



# Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP): West Central Region

## USDA Programs Benefit Small Farmers

by Dr. K.B. Paul, ISFOP Program Director

ISFOP clients know by now that, as Extension personnel, we offer research-based information, education and training, and that we have no funds to provide any loans or grants. However, we do tell them about other programs that offer loans, grants and technical assistance to qualified small farmers. For example, various agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have programs and resources available for the benefit of small farmers.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Missouri offers financial and technical assistance to small farmers for implementing conservation practices to enhance agricultural productivity and improve the management of resources on their farms. In general, the NRCS-sponsored conservation programs are intended to address resource concerns such as soil erosion, soil, water and air quality, plant and livestock health, and wildlife habitat. Specific programs that may be of interest to small producers are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the EQIP-Organic Initiative (EQIP-OI), EQIP High Tunnel Initiative and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). Additional information on these programs is available at <http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov>. Producers can also locate their local USDA Service Center from <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

### In the Spotlight: Little Dixie Family Farm

by Jeff Yearington

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Missouri was one of the top strawberry producing states in the nation. After learning of this, Ron Rushly, operator of Little Dixie Family Farm, decided to try a new cropping enterprise. The Cass County farm has been in the Rushly family for 87 years.

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The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) which provides financial aid to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or natural disasters prevent planting of a crop. Producers apply for coverage at their local county office and pay a service fee. Limited resource producers (based on agency criteria) may request a waiver of the service fees. FSA has direct and guaranteed loans available to farmers for purchasing real estate and financing operating expenses. Targeted funds are set aside for beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged producers. Producers must meet eligibility requirements, including the inability to obtain commercial credit. Cold storage for fruits and vegetables is available through the Farm Storage Facility Loan program. For more information on these programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov), click on 'Newsroom' then 'Fact Sheets' under 'Related Topics' or visit your local FSA county office.

North Central Region (NCR) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, funded through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), accomplishes its goals by offering a variety of grants to individuals and organizations. Of importance to ISFOP clients are the Farmer Rancher Grant Program, and the Youth and Youth Educator Grant programs. Please contact the Farm Outreach Worker (FOW) in your county for additional information. To learn about other grant opportunities from USDA, please stop by any of its offices in your area.

**Down to Earth:  
Reports from the field**



One of the Little Dixies on the Little Dixie Farm

## Little Dixie . . .(continued from page 1)

In the spring of 2010, Ron Rushly planted 1800 strawberry plants. Before long, Rushly was overwhelmed with the weeds that almost took over the new plantings. Keeping the weeds under control turned out to be his greatest challenge. Ron and his children spent many hours weeding the berry patch. This made him think that there must be a better method of controlling weeds in a strawberry field.

Rushly remembered an old horse-drawn cultivator that his family had used many years ago, which was sitting unused next to a pile of junk on the farm. He pulled it out, moved it to his shop, then modified it to fit behind his Allis-Chalmers Model B tractor. This old cultivator became a valuable piece of equipment for weeding the berry patch,

saving many hours of hand labor. This enabled Rushly to expand his strawberry plantings by 8,000 additional plants!

In Spring 2011, Little Dixie Farm harvested and marketed their first strawberry crop. More than 1,000 quarts of berries were handpicked and sold through local farmers markets and direct sales off of the family farm.

Next year, Rushly and his family plan to harvest berries from more than 10,000 plants. And, he says, the passion for farming is back. Some of the children are talking about staying on the farm for another 100 years.



*Ron Rushly in his strawberry patch on Little Dixie Farm in Cass County, Missouri*



*Susan Jaster, FOW*

## Meet Farm Outreach Worker (FOW): Susan Jaster—Lafayette and Ray Counties

Susan Jaster began a career in farming in the early 1980s in Arizona on a large commercial dairy. She continued dairy farming in Missouri on the 150-cow dairy that she co-owned with her husband, Art, and their three children for 18 years. During her farm career she was also a radio broadcaster and farm news reporter for a small radio station in Southwest Missouri. Jaster and her family participated in the 4-H program for many years, and she will be celebrating 20 years of service in 2012.

Most summers as a child, Jaster assisted her grandparents with their roadside vegetable

and strawberry stand and worked as a veterinary assistant during high school. She has always been a gardener and cared for many species of animals throughout her life. Jaster joined Lincoln University Cooperative Extension's (LUCE) ISFOP team as an FOW in September 2009. As an FOW, she attends many workshops and conferences in order to gain new information about small farms, livestock, growing produce and the craft of marketing. She stands ready to provide education and information to the small farmers in Lafayette and Ray Counties.

## Kitchen Incubators

by Jim Pierce

### *What is a kitchen incubator?*

A kitchen incubator is a facility that is equipped with commercial-size types of equipment for food preparation. The fully installed and operational equipment are available for rent by the hour, day or week. These are health department-approved facilities.

