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## Cover Crops: Managing Healthy Soils

The Cover Crop Workshop was held at the Bradford Research and Extension Center on May 12, 2011. The majority in attendance were beginning farmers interested in incorporating cover crops into their planting rotations of field and vegetable crops. The workshop agenda included four guest speakers as well as field tours of MU's Bradford Farm and Jefferson Farm & Gardens.

The morning began with speaker Robert Kremer, a microbiologist at the University of Missouri, who described the dynamic soil microbial community and how cover crops increase microbial diversity and activity. The next speaker was Clark

Gantzer a professor of soil and water conservation. His talk focused on the soil and water conservation benefits



**Tim Reinbott talking about the crimson clover behind him at Bradford Farm.**

of winter cover crops including increasing infiltration, binding soil particles, and slowing surface water. James Quinn, the regional horticulture specialist with MU Extension, shared experiences

of local farmers using cover crops in vegetable rotations, while Tim Reinbott, the Bradford Superintendent, went into detail about the different cover crops and how to manage them for field crop rotations.

Participants then were led on a tour of the fields at Bradford Farm where the cover crops hairy vetch, winter rye, and crimson clover were growing. The tour continued with a stop at Jefferson Farm & Gardens to view Austrian winter peas, buckwheat, canola, winter rye, and crimson clover. Feedback from the workshop indicated workshop goers were excited to experiment with growing cover crops in the future.

## Information at Your Fingertips

For great resources on getting started in farming, check out our website at [missouribeginningfarmers.org](http://missouribeginningfarmers.org). We have searched out the best resources on helping new farmers select enterprises, find financial resources, learn about marketing alternatives, and delve into financial management.

Updated information about regulations regarding labor and direct marketing in Missouri is also available.

The website also contains an updated calendar of events which lists our workshops and Grow Your Farm sessions as well as conferences and workshops of interest to new farmers.

New farmers who use social media can read our daily blog at [missouribeginning-farming.blogspot.com](http://missouribeginning-farming.blogspot.com) and also join us on Facebook under Missouri Beginning Farmers Program.

## Grow Your Farm Leads Son Home



Members of the Grow Your Farm class check out a high tunnel opera-

Justin Knoll strolled underneath the sun-screen netting that sheltered the potted flowers, grasses and other plants that are staples of Seven Cedars Farm.

While other 20-somethings have left the farm, Justin recently returned to manage the family farm in Jonesburg.

His parents, John and Melissa Knoll, decided to diversify with the help of the Grow Your Farm program.

"We want to give Justin an op-

portunity as a young farmer to succeed," John Knoll said. "We had ideas coming in, but the program reinforced our plans, gave us direction and actually excited my son and made him eager."

At the Warrenton MU Extension center last winter, the Knolls attended Grow Your Farm classes with six other families, including those with established farms, some with "town jobs," and those without land who are just

now deciding to get into farming.

"It's about helping them think more holistically about their land, what's available to them and how they might use those resources to better allow them to do the thing they love most," said Shelley Bush Rowe, MU Extension community development specialist in Warrenton. "It could be as simple as looking at a different way to package their product, at a different group of consumers or clients to  
(continued on page 3)

### Ag is Changing... Like it or Not

Social media has taken its threshold within the agricultural community by allowing producers to promote a positive message for agriculture in a time where there are many critics.

- 450 million people on mobile internet
- 68 million bloggers
- 500 million Facebook users
- 55 million tweets  
(Lane McConnell, Marketing Consultant)

Chris Blanchard of Rock Springs Farm in Iowa jump-started the monthly webinars in February.



The Missouri Beginning Farmer Program's online learning community will include archived monthly webinars on topics of interest to beginning farmers.

Other tools on the online learning community will include webinar chats with successful farmers, forum discussions on topics such as grass-based farming, tractors and equipment, and more. Also included on the online learning community will be hand-out materials, PowerPoint presentations and pictures from past and future face-to-face short courses and workshops.

Over time we anticipate adding a farmer mentoring component as well. Presently you will find the Chris Blanchard webinar titled "Ten Things to Think About When You Start Farming," "Pastured Poultry" with Curtis Millsap,

"Beginning Organic Farming" with Liz Graznak and "Soils Basics" with Joel Gruver as well as the 2010 workshop materials (Growing Producers for Local Markets; Tractors 101; Growing Produce for Local Markets; Berry Options and Production and Direct Marketing Options) and two discussion forums.

There are four steps to join the Online Learning Community:

1. <https://extweb.missouri.edu/accountmanager/login.aspx>
  2. <http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu/15PR-Moodle/CreatePassportOnly.pdf>
  3. <https://extweb.missouri.edu/courses/>
  4. [http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu/15PR-Moodle/Account%20Manager-1\\_FindACourse-PI/Account%20Manager-1\\_FindACourse-PI.shtm](http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu/15PR-Moodle/Account%20Manager-1_FindACourse-PI/Account%20Manager-1_FindACourse-PI.shtm)
- Upcoming topics for future

webinars are listed below. Each month go to the Missouri Beginning Farmers Program online learning community website or the Missouri Beginning Farmers Program blog <http://missouribeginningfarming.blogspot.com/> to get the URL to attend each webinar.

