh salad greens.

Growing one or a combination of these vegetables and fruits will provide healthy, nutritious food for your family and neighbors. An added benefit is an increase in farm income for small West Virginia farms. For more information about these fruits and vegetables contact: Lewis Jett, Ph.D WVU Commercial Horticulture Specialist, 2012 Agriculture Science Bldg, Morgantown, WV 26506. (304) 293-2634 or email Lewis.Jett@mail.wvu.edu.

TIPS ON DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Years such as this are a cause for concern for farmers- with low snowfall this past winter, and short amounts of rainfall this summer, pastures and crops are not receiving the necessary moisture to yield well.

Recent rainfall has alleviated the dryness some, but the weather never promises anything. What’s a farmer to do? Here are some tips for WV small farmers to minimize the ongoing damage to the farm and livestock, while we wait for precious rainfall.

Drought management starts well before a drought- have a drought management plan in place for times such as these.

Stock the farm at a moderate stocking rate. Stocking a cow-calf farm at 85% of the farm’s economic carrying capacity reduces marginal income by 2%, reduces feed requirement by 15%, and provides adequate feed for the herd 85% of the time.

Use rotational grazing on at least the best pastures and meadows to develop deep rooted dense sods that resist dry weather. Proper rotational grazing can maximize plant rooting depth and plant tolerance to dry weather. Rotational grazing provides about 6 weeks of good forage growth after rainfall stops and gives about another 6 weeks of reduced growth before hay feeding is needed.

Inventory pasture on a regular basis to monitor pasture growth rate. When plant growth slows due to dry weather pasture and meadow inventories should be taken weekly.

When pasture growth rate is lower than pasture demanded by the grazing herd start final planning for and implementing of your drought management plan.

Do not graze during drought.
• Rotational grazing increases the ability to make it through a drought.

• Do not open all the pasture gates during a drought!
• Feed hay in an abuse area that needs the fertility and wait for rain.

Reduce animal feed demand.
• Sell stocker cattle.
• Wean calves early (feed calves an energy supplement on pasture or with good hay). Market calves in a timely manner.
• Sell lower quality, performance, and old cows. Cow production records are important when making these decisions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
Many research studies have found a decrease in farm numbers over the last century in the United States. Major agricultural organizations also report a loss of farms. Farm Aid, an organization that works to promote the success of farmers, reports that every week 330 farmers leave their land. But other research offers a very different account of the farm scene: farm numbers are actually increasing in some places. What accounts for this difference in interpretation? Are farms disappearing or not?

One reason for the conflicting images of farm numbers may be the way in which the data are examined. When researchers use only two points of time, comparing, for example, farm numbers from today with those of over a century ago, it does appear as though farm numbers are continuing to decrease. However, in order to understand what is really going on, it is crucial to examine agricultural censuses through small blocks of time to assess shorter-term trends.

Detailed examination reveals that in the 1970s, the number of farms began to increase in certain places and continues to do so today. In fact, the state of West Virginia is one of those places and thus provides a critical place to study this phenomenon because it is unique among its neighboring states. Virginia, Ohio, New York, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky all report a continued decrease in farm numbers in recent years. However, from 1974 to 2007, West Virginia experienced a 40 percent increase in farms. There are many reasons for this, but all of them are still unique to West Virginia, so what is happening here? Why is this region so different?

As an anthropologist who is interested in agriculture, I could not ignore the numbers from the census data, but there is a lot of information missing and the census data alone cannot answer the fundamental question of what is happening in West Virginia: why do people choose to farm?

I met Tom McConnell about one year ago and we realized that we shared many of the same interests. We both admire and respect farmers and the farming lifestyle, and feel that farmers provide a lot for their community. There is so much opportunity with farming, and West Virginia abounds with it. The census data give us great information on statistics and numbers, but lacks the voice of farmers. So we hatched a plan: send an anthropologist out to live with farmers, get to know them, learn from them, and discover what goes into their decision to farm and to continue to farm. I am fortunate enough to be that anthropologist.

Strongly guiding my research will be the anthropological method of participant observation. Participant observation requires that I learn from individuals or families by working and spending time alongside of them. It is comparable to “walking a mile in someone else’s shoes”. That is one of the best ways to really get to know someone and it’s a great way to help out busy farmers. However, this type of research takes time and I have committed to it for at least one year and potentially longer. But I hope to make friendships that last a lifetime.

