

Upcoming Meetings to Provide Ideas on Enhancing Crop Income

By Rob Myers, Executive Director

At the Jefferson Institute, we have had many callers ask "what can I grow to make money besides commodity crops?" Many of our callers are experienced farmers, but others are new landowners just getting into farming, often part-time. For farmers and landowners looking for profitable crops, or ag advisors working with producers, we are teaming up with the Missouri Department of Agriculture to offer November meetings on specialty crops. These half-day meetings, jointly sponsored by MU Extension, will be repeated in three locations: Chillicothe, Mexico and Osage Beach. We are expecting to have additional meetings of this type at other Missouri locations during mid-February.

Our goal with these meetings is to have crop specialists and producers talk about the markets, economics and production issues associated with a wide variety of specialty crops. We will have speakers discussing specialty grains and oilseeds, crops for the birdseed market, horticultural options, agroforestry and growing native plants for resale. We anticipate having at the meeting some buy-

ers for selected crops. Attendees will also receive written reference materials on many of the specialty crops being discussed, including seed sources and lists of buyers and markets. Overall strategies for selecting and marketing specialty crops will be covered, as well.

Pre-registration for these half-day meetings is requested, and lunch is included in the advance registration price of \$10 (\$15 at the door). To register, call the Jefferson Institute at 573-449-3518.

Monday, November 11, 2002

Chillicothe, MO - Grand River Inn
located at the intersection of Highways 65 & 36
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 12, 2002

Mexico, MO - Audrain County 4-H Building
21509 Highway D
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 19, 2002

Osage Beach, MO - Tan-Tar-A Resort
Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture
11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Farmer's Corner: Mike & Richard Rice, Greenville, MO

By Cortney Miller, Communications Specialist

Mike and Richard Rice are a great example of a farm family diversifying their cropland as recognized by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Last year the Rices, of Pettis County, received a 2001 Missouri Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Award (see inside cover) to evaluate buckwheat grain and annual lespedeza seed production as an economic alternative to soybeans as a double-crop after winter wheat.

The project showed that alternative double-crop options do pay off. Compared to double-crop soybeans yielding 17 bushels per acre producing \$80.92 per acre, the buckwheat yielded 1,728 pounds per acre providing \$216 per acre. The lespedeza yielded 1,071 pounds that produced \$267.75 per acre. The herbicide costs for buckwheat and lespedeza were less than soybeans, but the seed costs were higher. After calculating seed and herbicide costs, both the buckwheat and lespedeza showed a better profit potential compared to double-crop soybeans. According to Mike Rice, a bonus to adding alternative crops was that it helped prevent soil erosion.

In addition to lespedeza and buckwheat, the Rices have grown canola and specialty grass seeds and forage crops.



Pearl Millet: Waiting for it's Day in the Sun

By Jim Quinn, Crop Specialist

There has been encouraging progress with semi-dwarf grain pearl millet over the last decade. Leading the way was the hybrid HGM 100, developed by a USDA-ARS breeder in Georgia. It matures in about 120 days in the Southern Corn Belt. Another hybrid closely followed, HGM 686, which was developed by University of Nebraska and had a slightly shorter maturity of about 110 days. The newest hybrid (yet to be named) is one to be released by the Georgia USDA program this winter, and with a maturity of about 90-95 days in Missouri, it has potential for double-cropping after wheat.

The advantages of grain-type pearl millet over a number of other cereals include its drought and heat tolerance, ability to tiller (often compensating for a poor stand), and good performance on sandy soils. While similar to sorghum, it has the benefit of maturing earlier, and does not seem to produce an irritating dust during harvest, unlike sorghum.

The primary market for grain-type pearl millet is expected to be the poultry feed market, with a modest amount going into that market in Georgia during the 1990s. Outside of Georgia, pearl millet has not yet gained acceptance into the poultry market, though it has good feed value. Another challenge is the price paid for poultry feed. Pearl millet sold into this market will be priced relative to corn, in the range of \$0.04 a pound. With current pearl millet hybrids yielding 4000-4500 pounds per acre in Missouri, the income potential for pearl millet sold for poultry is low. If pearl millet is double cropped after wheat, especially in the southern half of Missouri, this income of \$150 to \$180 per acre may be satisfactory. However, using pearl millet as the sole crop in a growing season requires a higher priced market.

A higher priced market for pearl millet can sometimes be found as part of wild birdseed mixes. It has the potential to be substituted for proso millet, which is a major ingredient in many wild birdseed mixes. Some of the same song birds which eat proso millet will eat pearl millet. However, the companies that package and distribute these products like the round, glossy look of proso, as compared to the dull tan and oblong appearance of pearl millet. While pearl millet is well-adapted to Missouri production, proso millet fairs poorly in Missouri, being better adapted to the western Great Plains

A recent spike in proso millet prices has stimulated renewed interest from the wild bird feed sector in pearl millet. Why this time? It's the second time in three years that proso millet prices have jumped from \$0.04 per pound to nearly \$0.15 per pound. This price spike has made the prospect of locally-produced pearl millet more appealing to birdseed buyers. Buckheit in east-central Missouri (800-622-7937, ask for Dave Danker), is one possible outlet for pearl millet as birdseed. Farmers growing pearl millet for the birdseed

market should seek an acreage contract with a firm price. If pearl millet is grown without a guaranteed market, it would have to be blended as low-value livestock feed (feed value is equivalent to corn). Birdseed packagers may also have a preference as to which variety of pearl millet is grown, due to minor seed color differences. HGM 686 would probably be the better full season choice (planted early June), while the new Georgia hybrid has good potential as a double crop.