**June 6, 13, 20** - Social Media Marketing with Lane McConnell, Ozark Farm and Neighbor  
**July 11, 18, 25** - Selling at Farmers' Markets: The Do's and Don'ts with Andy Larson, Iowa State Univ  
**Aug 1, 8, 15** - Direct Marketing of Meat with Mark Mahnken, Missouri Legacy Beef  
**Sept 12, 19, 26** - SARE Farmer/Rancher Grants with Debi Kelly, MU  
**Oct 3, 10, 17** - Beginning Beekeeping with Art Gelder, Walk-About Acres  
**Nov 7, 14, 21** - Value Added Agriculture

## Upcoming Workshops



*Hands-on installation of a high tunnel is a focus at the June 8-11th workshop.*

The Missouri Beginning Farmers Program will host numerous workshops this coming summer and fall. More information and the registration forms can be found at <http://beginningfarmers.missouri.edu/>

### June 9-11 - High Tunnel Production and Installation Workshop

Location: Springfield, MO  
 Registration: \$25 for production part of workshop to be held in the evenings (limited to 50 people) and \$50 for installa-

tion part of workshop to be held during the day (limited to 25 people). RSVP by June 6th, [byerspl@missouri.edu](mailto:byerspl@missouri.edu) or 417-881-8909.

### June 22-23 - Beginning Organic Production Systems Workshop

Location: Bradford Research and Extension Center, 4968 Rangeline Road, Columbia, MO.  
 Cost is \$25/person. Limit of 30 people.

### July 12 - Berry Options and Production Workshop

Location: Lafayette County Extension Center, Higginsville, MO

Cost is \$20/person. Limit of 30 people.

### August 3 - Direct Marketing Options Workshop

Location: Concordia Lutheran Church, 7291 Sarah St., St. Louis, MO 63143 (across from Schlafly's Bottleworks).

### August 18-19 - Accessing Federal Programs and Conservation Practices Workshop

Location: Bradford Research and Extension Center, 4968 Rangeline Road, Columbia, MO.

### Oct 7-8 - Blueberry Production Workshop

Location: Springfield, MO

### Oct mid month - Cheese Making for Profit

Location: Southwest MO

### Oct late in the month - Organic Farming Workshop

Location: south of St. Louis, MO

*“Walking through a farmers’ market with a chef at the Direct Marketing Options Workshop hit home for me.”*

*Caroline Todd, Columbia, MO*

## Grow Your Farm continued...

buy their product, or diversifying their income opportunities.”

With help from the class, the Knolls now have a plan to bolster their hay sales and expand their greenhouse operation from 650 square feet to 4,000 square feet by next year. They also outlined ideas to expand their grass-fed Simmental cattle sales and incorporate Justin’s budding photography business in the next five years.

“We learned from the class, but also learned from each

other,” said Melissa Knoll. “We met so many new people, from people wanting to be farmers to ones who had 500 acres.”

The program inspired her family to apply and receive a grant to construct a high tunnel. “We would have never even pursued that if not for the Grow Your Farm program,” she said.

Justin Knoll is optimistic about the farm’s future and how he can incorporate his interests into the big picture.

“Scenery is important to the type of photography I’d like to be doing,” he said. “Developing the photography business as part of our farm’s plans is another thing to add value and income.”

*Check our website ([missouribeginningfarmers.org](http://missouribeginningfarmers.org)) for more information on upcoming Grow Your Farm classes. Many start in January and February.*



## Missouri Beginning Farmers Program

Find us on the web at <http://missouribeginningfarmers.org>

Tele: 573-882-3776 (Univ of MO)

Tele: 573-449-3518 (Jefferson Institute)

For more information about upcoming events and programs contact:

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**Returning to the Farm:** Kevin Moore: [moorek@missouri.edu](mailto:moorek@missouri.edu)/573-882-0144 or Ken Schneeberger: [schneebergerk@missouri.edu](mailto:schneebergerk@missouri.edu)/573-882-8777.

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This Missouri Beginning Farmers Program is funded by a grant from USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture. Our three year program provides farm planning and mentorship opportunities, and educational workshops on specific topics of interest to Missouri's new and beginning farmers.

## Upcoming Events

The **Entrepreneurship Project for Agriculture**, another grant-funded effort for Missouri's Beginning Farmers, offers a cohort training program covering the basics of starting an entrepreneurial business in agriculture. Two more cohorts will start four week-long training sessions in 2011 and 2012. These training sessions include travel around Missouri and the United States to visit successful alternative farming businesses. For more information on the project, call Jill Lucht at 573-884-3185 or check out their blog at [muagentrepreneur.wordpress.com](http://muagentrepreneur.wordpress.com).

Be on the lookout this fall for the **Grow Your Farm** course to be offered near St. Clair, MO. For more information contact Dean Wilson at 636-797-5391 or [wilsondw@missouri.edu](mailto:wilsondw@missouri.edu)

Other classes will be forming for the **Grow Your Farm** course that will start in late January or early February. To find out when and where classes will be, go to <http://extension.missouri.edu/growyourfarm/>



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



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