This is a perfect time to tackle such a project because of the growing interest in local food and sustainability. West Virginia is doing so much with farmers markets, community-supported agriculture, and farm-to-table programs. This momentum and the desire to build sustainable communities combine to provide an ideal climate for additional farming opportunities.

There has already been a large amount of research addressing the local food interest, but so much of it focuses on the consumer who desires local food for many reasons such as E. coli scares or nutrient losses due to long distance transportation. The consumers are of course important, but they alone are not driving the local food movement. The voice of the producer, the farmer, is missing and needs to be heard as well. That is exactly what this project hopes to accomplish.

Inventory hay to quantify feed reserves. How many bales or tons of hay are on hand? Forage test hay by field and cut or if purchased to know its nutritional quality! Feed hay to livestock based on hay quality and nutritional needs of the animals.

Develop a drought/winter feeding program. How many days will hay need to be fed to how many cows, calves, yearlings, and bulls to be wintered? How many days feed will the hay on hand provide for the animal units to be wintered? How short is the supply of hay, in bales or tons? How many animals need to be sold to reduce the herd to equal the hay on hand or to pay for additional hay needed to feed the herd?

Is there need for and if so what is the best supplemental feed to purchase for the animals being fed? Manage forage when moisture returns:

- Feed hay until pastures grow back to the needed entry height.
- Stockpile tall fescue for late fall grazing to reduce the need for hay feeding.
- Orchardgrass grows well after a drought but does not stand up well under snow.
- Smooth bromegrass and reed canarygrass go dormant early.
- Apply N (urea timed for rain soon after application, nitrates more expensive).
- Clover (25-30% stand of legumes use no N since it will not be cost effective).
- Soil P and K in high range and pH 6.0 or more to get the most out of clovers or N.
- Strip-graze stockpiled forage to get the most out of it.

Feed supplements based on animal nutritional need and nutritional quality of the hay fed, if needed. Early cut hay that has 25-30% legume seldom needs a supplement when fed to mature cows. High fiber supplements such as soybean hulls and wheat bran or high protein feeds such as soybean meal and corn gluten feed are usually the best supplements for low quality hay. Shelled corn is not well suited for feeding with low quality hay due to its high carbohydrate level which can reduce the digestibility of fiber in low quality hay. Corn is of value when fed at low rates with high quality hay to growing cattle. The value of a supplemental feed is based on its content of TDN and CP.

Cows should be in a body condition score 6 at calving in order to rebreed in a most timely manner. It is least expensive to do this on fall pasture or by early weaning and proper feeding before winter weather sets in. Cold, wet weather increases an animal’s energy requirement. A fat animal is better able to make it through cold weather. An old saying is “a fat cow is half wintered”.

Drought Management continued from page 7
2012 SARE GRANTS AVAILABLE

BY NOLA WILSON, SARE COORDINATOR FOR WV

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) is a regional program of the National program of the same name. NE SARE offers local farmers and communities an opportunity to explore (research) new and different ways of doing things in their community or on their farm. There are different grant categories that include studying problems or opportunities for Farmers, Partnerships of farmers and educators, and Communities. But first: if you have an idea it is always best (not required) to talk to your local extension agent. The two of you and discuss opportunities including new or individual ideas related to farming, agri-business, marketing, increasing profit, enhancing environmental stewardship or what you the farmers deems necessary to improve the sustainability of the farm or food community.

Which grant is right for you?

Farmer Grants are for producers who have an innovative idea they want to test using a field trial, on-farm demonstration, marketing initiative, or other technique. A technical advisor—often an extension agent, crop consultant, or other service professional—must also be involved. Projects should seek results other farmers can use, and all projects must have the potential to add to our knowledge about effective sustainable practices. Application deadline: November 27, 2012.

Sustainable Community Grants make a direct connection between community revitalization and farming. Projects must address specific key issues such as farm finance, marketing, land use, water use, enterprise development, value-added product development, or other delineated topic areas. To apply, you must be affiliated with Cooperative Extension, a municipality, a state department of agriculture, a college or university, a community organization, or other institutional entity. Application deadline: November 15, 2012.

Partnership Grants are reserved for agricultural service providers—extension staff, nonprofits, consultants, state departments of agriculture, and others working in the agricultural community—who want to conduct on-farm demonstrations, research, marketing, and other projects with farmers as active cooperators. Application deadline: November 1, 2012.

