USDA Invests $18 Million to Train Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Emphasis on military veterans and limited-resource farmers

New Orleans, LA - Feb. 2, 2015 - U.S. Department of Agriculture's Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden (USDA) announced more than $18 million in grants to educate, mentor, and enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers. The grants are available through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill).

"As new farmers and ranchers get started, they are really looking to their community for support. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program empowers these farmers and ranchers to bring innovative ideas to the table when it comes to addressing food security, creating economic enterprises, and building communities," said Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden. "As we celebrate the first anniversary of the 2014 Farm Bill, programs like these are evidence that an investment in beginning farmers and ranchers is an investment in our future".

The grant announcement was made at Recirculating Farms Coalition in New Orleans. Recirculating Farms received a BFRDP grant to develop training sessions focusing on soil-based production and aquaculture for new and beginning farmers in New Orleans.

The BFRDP program, first established by the 2008 Farm Bill, aims to support those who have farmed or ranched less than 10 years with workshops, educational teams, training, and technical assistance throughout the United States. NIFA awards grants to organizations that implement programs to train beginning farmers and ranchers. Today's announcement was funded by the 2014 Farm Bill, which continued authorization of this program.

The 2014 Farm Bill mandated at least five percent of BFRDP funding support veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers. Among today's announcement, more than 15 percent of the funded projects have a substantial component that supports veterans and farming, while about 50 percent of the projects focus mainly on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. A fact sheet with a complete list of awardees and project descriptions is available on the USDA website.

- Since 2009, 184 awards have been made for more than $90 million through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. These awards are part of USDA's deep commitment to beginning farmers and ranchers. Additional USDA investment in beginning farmers and ranchers include:
The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program is currently accepting applications for the 2015 grant cycle. Applications are due March 13, 2015.

Funding for the BFRDP program is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, NIFA focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. More information is at: www.nifa.usda.gov.


**USDA seeks applications for Conservation Innovation Grants**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that applications are being accepted for up to $20 million in grants to facilitate the creation of new, innovative markets for carbon credits, providing additional revenue sources for producers and address natural resource conservation challenges. These grants are part of the Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program, authorized through the 2014 Farm Bill.

As in prior years, NRCS will accept pre-proposals for initial review before inviting entities to submit full proposals. Pre-proposals are due Tuesday, February 24, 2015. The full announcement of program funding is available at http://go.usa.gov/4Kvx. To apply electronically, visit http://www.grants.gov or contact a local NRCS office.
Raising Chickens: Is it all that its cracked up to be?

Interesting FACTS About Chickens:

- They produce fresh eggs, as organic as you feed them
- Rations purchased at feed stores are a complete ration once the hens start to lay eggs
- The egg shell is calcium and oyster shells enhance the grinding of food in the digestive tract as well as provide calcium for strong egg shells
- Chicks can be confined to a small area up to about 2 months
- Grown birds need @ 2 sq.ft/bird in the hen house, and 4 sq.ft/bird in a yard
- Owls, hawks, foxes, dogs and sometimes raccoons love chicken, so plan protection into your chicken yard design

What Do I Need To Get Started?

- Check the local city ordinances to make sure its ok to have backyard chickens
  - Some cities of home owner associations don’t allow chickens
  - Most complaints come from noisy roosters early in the morning or free chickens
- Provide a safe confinement pen to keep you chickens in your yard
- Local feed stores have several choices for fencing material that can be used for poultry
- Buy your chickens and feed for them
- Both can be purchased at a local feed store or check with a friend who has chickens
- Have a fresh clean water supply
- Equipment for raising chickens can also be purchased at the local feed store

How Do I Grow Chicks?

- From hatching to 2 months (before adult feathers form)
  - Provide food, water, and keep them warm @ 95 degrees the first week then decrease by 5 degrees for each week until about 8 weeks old.
  - Summer temperatures make it easier to raise chicks
  - Chick starter rations are balanced for baby chicks
- From 2 months to adult
  - The young birds are ready to move to the chicken coop
  - Change to a grower ration and layer mash for adult birds that are starting to produce eggs
- Usually to many rooster chicks are in the flock, they can be given to a friend or made into a tasty meal.
- Hens will lay without a rooster, but most people feel that it stimulates egg production to have a rooster in the flock. The eggs that are fertile are slightly lower in cholesterol
Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University (FAMU) College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) hosted the annual 4-H Public Speaking contest underwritten by the Tropicana Corporation and coordinated by Leon County 4-H. Each student winner (4th, 5th, and 6th grade levels) from each of the Leon County schools showcased their public speaking talents with hopes of attaining the 1st place prize. Congratulations to all of the participants.
Getting Ready For the Scotch Bonnet Growing Season Part II

If you didn’t get time to sow your Scotch Bonnet seeds during the month of January, do not panic. You are still a good way from the spring planting date. However, you should try your best to do so as soon as possible. This issue of the hot pepper monthly focuses on the type of supplies you will need for establishing your nursery.

