

Plow Sharing

March-April 2005

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A bi-monthly newsletter promoting awareness, understanding, and practice of sustainable agriculture



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I hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative. If you have ideas or suggestions for future issues, call or stop by the office. I always welcome your feedback!

Debbie Roos

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Chatham Farmers' Markets

Happy Spring everyone! Whether the weather shows it or not, you'll know it's spring because both Chatham County Farmers' Markets are about to open:

- Tuesday, April 5: Opening Day for the Fearington Farmers' Market
Hours: 4:00 pm til early evening at Fearington Village
Website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/fearington.html
- Thursday, April 7: Opening Day for the Pittsboro Farmers' Market
Hours: 3:30-6:30 pm at the County Fairgrounds
Website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/pittsboro.html

Both markets are seeking new vendors. Visit the market websites for market rules and vendor applications. Contact me at debbie_roos@ncsu.edu or 919-542-8202 for more information.



Don't Sell Yourself Short – Keep Your Prices Up!

By Lynn Byczynski

Reprinted with permission from Growing for Market*



Setting prices is one of the most critical tasks for farmers' market vendors. Many factors have to go into the calculations if you're going to maximize your sales and profits.

The single most important thing to remember about farmers' markets is that your produce should not be cheap. The whole point of farmers' markets is to allow farmers to capture the full retail price, because you just can't make a living selling wholesale when you're farming on a small scale. Experienced farmers know this, market managers know this and most consumers know it, too. So plan on getting the highest possible price for your products.

What's the highest possible price? Well, certainly, you should get at least the price that the grocery stores are charging. That's the starting point. But there are several reasons why your prices might be higher than grocery stores:

1. First, produce is often a "loss leader" for supermarkets. Produce managers buy big quantities of an item and sell it for barely above cost as a way of enticing shoppers into the store. Don't try to compete with these deeply discounted prices. You'll go broke.
2. Freshness gives you an edge over supermarkets and you should be able to charge accordingly. Potatoes, for example, may be selling for 10 cents a pound in the supermarket. But those potatoes may have been in storage for months, and their flavor will be far inferior to your freshly dug spuds. In

fact, the two aren't even the same item. Freshness equates to better flavor in virtually all kinds of produce. Customers know it and are willing to pay more for it.

3. Quality should be *higher* at farmers' markets than at supermarkets. Green beans that were mechanically harvested and have been sitting in a box for a week will be noticeably limper and duller than your fresh-picked beans. Lettuce varieties that withstand a thousand miles of shipping will be tougher than your crisp greens. Charge more for higher quality.
4. Specialty items just aren't available at many supermarkets, so you're going to have to make up your own prices. Heirloom tomato varieties, ripe and flavorful, are worth considerably more than the pale, hard tomatoes sold in stores. Purple potatoes, fennel bulbs, arugula, specialty melons—those kinds of exotic items command a higher price than some vaguely comparable supermarket item.

How do you know what is a fair price? It helps to know your costs of production. If you keep good records of your inputs and overhead, you can figure out how much you need to charge to make a profit. But you also have to take into consideration what other vendors are charging. Some markets have price guidelines that prohibit vendors from charging too little. Find out from your market manager if your market has any pricing rules. If not, survey the market regularly to find out what other vendors are charging. Find someone who attracts a lot of customers, who has high quality produce and a good display, and use that farmer's prices as guidance.

Don't undercut

The biggest complaint farmers have about selling at farmers' market is that new growers or hobby growers will often come into market and sell their produce way too cheaply. Please don't be guilty of this. You'd be hurting other farmers, the market's image, and ultimately yourself.

There's a certain dynamic that occurs around market prices. At the base of this dynamic is the fact that people don't buy more food than they need. If someone wants a watermelon, they're going to buy one watermelon. They're not going to buy three watermelons just because the price is cheap. So low prices will not affect the market's overall sales. One vendor's low prices may shift the volume within the market, so that the low-price vendor picks up more customers. But a farmer can't keep artificially low prices indefinitely and stay in business. You have to make a profit. When you raise your prices later, you're going to alienate your new customers who think of

you as the cheap place to buy. In the meantime, you may have hurt farmers who depend on the market for their livelihood. And you will have cheapened the tone of the market overall. Customers will start expecting bargains, rather than quality, and the entire market suffers.