Croszyton Seeds in Texas sells HGM 686 (800-628-6551). By mid-winter we should have the name or number and seed dealer contact for the new Georgia hybrid.

Celiac Disease and Grain Amaranth: Addressing the Need for Gluten-Free

By Jaime Steiner

Individuals with celiac disease cannot tolerate ingestion of gluten-containing products such as wheat, rye and barley. Sensitivity and reactions vary from person to person. In order to control symptoms, celiac patients must follow a gluten-free diet. Amaranth is a gluten-free, high protein grain that can be ground into flour and used in baked products. Amaranth flour allows gluten-intolerant individuals to incorporate baked goods such as cereals, breads and pastas into their everyday diet. Not only is amaranth gluten-free, but it also contains 14-16% protein and a balanced amino acid profile rich in lysine. Anyone can benefit from eating amaranth, but for a celiac, amaranth can be a lifesaver.

Got a Great Idea to Try on Your Farm? Need Funds to Make it Happen?

If you answered yes to these questions, the Missouri Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with University of Missouri Extension, has funds you can apply for. These agencies are offering 23 competitive grants to help Missouri farmers test their sustainable agriculture ideas on their own farms. Each selected project, which should focus on reducing dependence on non-renewable resources and/or conserving natural resources such as air, soil and water, will be awarded up to \$3,000. Grant funds are yours to keep, but the program requires you to provide matching labor and/or funds on the project.

The application is due November 30, 2002, and is available at the following website:

<http://agebb.missouri.edu/sustain/sagdemo/modemoap.htm>.

The Jefferson Institute will be glad to help you submit an application for this program as well as answer any questions you may have. Contact us at 573-449-3518 for more information.

Markets for Missouri Sunflowers

One advantage of sunflowers over other Missouri specialty crops is the in-state market. With the majority of sunflower production in the Dakotas, Kansas, Minnesota and Texas, Missouri producers have a decided transportation advantage when selling to these buyers. The map below provides examples of regional buyers of sunflowers for the birdseed market. This list does not represent all available buyers in the region. Other marketing options may exist, including your local cooperative and garden centers or hardware stores. Some farmers have chosen to produce and market their own birdseed. Producers are urged to explore these markets and other options for contracting and/or marketing of their sunflower crop.

Three quality parameters are important for the birdseed market: moisture, test weight and foreign material. Typically, moisture must be at 10% or less and minimum test weight varies between 27 and 28 lbs/bushel for the various companies. Some companies also set a maximum foreign material content at 5%. Buyers may also have minimum purchase requirements. Contact individual companies for details.



BUCHHEIT AGRI

Contact: Dave Danker
33 Perry Corporation Road 540
Perryville, MO 63775
(573) 547-4569 or 1198
(800) 622-7937

CUSTOMIX CORPORATION

Contact: Tom Cravens
433 East Commercial
Marshfield, MO 65706
(417) 468-6685

GEORGE KELLER & SONS

Contact: George Keller
909 Maine Street
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 228-6700

LOUTRE VALLEY SEEDS

Contact: Craig Timmerberg
968 Highway J
New Florence, MO 63363
(573) 252-4283

MFA, INC.

Sunflower Delivery Point
2200 Clinton
Sedalia, MO 65301
Purchasing Agent: Lisa Heis
(573) 876-5346

MISSOURI SOUTHERN SEED

Contact: Doug Hartman
PO Box 699
Rolla, MO 65402
(800) 844-1336

ORSCHELN'S

Contact: Ken Gregg
101 West Coates Street
Moberly, MO 65270
(660) 269-3519

PENNINGTON SEED

Contact: Kevin Neill
PO Box 338
Greenfield, MO 65661
(800) 658-0410

WESTLAKE'S HARDWARE

Contact: Lee Shaner
15501 West 99th Street
Lenexa, KS 66219
(800) 848-4307 ext. 2310

Calendar of Events

October 31-November 2, 2002

National Small Farm Trade Show & Conference
Columbia, MO

November 11, 12 & 19, 2002

Specialty Crop Meetings
(see front page)

November 12, 2002

Native Plant Workshop for Professionals
Kansas City, MO

(For more information, call: 800-633-2535)

November 17-19, 2002

Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture
Osage Beach, MO

November 22, 2002

Agritourism Conference
Sedalia, MO

(For more information, call: 785-865-0617)

*This newsletter is printed on 100% kenaf paper,
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The Jefferson Institute staff would like to thank everyone who stopped by to see us at the Missouri State Fair in August. We enjoyed talking with you!



The Thomas Jefferson Agricultural Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit education and research center based in Columbia, MO. For more information, contact us at (573) 449-3518 or by email at: info@jeffersoninstitute.org.



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