To learn more about these NE SARE grant opportunities visit the website at https://nesare.org. The website will provide information needed about the application process, awarded grant policies, examples of projects funded, award amounts plus many other resources. For additional information or questions contact Nola Wilson, SARE PDP Outreach Leader at 304-293-7312 or Dee Singh-Knights, WVU SARE Coordinator at 304-293-7606 directly.

GROWING APPLES? WANT PROTECTION?

What’s Insured? Any variety of apples adapted to the area located on insurable acreage that has produced at least 150 bushels per acre in one of the past 4 years. Policy offers basic coverage against damage from natural perils resulting in fresh or processing fruit that fails to grade U.S. No. 1 Processing or better.

Protects against:

- Adverse weather conditions
- Fire
- Insects
- Failure of irrigation water supply
- Plant disease
- Wildlife
- Wildlife

Next step?
Locate an agent using the online agent locator or call Tom McConnell for assistance.
AGENT LOCATOR: http://www3.rma.usda.gov/apps/agents/
NEW INVASIVE SMALL FRUIT PEST

BY DR DANIEL FRANK, WVU EXTENSION SERVICE ENTOMOLOGIST

West Virginia small fruit growers should be on the lookout for a new invasive insect pest, the spotted wing Drosophila (SWD), which attacks soft-skinned fruit such as berries, grapes, and stone fruit. A native to Asia, this pest was first detected in West Virginia in the fall of 2011. SWD flies look similar to native vinegar (fruit) flies whose larvae typically infest over-ripened fruits and vegetables. However, unlike these native vinegar flies, SWD can infest ripening and ripe fruit. To determine whether SWD is present in fruit plantings, and if action is needed to control populations, monitoring should be conducted on a weekly basis before fruit begin to color and continuing until the end of harvest. Late season fruit crops appear to be especially vulnerable since SWD populations are generally highest at this time.

Monitoring: Homemade monitoring traps can be easily constructed from 16 or 32 ounce clear plastic deli containers or disposable cups (Fig. 1). Several holes 3/16 to 3/8 inch in diameter should be drilled or burned with a hot wire or soldering iron in the upper half of containers. The small holes allow access to SWD and other vinegar flies, but exclude other larger insects. One or two inches of apple cider vinegar plus one drop of unscented dish soap is the recommended lure. The dish soap breaks the vinegar’s surface tension so the flies sink into the vinegar and drown rather than escape. To hang a trap, thread a wire or string through two opposite holes near the top of the container, and close with a lid. Traps should be hung in the fruit zone making sure the holes are clear of vegetation so SWD can easily fly in. The vinegar in traps should be refilled as needed to maintain lure volume, but should be changed out at least monthly. Do not dispose of vinegar in the field, or it will compete with the vinegar in monitoring traps.

Identification: Native vinegar flies and other insects will be attracted to the vinegar in monitoring traps, so SWD will need to be distinguished from these other insect species. SWD are small (2 - 3 mm) in size with light yellow or brown bodies and red eyes. With the aid of a hand lens, male SWD can be easily identified by a characteristic black spot near the end of both wings (Fig. 2). Female SWD are more difficult to identify since they do not have wing spots. Female SWD have two rows of serrations on their ovipositor (i.e. egg laying organ) that are longer and more pronounced than other vinegar fly species. However, the ovipositor may be difficult to view without the aid of a microscope. When checking traps it may be necessary to pour the vinegar into a shallow white container or a clear container on a white background to increase contrast. Draining off the vinegar and replacing it with water may also make it easier to see the wing spots on male flies.

Control: SWD is best controlled using a combination of different management strategies. Timely harvest and removal of over-ripe or unwanted fruit from fields as well as removal of wild host plants (e.g. wild grapes and berries) near crop fields can minimize resources needed for SWD to multiply. If SWD is detected in traps, insecticides can be used to target egg laying adults. Recommended insecticide classes include pyrethroids and organic pyrethrums, organophosphates, and spinosyns.

For more information regarding SWD monitoring, identification, and control contact: Daniel Frank at dlfrank@mail.wvu.edu or by phone at 304-293-8835.
FIELD FULL OF BUTTERCUPS?