Many farmers have found that they sell out despite having the highest prices at the market. You know the old expression, “You get what you pay for.” People believe that. If your prices are lower than everyone else’s, many people are going to assume there’s something wrong with your produce. Conversely, if your produce is of high quality and you charge more for it, customers will think you’ve got something special, and they’ll want to buy it.

Most customers will respect you for charging a good price for your food; it shows you have pride in your produce. But occasionally you will have someone gripe about your prices. The best response is a polite one: “This is what I have to charge if I’m going to stay in business. “Most people can understand that; some will get huffy and walk away, but who wants that kind of customer coming back every week anyway?

If you’re in a state that charges sales tax on food, get a calculator and add the tax to the customer’s bill. Many growers don’t charge sales tax because they think it’s too much trouble to add those percentages. But the farmer still has to pay the state at the end of the year. Charging sales tax is like giving yourself a raise of 5% (or whatever your sales tax rate is). And customers won’t notice; they’re used to paying the sales tax.

It is far better to go to a new market with high-quality produce, charge what everyone else is charging, and build business slowly and honestly. You will win the respect of both farmers and customers. You can hold your head up at the end of the day. And over time, you’ll build a base of loyal customers who come to you because of the quality of your produce, and your marketing venture will be a success.



** Growing for Market—a monthly newsletter edited by Lynn Byczynski—is a great resource for growers; to*

subscribe, call 800-307-8949 or email growing4market@earthlink.net.



Growing Small Farms Website www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg

The GSF website continues to grow, and many new pages will be added this spring. I am now working on several new farm profiles and crop problems (some from last year that I never had time to post, but they are just as relevant as ever!). Here’s a review of the major sections:

- **About the Program**—About the Program, About the Agent, Chatham Co. Agriculture Quiz, Ag Statistics, etc.
- **Calendar of Events**—upcoming educational programs
- **What’s New**—check this section to see what’s been added since your last visit
- **Crop Production**—Cover Crops, Local Crop Problems, Organic Pest Management
- **Marketing**—Community Supported Agriculture, Tips for Marketing to Restaurants and Retailers
- **Local Farm Profiles**
- **Grower Resources**—Grower Resource List, Listservs, Plow Sharing Newsletter On-line, Enhancing Sustainability Workshops, Organic Certification Guide, Farm Planning and Recordkeeping, Sustainable Agriculture Organizations, On-line Agronomic Reports
- **Buy Local Guide**—Farmers’ Markets, Restaurants, Grocery Retailers, CSA Farms, Pick-Your-Own Farms, On-farm Stands, Nurseries
- **Farmers’ Markets**—Pittsboro Market, Fearington Market, Consumer Information, Vendor Information, Vendors and Products, and more
- **Web Resources**—over 500 links in 34 categories

As always, I welcome your suggestions for the website—just drop me an email at debbie_roos@ncsu.edu. Keep your eye out for lots of new pages later this spring!

New Pastured Poultry Resources

The February Pastured Poultry Conference (below) was a big success, with 130 in attendance! Participants enjoyed a program packed with knowledgeable speakers.



Two new resources emerged from the conference:

Pastured Poultry Listserv

In order to provide a support network for folks interested in pastured poultry production, I created a new pastured poultry listserv that already has over 100 subscribers. If you are interested in subscribing, email me at debbie_roos@ncsu.edu and put “subscribe pastured poultry” in the subject line.

Pastured Poultry Resource List

With help from some of the conference presenters, I put together a resource list for pastured poultry production. You can see it on the GSF website at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/poultrylist.html. The list includes books and publications, hatcheries, equipment and supplies, organizations, websites, and listservs, feed suppliers, and processors.