### *How do they work?*

The first step is to make an appointment with the staff for a tour and to find out the specifics for using the facility. Ask questions like: what will be required of me to use the kitchen, how

much does it cost, and how do I engage the use of the kitchen? They may require you to have a merchant license, food handling license, insurance and other training. After meeting the requirements, make a reservation to use the kitchen incubator for a block of time.

### *Why is a kitchen incubator important to beginning and small farmers?*

Kitchen incubators allow farmers with limited capital to explore the possibility of adding value to the fruit, vegetables, herbs or meat they produce. They can do this without

having to invest a huge sum of cash in a kitchen incubator. An example would be a farmer with a short harvest season for cilantro. This person might decide greater profit could be had in the form of salsa or a cilantro pesto. After developing a recipe in their home kitchen they could rent the kitchen and produce health department-approved batches to test the market.

The second step would be to begin manufacturing the product with the most positive response using the kitchen incubator.

*(cont'd on page 3. . .)*

## Kitchens . . .(continued from page 2)

### *Where can a kitchen incubator be found?*

Many farmers do not know that the Kansas City region now has an 'incubator kitchen' located at the Independence Regional Ennovation Center, located in what used to be Independence Regional Hospital. It has a long list of kitchen equipment, such as 40-quart mixers, restaurant ranges, ovens, fryers, and even a smoker. There is also cold/dry storage, office space and conference rooms for

rent. One can also conduct training workshops and provide business planning help in conjunction with Missouri Small Business Development & Technology Center. There are many other services offered as well. Contact information is 201 N. Forest Avenue, Independence, Missouri or call (816) 463-3532.

The City Market Farmers' Market in Kansas City will be installing a kitchen incubator called the Farm to Table Kitchen.(cont'd on page 4)



*Kitchen Incubator facility at the Ennovation Center in Independence, Missouri (Photo courtesy of the Ennovation Center)*

## THE IPM CORNER: BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG: A NEW INVASIVE INSECT PEST

*By Dr. Jaime Piñero, LUCE Integrated Pest Management State Specialist*

The brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) has been detected in some Midwestern states. This invasive stink bug is native to China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, and was introduced into the US in 1996. It can cause devastating damage to many crops, including tree and small fruit, vegetables, row crops, vineyards, etc. For example, in 2010 severe crop injury was reported in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Currently, it is found in 31 states including Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. Its presence in Illinois and Missouri is unknown.

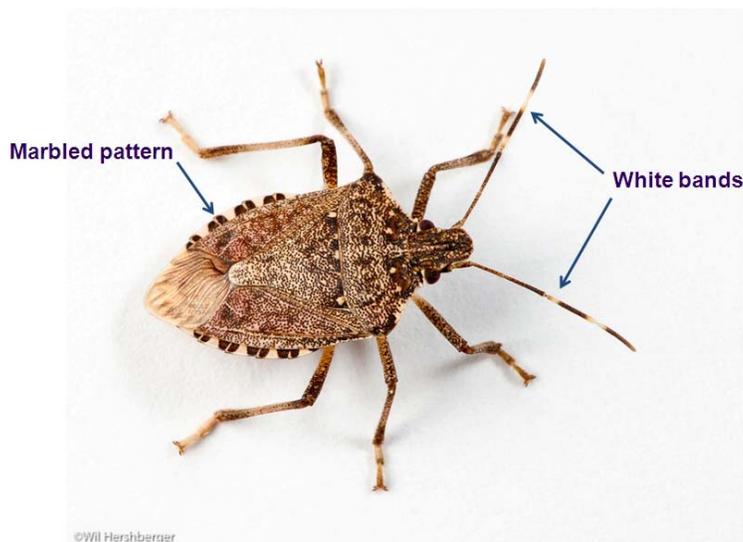
Its additional status as a nuisance pest makes the brown marmorated stink bug different than other plant-feeding stink bug species. **The adults enter homes and other buildings in the autumn seeking sheltered sites to spend the winter.** The adults fly to these overwintering sites in mid September, and the peak flight activity is from **late September until early October.** The bugs are harmless to humans and pets as they do not bite, but they can become a nuisance when they congregate in large numbers outside and inside buildings. In extreme cases, hundreds can invade a home. When disturbed, the bugs produce a characteristic pungent, acrid odor that many people find offensive.

The adult brown marmorated stink bug has the typical shield shape of other stink bugs. They are approximately 15 mm (5/8 inch) long and 8 mm (3/8 inch) wide. The upper side of the body is mottled shades of brown and gray, and is covered with dense puncture marks, as shown in the image below. The word marmorated refers to its marble-like coloration. The adults of the brown marmorated stink bug can be distinguished from other species of stink bugs by the alternating dark and light bands on the last two segments of the antennae. The edges of the abdomen also have alternating light and dark banding.