BY ALEXANDRIA STRAIGHT, WVU EXTENSION AGENT, DODDRIDGE AND RITCHIE COUNTIES

I have noticed driving through farming communities and in my own pastures this year that there seems to be a lot more yellow than on normal years. I have also been getting many calls into the office on the topics of buttercups.

Buttercup is normally a common weed in the northern United States and is more common in seasons that are wetter and warmer than normal. It is also most common in areas of acidic soil that has poor drainage and poor fertilization. Buttercups are unpalatable to most animals and overlooked unless there are no other desirable feed sources. This is a natural defense, because buttercups do hold a low toxicity to animals. Ranunculin is the toxin found in buttercups and can cause oral and gastrointestinal irritation. Primary signs are oral irritation, salivation, abdominal pain, and diarrhea which may be bloody. No treatment is typically necessary unless severe gastrointestinal signs are present (colic, bloody diarrhea) or if a large quantity was observed to be eaten. Minor oral irritation will resolve on its own. Buttercup is perfectly safe in prepared feeds like hay, because the toxic compound is volatized.

Flowering occurs from April to August. Buttercup seeds are spread by wind, birds, rodents and humans. Seeds can remain viable in the seed bank for several years and tend to be highly dormant, with only a few seeds germinating in a given spring, which makes this plant slightly difficult to control. Tall field buttercup can be controlled by mowing, but creeping buttercup will need to be controlled by repeated tilling. Since buttercup prefers acidic soil with poor fertilization, liming and fertilizing your fields will decrease the incidence of buttercup and help promote the good forages and grasses you want your animals to consume.

When using any kind of herbicide, you must be sure to follow all pesticide labels and directions. I hope this helps many of you to control buttercup and other weeds in your pastures this season and the upcoming seasons. Remember most weeds can be controlled by getting your soil pH and nutrients to the place that grasses and forages will thrive and weeds will be outcompeted. If you have questions about your soil health, WVU provides soil sampling at no cost to you. Stop by your WVU Extension Office and pick up a soil and follow the instructions. Your county agent can help you interpret the results and prepare the “recipe” of soil amendments appropriate for your fields.

See the back page of this publication for the list of County Extension Offices in West Virginia, as well as the name of the agent in each county.
“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!” Author Henry David Thoreau could have been speaking of Mineral County FFA members and the goals they have of bringing farming back as a viable source of income in their home state. With the help of West Virginia Agriculture Education and support of West Virginia University Extension’s Small Farm Center, Mineral County FFA members are now involved in both the farm to table and farm to school initiatives. Students are finding ways of producing vegetables, fruits and meats in their Supervised Agriculture Education programs. Students are raising items such as sweet potatoes, corn, lettuce, onions, peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, cantaloupes, watermelons and more. Many students have small egg producing enterprises and are looking to expand.

Students in this area are much the same as those throughout the state. There are those who have very little space to work with and then those with several hundred acres of land. It is the goal that each student be successful in learning how to grow food for themselves and others. Students from one area in the county are raising produce on commercial basis in a large scale farm operation, while a young lady has turned her yard within a mobile home complex to a bountiful harvest. Another young lady revived a garden which has not been in use for over 20 years. Each student has found their fair share of struggles but is discovering strategies to overcome and advance their programs. Along with traditional gardening, students are also able to implement more recent technology such as raised beds. On a visit to one young lady’s home, while the raised bed machine was being used, the comment from her grandfather was “Wow, this could really become profitable.” It will soon be possible for students to add experience and knowledge of raising food in the school’s high tunnel structure.

Another area of interest for our students is raising layer chickens for egg production. Many students have found joy in learning to raise chickens in the animal science program at school. They are now able to take some of the chickens and develop their own egg producing operation. Students are hoping to build their business as they go and develop a market for local eggs. This is another example of young people becoming entrepreneurs within agriculture education.

The food the FFA students produce is only the beginning in Mineral County. Collaboration with the ProStart, a culinary arts program is of the upmost importance. This collaboration has shown the ProStart students where their food comes from and how important it is to support our local economy through using local products. It offers a fresher, more nutritious food source for use in the classroom. Currently, ProStart uses herbs grown by the FFA greenhouse for labs, lettuce grown in the Ag hydroponics system for salads, and the FFA members’ eggs in baked products. These, among many other local foods, are used within the ProStart program. Agriculture has formed a strong partnership in which the ProStart students not only learn in the classroom but also use handling, cutting, preserving, processing and serving skills through the many events. It is amazing to see the amount of community support both programs are receiving for their efforts. ProStart was instrumental in making a locally sourced banquet a success for the students. In the future there are shared goals of many farm fresh meals, Students will jointly meet with farmers about the industry and students will learn and be able to see the process go full circle from seed to harvest, to table.