Interns on the Farm

by Atina Diffley
Gardens of Eagan

***Editor’s note:** Atina gave a wonderful presentation on hiring interns at the Southern SAWG Conference back in January in New Orleans. I contacted her after the conference and she gladly offered her notes and gave permission for me to print them in this newsletter. This article is adapted from her lecture.*

What Is an Internship?

Generally farm internships are a vocational ag experience. They are predominately a practical experience. The training that interns receive is hands-on, experiential based. Training is in the field rather than in a classroom, in real-farm, real-weather conditions.

Having a Latin root—apprentice—apprenticeship means to be able to learn and comprehend. There is a difference between the accumulation of ideas and the development of a system of understanding. By combining knowledge learned intellectually with hands-on experience, the apprentice gains a working knowledge and understanding based on experience.

Why Have Interns?

What does the farmer receive?

- Help on the farm
- Relationship
- If you have a true commitment to changing agriculture to an organic/sustainable system, teachers and role models are crucial. You might not be able to feed all the starving children in third world countries but you can make a difference in your own community.

What does the farmer give?

- Time—training
- Mentorship

Interns vs. Employees

- **INTERNS ARE NOT CHEAP LABOR.** It takes valuable time and energy to provide instruction to them. If I looked at labor from a strictly financial point of view I would hire skilled, experienced migrants, pay them double an intern wage and not have to spend the time teaching, demonstrating, evaluating and re-teaching. **AGAIN, DON’T VIEW THEM AS CHEAP LABOR.**

- *If you don’t enjoy teaching and sharing information, don’t have an intern.*

- Know the labor laws which apply to your farm (federal vs. state).
- Recognize your liability. Know what you can live with.
 - Safety—write down safety rules and have interns read and sign them; workman’s comp insurance
 - Housing, OSHA

Recruiting & Hiring

Where to advertise:

- Word of mouth, the places where you market.
- Agricultural college newsletters, web sites, bulletin boards
- Sustainable agriculture organization websites
- MESA, foreign interns: www.mesaprogram.org
- Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF): www.woof.org
- ATTRA’s Apprenticeship Directory: www.attrainternships.ncat.org
- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) Intern Referral Service—contact CFSA at 919-542-2402 or cfsa@carolinafarmstewards.org

Interview with the same seriousness that you would an employee. *Watch for the cracks*—what negative beliefs do they have about themselves?

Ask open-ended questions—not yes or no:

- Get them talking about their passions and past experiences.
- If they start talking about anything, don’t interrupt. Uninterrupted talk is usually very revealing.

Get as complete a picture (physical, psychological) as possible:

- Why do you want to work on an organic farm?
- Describe what you hope to learn/gain from this experience.
- What are your goals in this area? What is your career objective?
- What do you see yourself doing at the end of the Apprenticeship Program? The following winter? In 5 years?
- What related experiences have you had?
- Who is your favorite agricultural writer?
- Do you have any mechanical experience?
- Have you operated any equipment? What?
- What do you expect from the farm you work on?
- What is the condition of your health?
- How do you define “organic”? “Sustainable”?
- Have you ever and do you now, have problems with your back?

- Do you have allergies?
- What is organically grown food?
- How do you deal with monotonous, non-intellectual tasks?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- Tell me about the worst boss you ever had.
- What did you like about your past jobs? What did you dislike?
- Can you talk and work at the same time?
- Do you have a driver’s license? What is your driving record?
- What has been your strongest learning style in the past—reading, experience, audio, etc.?
- How do you do in the following adverse conditions: heat, cold, sun, mosquitoes, rain? Long days of physical labor, bending over?
- Lively scale—rate the applicant on scale of 1 to 10 in terms of their “liveliness”.

CHECK REFERENCES – ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL!
Would they rehire them?



Bunching chives at Ayrshire Farm.

Encourage interns to address what they want out of the experience and to look at other farms as well. The better matched their needs are to your operation the better the relationship will be. If they are unhappy, you will be too. If they are frustrated, or if they feel like they are wasting their time, they will waste yours.

BE REALISTIC. Paint as accurate of a picture of your operation as possible:

- Describe a typical year.
- If possible have a working interview.
- Don’t deny if your intern’s goals don’t match your operation. A warm body and pair of hands is not enough.
- Don’t promise things you can’t deliver.

