



Down to Earth: Reports from the field

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

Lincoln University Cooperative Extension

Message from the Dean & the 1890 Administrator

It is with great pleasure that we offer the first of many newsletters that the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) will publish. Many of you are not familiar with this recently developed extension program at Lincoln University. It was designed to meet the needs of small farmers and gardeners in selected regions of Missouri and provide one-on-one assistance to the greatest number of families as efficiently as possible. Our emphasis is on limited resource producers located in both rural and urban regions. Our goal is to personally assist producers in developing profitable operations. Our Farm Outreach Workers (FOWs) have been carefully selected and have varied experiences in agricultural systems. Please use their expertise for all of your production and marketing needs. They stand ready to assist you!

Sincerely,

Steve Meredith

Dean & the 1890 Extension Administrator

In The Spotlight:

Hello from the Small Farm Outreach team! We are working in the area and would like to introduce our program to you and keep you up to date with the exciting things area farmers are doing. In this, our first issue of Down to Earth, let us introduce you to Christie & Jason Jonas, Innovative Small Farmers, residing in Jefferson County, Missouri.

The Jonas Farm was established in 2006. The main focus of the farm was vegetables which Christie and her husband grew to sell from off the farm via contacts from the Local Harvest Web site and word of mouth. (continued on Page 2)

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Community Gardens: A Harvest of Hope



## JONAS FARM (continued from Page 1)

The couple has about five acres of land of which half an acre is in vegetables/crops and 3/4 acre is in various fruit trees along with native berry bushes. The remainder of the land is in pasture. Christie plans to start including cover crops into their plan for managing their garden/crop ground, which in turn can be part of their rotational grazing plan for their goats. They are planning on grazing the cover crop in the winter when the garden/crop ground is not in use. The benefit that they hope to derive from grazing the cover crop is the manure as fertilizer. This would also help to reduce the cost of food for the goats.

Currently they have Nubian and

Nubian/LaMancha cross dairy goats and egg laying chickens at the farm. The Jonas' also have a few guinea fowls in an effort to keep the insect population under control which has been devastating to their vegetable crops, particularly the squash.

They currently sell their produce, jams and eggs through the De Soto Farmer's Market (in season). The family will continue to explore new marketing options and ways to increase their overall income from the farm.

Kevin Krause, the Farm Outreach Worker (FOW) in Jefferson and Washington counties, is working with

the Jonas family. He says, "The Jonas' are very enterprising folks. They are exploring various options to generate additional income from their farm."



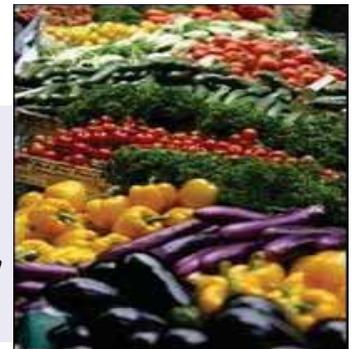
**Jonas Family Farm**

## Plans for Community Gardens Underway

Community gardens are bringing seeds of hope to urban communities. The concept of the garden is to provide quality food to gardening participants. As those of us who garden know, there are multiple benefits from planting a seed and watching it grow; food budgets are expanded, there is physical exercise involved and mental health benefits from being outside and connecting with neighbors. Less obvious benefits

can be far reaching: bonds forming between gardeners, neighborhood enhancement and even a decrease in crime in neighborhoods where gardens exist. Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE) currently works with gardens in St. Louis, Kansas City, Warrenton, Washington and Lincoln counties.

*Want to start a garden in  
your neighborhood?  
Lincoln University  
Cooperative Extension can  
help!*



## High Tunnel Production

What's the latest innovation in small scale agriculture? High tunnels! These affordable structures add valuable time to the growing season, allowing producers to extend their harvest and plant earlier in Spring. What's the difference between a high tunnel and a greenhouse? According to the University of Missouri at Columbia (MU), a greenhouse is a structure with glass or plastic roof and frequently glass or plastic walls; filled with equipment



like screening installations, heating, cooling and lighting. A high tunnel is a plastic covered hoop house, which has no supplemental heat and is tall enough for entry of small equipment. A waterline for drip irrigation is the only connection needed for crop production.

Salad greens, herbs and other cool weather tolerant crops thrive in the high tunnel environment.

## Hoop House Workshop Scheduled

Speaking of high tunnels...Would you like to have one but hesitate at the cash outlay? On Saturday, April 24, the ISFOP offered a workshop on hoop house construction with the farmer's budget in mind. The guest speaker was Joe Perkins. Perkins recalls gardening as one of his earliest memories. Growing up in a family of 10, producing and preserving food was a necessity! As an adult, Perkins worked in the computer and data processing field and also served as a pastor. "After traveling to Haiti on a mission trip, I saw the need for the development of a sustainable food supply. I began spending time there, working in their rocky soil." Joining with other missionaries, Perkins began teaching the residents of Haiti how to increase their food production by installing raised beds. Soon after, he began

hoop house construction. "We began building 14 foot x 20 foot units and eventually graduated to 18 foot x 40 foot houses."

In addition to his work in Haiti, Perkins works in Ti'Paradis and has served as the catalyst for a thriving gardening project there. He says, "Greens, carrots and cabbage grow in the shade houses. Papaya and bananas are growing in the pot holes that are filled with compost, sifted dirt and lots of donkey manure!" Innovative and low cost installations are key to the continuance of these projects. Perkins joined with other partners to form Global Compassion Ministries, a multi-faceted ministry organization. "Besides our work in Haiti, we have also built a large shade house for an orphanage in Honduras and

done some work in Mexico." Perkins is currently taking an active role in the Community Garden Project at First Baptist Church in Troy.