Potting Soil

A light potting mix free of weed seeds is ideal for starting your Scotch Bonnet seeds. Any light textured commercial potting soil will do although I have found pro-mix to do very well. One 3.8 cubic feet bag is sufficient to produce sufficient seedlings for a 0.33 acre garden.

Seedling Trays and Inserts: Scotch Bonnet seeds grow best in inserts with cells ranging between 2-3 square inches. These are slightly larger than normal but Scotch Bonnet seedlings require plenty of root room for development. The cells of the inserts can be square or round in shape. However, the bottom of the trays and inserts must be slotted to allow excess water to drain and improve air circulation.

Planting: Because of the light texture of most potting soils, it is wise to dampen the soil before planting the seeds. This is important because watering the seeds after planting can cause them to be ‘splashed’ out of the cells resulting in poor germination rates. Planting too deep can delay germination and time to transplanting. It is recommended that you plant only one seed per cell. However, in order to ensure that all cells are populated, I sometimes plant 2 – 3 seeds per cell then thin back to one seedling per cell after germination.

The Planting Environment: ALL seeds should be planted in indoors or in a temperature controlled greenhouse. Again, the importance of ‘bottom heat’ cannot be over emphasized when seeds are sown during the winter months. In the absence of bottom heat, the seeds can be forced into dormancy and will not germinate in time for your spring planting. If you are growing the crop for profit, transplanting on time can provide a competitive edge so bear this in mind.

That’s it for this month. The upcoming issue will provide transplanting and growing instructions for the crop. Please be on the lookout for the March issue.
CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Reflecting on Yesterday....

Working for Today...

Dedicated to Tomorrow!
Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)

One of the best known and most widely-used culinary herbs. It is quite easy to grow and is commonly found as a decorative as well as a functional plant in many home gardens. There are over 100 varieties of thyme and the most common are garden thyme and lemon thyme. Many varieties are so close in appearance it is most often very difficult to differentiate them.

Thyme is packed with disease fighting and preventing properties. The herb contains the essential oil thymol which has antiseptic and anti-fungal capacity. Fresh thyme has one of the highest antioxidant levels among herbs; it has a Total Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) value of 27,426 micro mol TE/ 100 gram.

The herb is rich in in vitamins and minerals that are essential for optimum health. Just 100 grams of fresh thyme provides 38% of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of fiber; 27% RDA of vitamin B 6; 266% of vitamin C; 158% vitamin A; 218% of iron; 40% of calcium; 40% of magnesium and 75% of manganese.

Thyme can be used in its fresh or dried form but is superior in its fresh form. When cooking with thyme it is best to add the herb at the last moment because prolong cooking will cause the essential oils to evaporate thus losing its flavor.

Medicinally thyme based formulations has been used in mouthwashes, toothpaste and soaps.

Honey from bees that harvest thyme nectar is a gourmet delight. It seems odd that bees would willingly visit the thyme flower because most insects are repelled by thyme.
# 2015 FAMU CEP Calendar of Events

## January
- **January 15th** – Master Goat/Sheep Program and Master Farmer Program
  - Online Registration starts – [http://www.famu.edu/goats](http://www.famu.edu/goats)
  - Contacts: Mr. Gilbert Queeley – 850-412-5255
  - Mrs. Angela McKenzie-Jakes - 850-875-8552

## February
- **Aquaponic Seminar**
  - February 23rd, 6–8:00 pm- Fee: $20 early reg./ $25 day of Event
  - Sponsored by Gadsden County Extension Office at the FAMU Teleconference Center
- **Vineyard Management & Pesticide Safety Workshop**
  - February 11th–1 —4:30 pm at Center for Viticulture & Small Fruit Research. Call (850) 599-3996 to register.
- **Feral Swine Workshop**– February 13th in Ocala, FL; Feb 27th, Quincy

## March
- **FAMU CEP Master Farmer Program**
  - March 13-14 and March 24-28
- **CROP Block Party**– FAMU Teleconference Center
  - Date : PENDING - 9:30:00 pm. FAMU Teleconference Center

## April
- **FAMU CEP Master Farmer Program**
  - April 10-11

## May
- **FAMU CEP Master Goat and Sheep Certification Program**
  - May 1-2
  - May 15-16

## June
- **FAMU CEP Spring Agri-Showcase** – Date: June 6th
  - *Master Goat/Sheep & Master Farmer Programs Graduation*
- **Ag Discovery Summer Program**– June 7-20, 2015
  - Contacts: Dr. Mobley, Dr. Wright, Mrs. Lyttle-N’Guessan
- **2015 Master Goat and Sheep Certification Program**
  - *Bonus Session* June 20th: 9–4 pm

## July
- **2015 Master Goat and Sheep Certification Program**
  - *Bonus Session* July 25th: 9–4 pm
- **USDA NIFA Ag Tech Century 21 Program** – July 12-17, 2015
  - Contacts: Dr. Mobley, Dr. Wright, Mrs. Lyttle-N’Guessan