Key Traits of a Successful Apprentice

The work is often hard. Farming is not for everyone. I don't consider it absolutely necessary to have previous experience in farming. The skills/traits we consider most important in an intern are:

- Interns must enjoy physical work and being outside all day.
- Ability to do physical work for a sustained period. Ability to hustle.
- Assertive learner. Self-motivated learners. Asks whole questions. Carries a notebook.
- Common sense and safety skills.
- A positive attitude and personality
- A good back and general good health



Planting leeks at Perry-winkle Farm

- The ability to take responsibility and be accountable.
- Enthusiastic, involved, and quick learning.
- The ability to think clearly and act decisively.
- Communication skills
- Self-knowledge of goals and life direction.
- Ability to make and keep commitments

Structuring the Relationship

What does the intern want?

- Education
- Money
- Real farm experience
- Appreciation
- Constructive feedback
- To feel valuable—no one likes to feel like they are in the way.

What does the grower want?

- They want to get the jobs done economically and efficiently.

Always remember that you are the farm leader. Leadership functions must be performed if a group is to

function well. An operating leaderless group is a contradiction. A leaderless, collapsing group is common. At least one person must think about the group as a whole rather than just her or his role in it. The leadership function must be filled for any group to operate well.



Planting lettuce at Peregrine Farm.

Training

How do you plan to provide the educational component to the intern?

Ideas for training

- Regular field tours
- Topic evenings
- Dissemination of information during work
- Evaluation of work and retraining when necessary
- Training on higher level jobs
- Continue to provide challenges

Written self-evaluations by interns can help them focus on goals and learning.

Training period—people are the most trainable in their first month. When they first start they are generally eager to learn and to do things right. Many people make the mistake of starting out slow and then picking up speed. The problem with this is the pace gets set on slow and it can be hard to pick it up later. Start right out with reality.



Christy harvests mizuna at Ayrshire Farm.

Setting Clear Expectations – WRITE IT DOWN!

- Hours of work expected
- Financial compensation
- Housing arrangements
- Time off
- Vacation time
- Tasks taught
- How education is handled
- Time period of internship
- What can the intern expect to learn from you?
- What do you expect from them? What are their responsibilities? What work habits do you expect?
- What are your farm rules? Proactive—as in organics, prevention is the key word here. If you want a drug-free farm, say it, write it. If you expect them to be punctual let them know it. If you don't want them to smoke next to your tomato plants, say it.

Potential Problems You May Encounter

- Some interns lack common sense. Safety issues can arise. You may be liable if someone is hurt.
- Not realistic. Intern has romanticized farm life and they think life on the farm is going to be a picnic. They actually believed Wendell Berry's essay on how much fun it is to bale hay.
- Personality conflicts inhibit creation of a harmonious environment for everyone on the farm.
- Poor work skills, lack of trust
- Poor role models for your children
- No experience. Until you know what basic skills they have, don't take anything for granted. You may have to go through everything on the farm. Hooking up a wagon to a tractor may seem simple to you but not to them. I've had interns think they put their finger in the pin hole to line it up. You can be liable if they get hurt.

When to Terminate the Relationship Prematurely

- Safety
- Everyone is frustrated
- Inability to learn and comprehend
- Poor attitude
- Generally if it just isn't working I have found that the work is easier when they leave. Everyone on the farm breathes a sigh of relief. Everyone on the farm is affected when there is a problem.
- People sometimes feel like a failure and will stick it out and I let them know the true failure is to not listen to themselves and move on when moving on is the right decision. Usually can avoid termination.

**Remember to show appreciation, EVERYDAY!
Find something positive to thank them for.**

Atina and her husband Martin operate Gardens of Eagan in Farmington, Minnesota. You can learn more about their certified organic farm on their website at www.frontiernet.net/~atinagoe.



**Southern SAWG's
Experienced Organic Farmer Network**

What is Southern SAWG?