The workshop on the 24th is centered on the construction of the hoop house. Participants gained satisfaction and new knowledge of hoop house construction. Mini sessions were also offered on plant grafting, heirloom vegetable varieties, and compost and potting mediums. Plans for the hoop house are still available.

Contact David Price  
(636) 358-7097  
if you are interested in  
hosting a hoop house  
workshop in your area

## Urban Agriculture Takes Off in St. Louis

One focus of our Innovative Small Farm program is working with St. Louis city and county on urban agriculture projects. For the past several years, City Seeds and New Roots Urban Farm were the two main urban farms in St. Louis. Recent additions to the urban farming scene include: Boxwood Garden, a for-profit nursery and café that now grows vegetables for their Central West End café and The Burning Kumquat, a student run urban farm on the campus of Washington University.

Recently, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and MU Extension teamed up to offer the Grow Your Farm business planning course for beginning farmers at Schlafly Bottleworks in Maplewood. Incredibly, over half our participants want to start urban farm projects! With such a large number of burgeoning urban farmers, we wanted to highlight some of these new projects and this major trend towards farming in cities.

New projects in St. Louis include the North Area Development Corp., a group in North City St. Louis that hopes to utilize the large amount of land owned by churches to start several greenhouses and youth jobs training program. Slow Rocket is probably the newest urban farm just "breaking ground" in the antique district on Cherokee street in south city. The 13<sup>th</sup> Street Garden is starting its third season on half an acre in Old North St. Louis growing vegetables for the North City Farmers Market.

Two other Grow Your Farm participants, Chris Clark and Cara Marie Spencer, are both in the planning stages of starting two more urban farms in south city. And, last but not least, Earth Dance Farm in north St. Louis County just took on 30 apprentices to their two acre sub-urban plot. They'll be spending the summer learning how to grow and direct market organic vegetables.

During World War II, Victory Gardens produced 40% of all produce consumed by Americans after just two seasons of gardening. This shows the potential for small-scale activity making a big difference [Department of Defense studies taken from Ken Meters 2009 article "The Potential for Urban Agriculture"]. With a changing economy and a growing focus on local and healthy foods, urban communities across the nation are responding by finding creative ways of bringing the food system right into their backyards. With so many new and diverse urban food projects, St. Louis finds itself swept up in the current trend towards urban self sufficiency and local food systems.

*Please contact ISFOP, if you would like more information on any of these specific urban farm projects and we'll start planning an urban farm tour!*



# ISFOP



If you are a small farmer and have a need for information, please contact one of the following Farm Outreach Workers. These people live and work in your community. They can provide information on ways to better manager your resources, reduce expense and increase income. They can also provide information on other available programs and resources that may increase your income and 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.

**Contact Information:**

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- ◆ Vonna Kesel, program secretary

## Meet the ISFOP East Central Region Outreach Team

**Trish Grim** is the Regional Small Farm Specialist with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program. Trish spends one half of her time coordinating the work of ISFOP throughout the East Central region and the rest of her time as the Farm Outreach Worker (FOW) for St. Louis County. She is based in St. Louis city and works one on one with farmers, both rural and urban, providing technical assistance and research based information to increase both yields and farm profits. Her work in St. Louis County focuses primarily on urban agriculture where she works directly with refugee and minority populations through hands-on workshops focused on composting, marketing, intensive -profits, co-coordinating a low-income farmers market, and educational programming for both youth and adults on food production.

**Kevin Krause** is the FOW for Jefferson and Washington counties. Kevin received a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Conservation and Management from Missouri State University in 2002. Since graduating he has worked with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) as a Fisheries Technician and Ducks Unlimited as the Regional Director of Southeast Missouri. He grew up outside of Washington on the family farm. There he

embraced rural living as he assisted his family raising livestock, grain crops and vegetables. Kevin and his family reside outside of Washington.

**David Price** earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Middle Childhood Education from Missouri Baptist University. Beginning in 2000 David and his wife began a small beef cattle enterprise on their Lincoln County farm. In 10 short years it has flourished into a business that supplies over 200 families with locally grown, all-natural, Angus beef. Beginning in 2010 David joined the ISFOP team to serve in St. Charles and Lincoln counties as a FOW. David and his family reside in Lincoln County.

**Janet Hurst** is the FOW for Franklin and Warren counties. Janet is a certified cheesemaker through the University of Vermont and the author of "Homemade Cheese" a homestead guide to making cheese. She has also studied cheesemaking in Maine, Canada and Israel. Janet has been published extensively in such magazines as the Mother Earth News, Countryside, the Dairy Goat Journal, Mary Jane's Farm as well as other national and regional publications. She enjoys gardening, preserving food for her family and working with dairy animals.

**Dear farmers and friends:**

**It is with a heavy heart that I leave my position as Small Farm Specialist with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension. I have learned so much from each of you and will carry these experiences with me as I now transition to farming. My family and I have decided to try our hands at farming full-time! We're moving to the northeast part of the state, where we plan to farm commercially and homestead with our little one, Emory. While we move to an exciting future, I thank you for the opportunity to work and learn together.**

**Deepest regards,**

**Trish Grim**

**Small Farm Specialist**