The students and local farmers in Mineral County are anxiously awaiting the beginning of the school season so that they can sell their fruits and vegetables to the schools in Mineral County. The farm to school program is pursuing the use of local foods in all counties in the state of West Virginia. The key is to work closely with your local food and nutrition director to discover what products are in need and could be easily worked into the meals in your county. It will be a joy for students to see their own products on the salad bar or flowing onto the cafeteria trays. The menus won’t change overnight but we hope that even one item a month can be locally sourced.

Mineral FFA members and ProStart students alike are excited about the changes occurring. With around 20 students currently involved in producing, the chapter of a little over 100 members is sure to see growth in these programs. The ProStart classes have around 35 students acquiring the knowledge of using local foods within culinary arts. Every goal takes time, and everyone must use baby steps but West Virginia can make it happen.
ROBISON NEW DEAN OF AG SCHOOL

BY DAVID WELSH, DAVIS COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCE AND DESIGN

Daniel J. Robison, associate dean for research and professor of forestry and environmental resources at North Carolina State University, has joined the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design at West Virginia University as its new dean.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Robison as our newest Mountaineer,” said Provost Michele Wheately, WVU provost and vice president for academic affairs. “He has a tremendously exciting vision for furthering the academic profile and success of Davis College students, faculty and staff.” Robison said, “I am truly honored to be named dean and I’m proud to work with the outstanding people in, and stakeholders of, the Davis College as we forge into what is sure to be a dynamic period in the history of the College. It is a strong College with terrific programs and people, from the agricultural, natural resource and design sectors – all relevant to the needs of West Virginia and beyond, and capable of making important contributions to our communities and landscapes.

“The people and the mission of the Davis College are perfectly aligned to address the great challenges of our time, and to push into the future with our work and through our students.” Robison began his new assignment in late May, and he’s been hard at work meeting with college faculty and constituent groups.

“One thing that’s become very apparent very quickly is the Davis College’s dedication to small farmers,” Robison said. “So many of our teaching, research, and outreach programs are designed to make a difference for small farmers, whether it’s in the form of training the next generation of farmers, using research to make farms healthier and more productive, or helping them expand their markets.”

More than 90 percent of West Virginia’s 21,000 farms are small, single-family operations. West Virginia University’s 150-year-old land-grant mission is designed in part to foster economic development in ways that specifically serve the citizens of the state and region.

“When you consider those two factors, both our mission and the faces of farming in West Virginia, it makes perfect sense that we should aim so many of our efforts at supporting that community,” Robison said. “And, this can’t be said often enough, the small farmers of West Virginia support us. They entrust us with their children’s education, and they open their farms and businesses to our scholars so we can make new discoveries.”

The Davis College and WVU Extension partner on a number of projects that support West Virginia’s agricultural industry. Poultry scientists work with industry to minimize pollution while saving producers feed and energy costs. Animal scientists and economists conduct ongoing research in support of the state’s sheep and goat industry. WVU is home to a highly regarded and innovative organic farming research project.

ASPARAGUS IN THE HOME GARDEN

BY DAVID RICHMOND, WVU EXTENSION AGENT IN RAILEY AND SUMMERS COUNTIES

Asparagus is a long-lived perennial vegetable crop that is enjoyed by many gardeners. It can be productive for 15 or more years if given proper care. Asparagus can be planted throughout West Virginia from mid-April to late May after the soil has warmed up to about 50 degrees F. When purchasing asparagus sets buy one-year-old, healthy, disease-free crowns. A crown is the root system of a one-year-old asparagus plant that is grown from seed. Each crown can produce 1/2 lb. of spears per year when fully established.

Space the crowns 1-1/2 feet apart in the row. If more than one row is planted, space the rows five feet apart from center to center. Wide between-row spacing is necessary because the vigorously growing fern will fill in the space quickly.

After planting, back fill the furrow to its original soil level. Spears should emerge within one week in moist soils.

Do not harvest the asparagus during the planting year. Spears will be produced from expanded buds on the crown. As the spears elongate and reach a height of about 8 to 9 inches, the tips will open. The spear will become woody to support the small branchlets that become ferns. The ferns produce food for the plant and then move it down to the crown for next year’s spear production.