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, or Southern SAWG, is a regional organization whose mission is “to empower and inspire farmers, individuals, and communities in the South to create an agricultural system that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, and humane. Because sustainable solutions depend on the involvement of the entire community, Southern SAWG is committed to including all persons in the South without bias.”

Southern SAWG is responsible for conducting the always wonderful annual conference that takes place at various venues around the south in late January. I personally have not missed a conference since I first learned about the organization while in graduate school in 1995. I depend on this conference to learn about new production and marketing methods, network with growers and educators from across the country, reconnect with old friends, and generally revel in the warmth and camaraderie and great energy that our sustainable ag community provides. Most who attend this conference come away feeling energized and rejuvenated.

The EOF Network

In 2002, partnering with USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), Southern SAWG organized an Experienced Organic Farmer (EOF) Network to develop and compile successful southern-region organic farming strategies based on practical experience.

This was an 18 month pilot project made up of ten full-time, commercial-scale producers of horticulture crops



who have practical experience that surpasses any information available to them through traditional learning avenues. The EOF Network participants included

two local farmers: Cathy Jones (Perry-winkle Farm, photo above) and Ken Dawson (Maple Spring Gardens, photo below) plus other southern farmers: Mark Cain (AR), Nicolas Donck (GA), Alvin Harris (TN), Rose Koenig (FL), Charlie Maloney (VA), Tim Miller (TX), Ellen Polishuk (VA), and Alison and Paul Wiediger (KY).



Generally underserved by institutions and agencies because of their unique production and marketing systems, these long-term organic producers have had to learn on their own almost every step of the way. Yet, as pioneers, they have also become the ones most sought out by other farmers and agriculture information providers for reliable organic farming information.

Using email and other internet services, the producers in the EOF Network exchanged information and learned from each other new practices and strategies to improve their operations, while project coordinators collected the information to share with others. A substantial amount of valuable and comprehensive information was exchanged and compiled through the 18-month period of the project (October 2002 - March 2004) in farm profiles, farm photos, electronic discussions, and in-depth videos of two EOF Network farms.

Utilizing information gained through this project, EOF Network producers were able to incorporate into their

own farming operations new varieties, new crops, new equipment, new practices and new marketing strategies with much lower risk and a shorter learning curve than when farming in isolation using the standard trial and error approach.

Now you can learn from these most experienced organic producers. **The information accumulated through this pilot project is now available to you on the SSAWG website** at www.ssawg.org/organicfarmer.html. Be sure to check out the Network Discussion Summary where you can search by topic area for the information you want. There is some great information in there, from favorite varieties, to nuts and bolts production strategies, to farmers' market tips, and more. Take advantage of this great resource by visiting the Southern SAWG website today!

Certified Organic Seed Sourcing Service

by Cricket Rakita



While working with organic growers, we have found their largest stress to be the lack of a centralized knowledge base about what seeds are and are not available organically. As well, I have talked to a number of farms that have chosen not to become certified for the same reason. I even spoke to one organic grower who told me that her certifier required her to send her a list of all of the seeds that she could not find organically so he could do a search, which he did not do in a timely way.

By working with the project, we have become closely acquainted with many organic seed dealers. We have started a database of all of the organic seeds available in the country. We will now use this information to offer growers an Organic Seed Sourcing Service.

We will accept lists from organic growers of the seeds they wish to plant and reply to them with a list of dealers that sell them. Conversely, if no organic seeds are available, we will then be able to provide documentation of this that would be suitable to all certification agents. We

will send you our fully documented reply via first class mail within 4 business days of receipt of your request. As many organic certification agents look positively on growers that experiment with organic varieties when they purchase conventional seed, we would like at some point to add the service of suggesting experimental varieties in these cases.