## August
- **FAMU CEP Open House**– Perry Paige Courtyard/ Date: TBA
- **2015 Master Goat and Sheep Certification Program**
  - *Bonus Session* August 15th : 9–4 pm

## September
- **EVENTS COMING SOON**

## October
- **FAMU CEP Fall Agri-Showcase**– Date: October 24th
  - FAMU Research & Extension Center, Quincy, FL

## November
- **EVENTS COMING SOON**

## December
- **EVENTS COMING SOON**
Feral Swine: Impact to Florida

Feral Swine Workshop

Guest Speaker:
Representative from USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services

*Free Workshop*

February 13, 2015
11 a.m.—3 p.m.
Livestock Agriculture Pavilion
2232 N.E. Jacksonville Road
Ocala, FL

* Door Prizes * Free Lunch*

For more information, contact FAMU Cooperative Extension at (850) 599-3546.
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research
Muscadine Grape Workshop

On Wednesday, February 11, 2015 from 1:00 to 4:30 PM, the Florida A&M University/Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research in cooperation with the FAMU/Research and Extension Center will be offering a workshop on “Vineyard Management and Pesticide Safety”.

Grape growers, backyard grape enthusiasts, Master Gardeners and the general public are encouraged to attend. During the workshop, you will learn about Muscadine grape production to include vineyard management, pesticide safety, grapevine pruning benefits and hands-on pruning demonstration in the vineyard. For the vineyard pruning activity, participants are asked to monitor weather conditions and dress appropriately.

To register, please call Ms. Angela Harper at (850) 599-3996 with the Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research.
Aquaponics Seminar
A Food Production System in Combination with Aquaculture and Hydroponic Principles

The Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University (FAMU) College of Agriculture and Food Sciences Cooperative Extension Program will be conducting an Aquaponic Seminar on Monday, February 23. The seminar will take place at the Cooperative Extension Teleconference Center, 2010 Pinder Drive (corner of Oseola and Pinder Drive) from 6 p.m.—8 p.m.

Guest speaker, Mr. Donald Bailey, Research Specialist at the University of the Virgin Islands/Agriculture Experiment Station will speak on Tilapia Aquaculture & Aquaponics farming. He has worked with UVI since 1986 in the Aquaculture Program, which has undertaken the development of a commercial-scale aquaponic system for the production of tilapia and a variety of vegetable crops. The program’s goals are to develop a system that conserved land and water, recovered waste and reduced discharge from fish production - converting it into a valuable product. The Aquaculture Program also developed small-scale biofloc tilapia production systems and tilapia cage culture systems for farmers in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Bailey received a Masters of Business Administration in 1992 and applies business management and budget analysis to the design, operation and production of the aquaponic systems studied. The combination of scientific research with a business model leads to a practical and applied approach to system management. It highlights the advantages and disadvantages of aquaponic systems and the continued search for opportunities to improve system performance.

For more information, please call the FAMU Cooperative Extension Program at (850) 599-3546.
Students will live on the Tallahassee campus and work with a variety of animal species. In addition, students are exposed to opportunities in animal science to help them better understand and refine their career paths. Contacts: Dr. Ray Mobley, (850) 445-7423, ray.mobley@famu.edu; Dr. Glen Wright, (850) 599-3546, glen.wright@famu.edu; Carmen Lyttle-N’guessan, (850) 412-5363, carmen.lyttlenouessa@famu.edu www.famu.edu/ herd.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) was founded as the State Normal College for Colored Students and, on October 3, 1887, began classes with 15 students and 2 instructors. Today, “FAMU” as, it, has become affectionately known, is the premier school among historically black colleges and universities. Prominently located on the highest hill in Florida’s capital city of Tallahassee, FAMU remains the only historically black university in the 11-member State University System of Florida.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
If you have questions about the AgDiscovery program, please call APHIS at (301) 851-4199 or send an email to agdiscovery@aphis.usda.gov
An intensive week long program developed to provide a better understanding of science through experiential activities in Food Science that are linked to the Sunshine Standards.

**Ages 12-14

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“By obtaining information on Food Science and knowing that it is a career choice, it has helped me shape the studies I plan to pursue and gives me more options”

---Student Participant

**Contact:**
Conchita Newman
(850) 599-3440
conchita.newman@famu.edu
Florida A&M University
Celebrates the 125th Anniversary of the Signing of the 2nd Morrill Act
1890-2015

Shortly after its founding, FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY (FAMU) became the beneficiary of educational provisions for African Americans made possible through the passage of the Second Morrill Act of 1890. Through this important federal legislation, FAMU, formerly known as the “State Normal College for Colored Students,” was designated to receive a land grant “to the endowment and support of branches of learning as related to agriculture and mechanic arts, including military tactics.”

For more information, please log onto:
http://1890universities.org/