Asparagus is very drought tolerant and can usually grow without supplemental watering because it seeks moisture deep in the soil. However, if rainfall is insufficient when planting or afterwards, it is beneficial to irrigate the crowns. Otherwise the plants will become stressed and vigorous growth will be impeded.

Harvest asparagus by snapping 7 to 9 inch spears with tight tips. There is no need to cut asparagus below the soil with a knife. This may injure other buds on the crown that will send up new spears. The small stub that is left in the soil after snapping dries up and disintegrates. A new spear does not come up at the same spot, but comes up from another bud that enlarges on another part of the crown.

As the tips of the spears start to loosen (known as “ferning out”), fiber begins to develop at the base of the spears, causing them to become tough. The diameter of the spear has no bearing on its toughness. When harvesting, the asparagus patch should be picked clean, never allowing any spears to fern out, as this gives asparagus beetles an excellent site to lay their eggs. The year after planting, asparagus can be harvested several times.

Look into local opportunities for marketing asparagus, as it is becoming more popular with those in the “foodie” realm.
NON-TRADITIONAL COOPERATIVES

BY DAVE HAHN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

People have a natural tendency to work together for the common good when tasks can be better accomplished through group action. In early civilization, the Chinese developed savings and loan associations, the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans used craft and burial societies and the Babylonians developed a process for farmers to cooperate and farm together. In the US, the cooperative business model has been most widely used in agriculture. Locally, a hog marketing, slaughtering and packing cooperative was formed in 1820 in Granville, Ohio. Many cooperatives involving a variety of commodities have been formed since. The Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC) is comprised of a business development, research and extension education team from Ohio and West Virginia. The purpose of the team is to help new and emerging cooperatives in the two states. During the past ten years, OCDC has facilitated several non-traditional cooperatives. Several groups have formed and are operating in the health care area. These include Home Healthcare Provider Cooperative, a group of home health agencies concerned with the home healthcare workforce in the area, and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ARDC) which serves individuals 60+ years of age in eight SE Ohio counties. This cooperative is concerned with rehabilitation of senior citizens and others with serious disabilities. A second group includes a manufacturing based cooperative which focuses on purchasing services and supplies and training for needed skills in the manufacturing industry. The Athens and Galia Counties Purchasing Cooperative concentrates on fuel purchase for its trucks and buses. An exhaust cleaning cooperative has been formed to serve restaurants. This 30 member cooperative is a multi-state group serving a large portion of the country. A third area is the use of the cooperative model for local fresh foods distribution. Several local farmers markets have been formed using this business model. A new farmers market has recently opened in Huntington, W.Va. called The Wild Ramp. This market is currently served by 20 different vendors. A current project is the Cincinnati Food Hub. Growers in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio are being recruited to provide produce for this hub. It will include an active apprenticeship program for those interested in joining this industry. Cooperative produce auctions serving local markets are popular among the Amish. These auctions attract a variety of buyers. A processing and distribution chain has been organized to provide fresh produce to institutions and a large supermarket chain. Refrigerated trucks can pick up tubs of produce at the growing site, sort, package and deliver the product to the final destination. This group is interested in contracting with growers who want to focus on food production rather than marketing. The cooperative business model can be useful for a variety of businesses working together for increased visibility in the marketplace.