This service will be offered **free of charge** for the duration of 2005. To submit a request, visit our website at www.savingourseed.org/pages/sourcing.htm and complete the form or phone, mail or fax it in to:

Organic Seed Sourcing Service

The Save Our Seed Project
49 Circle D Dr.
Colbert, GA 30628
Phone: 706-788-0017
Fax:: 706-788-0071

For more information, visit the Save Our Seed website at www.savingourseed.org/index.html

Chatham Beekeeping Update

Part of my responsibilities as an Extension agent for Chatham County involve working with our local beekeepers. However, I was so busy with my small farms program my first few years here, and we have such a well-functioning Beekeepers' Association, that I let my beekeeping responsibilities slide. But now I am pleased to say I am fully involved! It is something I am very interested in, both personally and professionally. Anyone who knows me knows how fanatic I am about insects, so it's a no-brainer that I would find these social insects so fascinating. But also—as a gardener and one who works with farmers—we need bees! So it makes sense that my beekeeping duties overlap with my farming responsibilities. I formed an advisory committee comprised of local beekeepers—both newbies as well as old timers—to help me meet the educational needs of this great group.

Here's an update on what's happening locally with beekeeping.

Update on New Beekeeper Cost Share Program

Chatham County is experiencing an upsurge in interest in beekeeping, evident from the 60 folks who recently completed our Beekeeping School this winter. NC State University's New Beekeeper Cost Share Program (see the January-February issue of Plow Sharing on-line at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/psindex05.html), led by State Apiculture Specialist Dr.

David Tarpy, has stimulated massive media interest and spawned numerous calls to county agents across the state. Seven new beekeepers in Chatham county were selected to participate in the program, one of the highest in the program. We will be matching these new beekeepers with experienced mentors to help them with their new bees.

New Chatham Beekeepers Listserv

To channel all the interest and enthusiasm (and questions!) coming out of the Beekeeping School, I created a Beekeepers listserv which now has over 100 subscribers. The listserv is used to ask questions, share information, announce relevant events, etc. If you would like to join, email me at debbie_roos@ncsu.edu

April 23 Beekeeping Field Day

The Chatham County Beekeepers' Association will host a Field Day on Saturday, April 23. We will visit several beekeepers to see how they manage their hives and get exposure to different conditions and challenges. This is an annual event and a great opportunity to network and learn new things. The field day will start around 8:30 am and go until the afternoon. .

April 30 Demonstration

The folks who receive bees through the Cost Share Grant will receive their bees on Saturday April 30. We will schedule an afternoon demonstration of hiving package bees back here in Chatham, location to be determined. If you are interested, pencil this in your calendar and we will release details later.

For more information about these field days, contact Debbie Roos at 919-542-8202 or debbie_roos@ncsu.edu.

Chatham County Beekeepers' Association

This group meets the third Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm in the Agricultural Building in Pittsboro. For more information, contact Michael Almond at maalmond@earthlink.net.

NCDA's New "Bee Linked" Website Lists Pollinators

The purpose of the website is to bring together growers in need of bee pollination services and beekeepers who have honey bee colonies for rent. Growers with pollination needs and beekeepers with colonies for rent may post their names, address, and other pertinent information on this website: www.ncagr.com/plantind/beeboard/index.htm. No pollinators are currently listed for Chatham County! If you have hives to rent, please get listed on this site. This is a brand new site so it will take time to get everyone posted. Don't miss this chance!

April 23-24, 2005
10th Annual Piedmont Farm Tour

Sponsored by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and Weaver Street Market. The goal of the farm tour is to raise awareness of local farms and their importance to the beauty and permanence of the Triangle region. Our rural character is founded on the pastoral settings that small farms represent. Local farm systems are an integral part of achieving long-term socio-economic sustainability. All of us, from farmer to distributor to consumer, play a role in creating a sustainable agriculture. All proceeds benefit CFSA.

The popular tour features 30 farms in Chatham, Orange, Wake, Alamance, and Durham counties. For new farmers or established farmers looking for alternative enterprises, the farm tour provides an excellent opportunity to see "up-close-and-personal" the diversity of agriculture in the region. You might glean some new ideas! For more information contact Julie Eubanks at 919-542-2402 or julie@carolinafarmstewards.org.

Enjoy these photos from some of your favorite farm tour stops!