If you happen to see a brown marmorated stink bug in your area, please contact the Missouri Department of Agriculture by contacting Collin Wamsley, State Entomologist at (573) 751-

5505 [Collin.Wamsley@mda.mo.gov](mailto:Collin.Wamsley@mda.mo.gov), or Dr. Jaime Piñero at [PineroJ@LincolnU.edu](mailto:PineroJ@LincolnU.edu)

*If you are able to capture a specimen, please place it in any type of container such as a plastic medicine bottle or a film canister and put this in a freezer for at least 24 hours before submitting the sample. Digital pictures will also be useful.*



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# ISFOP

If you are a small farmer and need information, please contact an ISFOP Farm Outreach Worker (FOW). FOWs live and work in your community. They can provide information on ways to better manage your resources, reduce expense and increase income. They can also provide information on other programs and resources that may increase your income and the overall quality of life for your family.

**You are eligible to participate if:**

- Your family lives on a farm, rural or urban.
- Farm products or income from the farm are necessary for you to live where you do.
- Your family provides the management and most of the labor for your farm.
- Your total annual family income is less than \$50,000.

### How to Contact

#### West Central Regional ISFOP Farm Outreach Workers:

- **Katie Nixon**, West Central Regional Coordinator and Jackson County  
[NixonK@LincolnU.edu](mailto:NixonK@LincolnU.edu)  
(816) 809-5074
- **Jeff Yearington**, Cass and Johnson Counties  
[YearingtonJ@LincolnU.edu](mailto:YearingtonJ@LincolnU.edu)  
(816) 899-2181
- **Susan Jaster**, Lafayette and Ray Counties  
[JasterS@LincolnU.edu](mailto:JasterS@LincolnU.edu)  
(816) 589-4725
- **Jim Pierce**, Clay and Platte Counties  
[PierceJ@LincolnU.edu](mailto:PierceJ@LincolnU.edu)  
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*Publications are available upon request.  
Contact Pamela Donner, Media Center Coordinator  
at: [DonnerPJ@LincolnU.edu](mailto:DonnerPJ@LincolnU.edu)*



(continued from page 3. . .) Currently the concept is in developmental stages and should be available sometime in 2011. It is expected to be smaller in scale and available by the hour to individuals, vendors, and organizations. Contact Paige Powers for more information by phone (816) 842-1271 or by email at [ppowers@copaken-brooks.com](mailto:ppowers@copaken-brooks.com).

## Kitchen Resources and Further Reading

- **Independence Regional Ennovation Center**  
Supports entrepreneurs  
201 N. Forest Avenue, Independence, MO 64050, USA  
Jenni Mann (816) 463-3532  
[tlesnak@independencemo.biz](mailto:tlesnak@independencemo.biz)  
<http://www.ennovationcenter.com>
- **Missouri Value Added Center**  
Helps develop business ideas for agriculture  
<http://valueadded.missouri.edu/services.php>
- **The Culinary Incubator**  
Online resource and links for the entrepreneur and a map  
[www.culinaryincubator.com/maps.php](http://www.culinaryincubator.com/maps.php)
- **Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC)**  
Has information and links to kitchen incubators  
1111 NSRIC, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3310  
(866) 277-5567  
[www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org)

## Upcoming Events

- **Small Engine Repair Workshop:** Saturday, October 29, 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m. Raymore, MO. **Contact** Katie Nixon (contact information above).
- **Accessing Federal Programs and Conservation Practices:** Monday and Tuesday, October 3 and 4, Columbia, MO. **Contact** Debi Kelly: [kellyd@missouri.edu](mailto:kellyd@missouri.edu) (573) 882-1905.
- **How to Start an Urban Farm:** Two consecutive Thursday's, October 20 and 27, two-part series at the LUCE Kansas City Urban Impact Center (KCUIC). **Contact** Katie Nixon (contact information above).
- **Small Farm Trade Show and Conference:** Thursday-Saturday, November 3-5, Boone County Fair Grounds, Columbia, MO. [www.smallfarmtoday.com/tradeshow/](http://www.smallfarmtoday.com/tradeshow/)
- **Women's Landowners Conference:** Thursday, November 10, Concordia Missouri. **Contact** Susan Jaster (contact information above).

### Remember the following dates:

SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant Proposal: December 2, 2011  
SARE Youth/ Youth Education Grant Proposals: January 12, 2012  
[www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Types-of-grants/](http://www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Types-of-grants/)

### Save the Date:

**Great Plains Growers Conference:** Thursday-Saturday, January 5-7, 2012, St. Joseph, MO