WV COOPERATIVE LAWS NEED UPDATED

BY TOM MCCONNELL, PROGRAM LEADER, WVU SMALL FARM CENTER

West Virginia’s current law affecting cooperatives (Chapter 19, Agriculture- Article 4, Cooperative Associations) was last amended in 1927. It is surprising how relevant the language is after so many years, however some changes should be made. The purposes of the Chapter 19, Article 4 include any activity one can think of involving agricultural products including marketing, harvesting, drying, processing, common ownership of machinery, securing market information, and buying agricultural inputs. It also includes borrowing money as a cooperative. There haven’t been many cooperatives formed in WV in the last years but Tri-State Local Foods, Inc. recently filed with the Secretary of State’s Office and it reportedly went very smoothly. The current law, with a few modifications, can be a law that benefits more businesses and farms than it does now. A group assembled by the WVU Extension Small Farm Center, including staff from both the WV SOS’s office and the Ohio Cooperative Development Center recently discussed the process required to update the current code and make it more relevant. The sequence approved at that meeting includes assembling a group of cooperative experts to consider the code piece by piece to expose its shortcomings and with the help of the SOS’s office develop them into a working document, then into a bill. Then we find an elected official to introduce our document into the next session of the WV Legislature. That process will begin in early August but the most immediate changes would include making it possible for two people to form a cooperative as opposed to the 5 we see now. A cooperative is a legal entity found on a same list as an LLC or a Sub Chapter C or S corporation. There is special and different tax treatment for each of these corporations. A cooperative’s tax considerations are usually not enough to cause a group of people to choose that entity but there are situations that tax treatment is important. The relevance of that is usually decided by whether the cooperative is “for profit” or a “non-profit” organization. At this point the taxation issue is important. Currently the law is for non-profits. Cooperatives can borrow money. That is not to say that they can borrow it easier than any other business type but that fact makes the committee want to study how that can be structured for today. Think how useful it would be for a group of producers to organize legally into a cooperative and borrow money to buy equipment, inputs or tunnels. The “one member, one vote” mentality of the cooperative is a simple principle that makes it very attractive for non-agriculture entities including artisans who use our agricultural products in their businesses, like bread bakers or pickle makers, etc. The language should be expanded to quilters, woodworkers and other community crafters and professionals who spend much of their income locally. These are the early impressions that surfaced at the first meeting, but the group would take any suggestions anyone cares to suggest. Just contact the WVU Extension Small Farm Center.
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LOCAL FOOD
ORNCHARD
POULTRY
SHEEP
STOCKYARD
SWINE
TRACTOR
VALUE-ADDED
WHEAT

AGRICULTURAL HOROSCOPES! (FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY)

BY MADAM KATHRYN

ARIES (3/21-4/19):
Inquire into season extension methods this fall. You could find your new niche! But remember to keep good records.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20):
Avoid overselling, or conversely, believing hyperbolic claims. Check nutrient management plans, plant food is expensive!

GEMINI (5/21-6/20):
Make a new friend! Visit a farmers market you’ve never been to, and strike up a conversation!

CANCER (6/21-7/22):
Wear sunscreen and avoid secondhand smoke. Also, eat only the freshest berries, the dark ones have been shown to prevent cancer.

LEO (7/23-8/22):
Take pride in your main pursuits, and protect them with risk management tools! Give some thought to purchasing your proteins locally.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22):
It makes sense to save for your future. It also makes sense to study your risk management plan. Check into crop insurance!

LIBRA (9/23-10/22):
Don’t be blind to nutrition issues or financial risk. Balance your rations today! Try preparing a meal from ingredients grown within a 50-mile radius of you. It’ll be delish!

SCORPIO (10/23-11/21):
Don’t be bugged by little things, or stinging remarks. WVU has an excellent pesticide specialist.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21):
Try not to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Buy crop insurance. It won’t make you rich, but it will keep you from going broke.

CAPRICORN (1/22-1/19):
Check grain futures before you buy your Livestock Risk Protection contract. Nobody likes a money-waster!

AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18):
No matter what age we live in, droughts are no joke! See page 7 for tips on drought management.

PISCES (2/19-3/20):
Salmon is your color, but aqua is your culture. Investigate small-scale fish farm cultivation.

If today is your birthday, have a great one! And by the way, you look young for your age!
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<td>304-636-2455</td>
<td>Ronnie Helmondollar</td>
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<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>304-643-2164 ext 5</td>
<td>Alexandria Straight</td>
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<td>Roane</td>
<td>304-927-0975/6</td>
<td>Brandy Brabham</td>
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<td>Taylor</td>
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<td>Tucker</td>
<td>304-478-2949 ext 209</td>
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<td>Patty Morrison</td>
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<td>Wood</td>
<td>304-424-1960</td>
<td>J J Barrett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>304-732-8000 ext 213</td>
<td>Susan England-Lord</td>
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### Important Websites

**West Virginia University Extension Service**  
www.ext.wvu.edu/  

**Agriculture & Natural Resources - WVU Extension Service**  
www.wvu.edu/~agexten/  

**West Virginia Soil Conservation Agency**  
www.wvca.us  

**West Virginia Dept. of Agriculture**  
www.wvagriculture.org  

**Farm Service Agency (FSA)**  
www.fsa.usda.gov  

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