Eliza MacLean with pigs at Cane Creek Farm

Judy Lessler with tour group at Harland's Creek Farm



Kid with kid (baby goat) at Celebrity Dairy



Flo & Portia making cheese at Chapel Hill Creamery



Portia with newborn calves

Haygrove tunnels and zinnias at Peregrine Farm



Dan and Louis Graham planting broccoli at Graham Family Farm (left)

Susan Loraine with baby water buffalo at Nu Horizons Farm



Bill Dow (left) of Ayrshire Farm (above)



2005 Calendar of Events

updated weekly on the web:

www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/calendar.html

April 13-14, 2005: Developing A Food Business Workshop at A-B Tech Enka Campus in Asheville, NC. The purpose of the workshop is to help participants explore the possibilities of starting their own food business. The intended audience includes producers and prospective producers, extension, lenders, and agribusiness leaders. Workshop participants will learn what resources are available as they consider a food business. The first day's topics will cover business start-up, legal considerations, market research, pricing, market outlets for your product. The second day's topics will focus on food processing, do you need a co-packer, what kind of facilities will be needed and will conclude with a tour of Blue Ridge Food Ventures – a local food processing plant. Successful local, small food entrepreneurs will share their experiences of the how they started their food business. Participants will receive a reference notebook and other materials that will help them as they consider developing their business. There is an \$85 registration fee due by April 6 that covers meals, notebook, and other reference materials. Workshop is sponsored by NCSU, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, and NC Tobacco Trust Fund. Please contact Cathy Hohenstein at 828-255-5522 for more information.

April 22, 2005: "A Comprehensive Approach to Farm Business Succession Planning" Workshop from 9:00 am til 3:30 pm in Greenville, NC. Sponsored by North Carolina Farm Transition Network and North Carolina Cooperative Extension. This workshop will provide an overview of the farm transition process for farm family members interested in learning more about the efficient transfer of farm operations between generations. The workshop will also help aspiring and beginning farmers interested in understanding the issues surrounding their partnering with an established operator. Farm business professional advisors (financial advisors, extension agents, district conservationists) are encouraged to attend to learn more about issues affecting their clients. To register, visit the conference website or call 919- 782-1705.

April 23-24, 2005: 10th Annual Piedmont Farm Tour from 1:00-5:00 pm, sponsored by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and Weaver Street Market. Featuring 30 farms in Chatham, Alamance, Orange, Person, and Durham counties. Learn more about sustainable production of vegetables, flowers, herbs, meats, cow and goat cheese, and alternative fuels. Contact CFSA at 919-542-2402 for more information.

April 25, 2005: "A Comprehensive Approach to Farm Business Succession Planning" Workshop from 9:00 am til 3:30 pm in Statesville, NC. See April 22 listing above for details..

May 6-8, 2005: The 16th annual **Spring Herb Festival** will be celebrated at the Western North Carolina Farmers' Market in Asheville on May 6-8, 2005. Visitors from across the Southeast come for the best variety and selection of herbs, herb plants, and herbal products. The event, which attracts over 20,000 visitors from across the Southeast, is open 9:00am to 5:00pm on Friday and Saturday and 10am to 3pm on Sunday. The event offers the best selection of herb plants and herb products as there are over 50 herb businesses that market only herbs and herbal products at the festival. Educational programs by herbalists are presented Friday and Saturday at the top of the hour at 10:00 & 11:00am and 1:00 & 2:00pm. An Information Booth is operated by local Master Gardeners, who are always willing to answer questions about planting, growing, and caring for herbs. For more information contact the Farmers' Market at 828-253-1691 or Rick Morgan at 828-689-5974. Visit the festival website for more information.

June 20, 2005: Chatham County Cooperative Extension presents a workshop on **Sustainable Pasture Management** as part of its Enhancing Sustainability Workshop Series from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Building Auditorium in Pittsboro, NC. For more information, contact Debbie Roos at 919-542-8202.

June 25-26, 2005: Mountain Farm Tour sponsored by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. Contact CFSA at 919-542-2402 for more information.

November 4-6, 2005: Annual **Sustainable Agriculture Conference** sponsored by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association in Durham, NC. Contact CFSA at 919-542-2402 for more information.

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