This newsletter is intended for people interested in commercial fruit and vegetable production, business planning and North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service meetings throughout North Carolina. For back issues of this newsletter please go to the Jones County Extension website and click on the Commercial Horticulture, Nursery & Turf menu option on the left side of the website. The website address is: http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu

Upcoming Workshops, Tours & Meetings

August 1, 2006. Strawberry Pre-Plant Meeting. 6 PM – 8 PM. Lenoir County Extension Center. Topics will include weed management, irrigation & fertilizer management and a discussion on methyl bromide alternatives. Dinner included – pre-registration required. See enclosed meeting flier.


August 15, 2006. Commercial Horticulture Advisory Committee Meeting. 6 PM. Jones County Senior Center.

August 16, 2006. Precision Vegetable Seeder Demonstration. Richlands Farms, Richlands, NC. 3 PM. See enclosed meeting flier.

August 21, 2006. Small Farm Equipment & Cover Crop Workshop. 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM. Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), Goldsboro, NC. Call CEFS at (919) 513-0954 for more information.

September 18, 2006. Season Extension of Vegetable Crops Workshop. 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. CEFS, Goldsboro, NC. Call CEFS at (919) 513-0954 for more information.

October 16, 2006. High Tunnel Greenhouse Production Workshop. 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. CEFS, Goldsboro, NC. Call CEFS at (919) 513-0954 for more information.

November 10-12, 2006. 21st Annual Tomato Disease Workshop. Mountain Horticultural Research & Extension Center, Fletcher, NC. Registration deadline October 23, 2006. Fee $50, $60 at the door. Contact Dr. Kelly Ivors at Kelly_Ivors@ncsu.edu for more information.
November 9-11, 2006. Southeast Strawberry Expo. Sunset Beach, NC (near Wilmington, NC). Contact the NCSA office at (919) 542-3687 for more information.

**Business Planning & Management**

**Finding the Entrepreneurial Spirit**

I have received a few calls in recent months from people interested in starting a new farm venture (supply). I also receive a regular number of calls from people interested in buying organic produce (demand). So does supply + demand = instant success? Obviously the answer to this is no.

For those of you already producing fruit or vegetables in eastern NC you understand the difficulties both economic and environmental involved in producing fruit and vegetable crops using conventional practices. Growing produce using organic methods merely adds to this challenge.

Most of you are aware of the growing demand for organic production. However, before you dive into a wholesale change in your production practices, or before you shift 100 acres of conventional field crop production over to organic field crop production, or fruit and vegetable production (organic or not), or start any new venture, there are a number of things that must be considered.

The key for most of us is deciding whether or not we have an entrepreneurial spirit. In many ways we all do, but I hope to define this a bit better to help you decide how much you do have before sinking lots of money into a venture.

Do you have the entrepreneurial drive to make your idea work? What kind of lifestyle expectations do you have, and will this new venture fit? What resources do you already have, or will you need to make this new venture work? Have you written a mission statement? And finally, what are the goals and objectives of this venture?

Obviously not all entrepreneurs come out of the same cookie cutter mold. They cross age, gender, income and educational levels of all kinds. The Small Business & Technology Development Center program, “Tilling the Soils of Opportunity...” define entrepreneurs using eleven key characteristics.

1. Passion
2. Persistence
3. Good Health & High Energy
4. Creativity & Innovation
5. Independence and Self-Reliance
6. Intuition
7. Self-Confidence
8. Market Awareness
9. Lack of Need for Status
10. Ability to Accept Challenges
11. Hard Work Ethics
12. Commonality of all Traits

In many ways, this list is self explanatory. You either have some or all of these traits in you, or you don’t. Many of these traits come shining through in people throughout the agriculture industry. Think about the people you buy and sell parts and services from. Which of these characteristics do you see that best reflects the chemical sales rep you work with? Which of these characteristics do you most admire in your number one farm employee? Which of
them do you feel is most limiting in a family member or coworker? As with anything in life, some of us are blessed with more of one characteristic than another.

One of the most valuable lessons I learned at Kansas State University, while working on my Masters degree, came from Dr. Allan Featherstone, my corporate finance professor. He said, “The goal of this masters program is to not only help you learn the material in the classes, but to help you recognize the things you are good at, the things you are not good at, and to hire people to do those things for you that you are not good at.” Needless to say I am not working in corporate finance today.

His comments apply as much to entrepreneurship as they do to corporate finance or any other aspect of business. If you are not a patient or persistent person, you need to find a partner that can calm your nerves or be the “bull in the china shop” that can close the sale or open a door for you and your products.

Entrepreneurs are successful because they have enough of all these characteristics inside them to succeed. They have the desire to make a new venture work. They have the market awareness to know where the most market growth potential is today (organics?). They have an understanding of the industry, its demands and risks, and they know how to accept the challenges that go with them. Mainly, they succeed because they know how to recognize their weaknesses and how to overcome them. Do you?

Onslow Farmer Market Update

The Onslow County Farmers Market celebrated their Grand Opening and building dedication on June 24, 2006. There were a number of activities and festivities held at the market that day. State and local dignitaries were in attendance. You can read more about this day at the Onslow County Cooperative Extension Service website at [http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu](http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu) or the Jones County website at [http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu](http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu). This information is posted under the Commercial Horticulture menu option on both websites.

The Onslow County Farmers Market Board is pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. Larry Kent to the position of part-time market manager. Mr. Kent’s role at the market will be to help facilitate market vendor set up, coordinate and promote market activities, with the assistance of NC Cooperative Extension staff in Onslow County and other county officials, increase farmer participation and keep the market board informed of issues related to the daily activities at the market.

Mr. Kent brings a wealth of business experience, greenhouse production, and vegetable & cut flower production to the job. If you are interested in selling produce or other home made products at the farmers market, he can be contacted at (910) 349-0009.

Crop Production

Cucumber Downy Mildew Now Widespread in Eastern North Carolina

From: Gerald J. Holmes, Extension Plant Pathologist, NC State University

“Since June 30, 2006, downy mildew has been confirmed on cucumber from the following locations: Swan Quarter (Hyde County), 4 fields in the Nash-Edgecombe County area, Clinton (Sampson County) and Harrellsville.
(Hertford County). I have had telephone calls reporting suspected downy mildew from other areas, but have not yet been able to confirm the reports.

In most cases the disease is just getting started, but in at least one location (Clinton) it looks like symptoms developed approximately 7 to 10 days ago, putting symptom appearance around June 21. With so many fields having the disease within a short time frame, it looks as though there was a widespread inoculation event coinciding with heavy rains.

Fortunately, according to Phil Denlinger of Mt. Olive Pickle Company, the spring crop is now complete. It is the summer crop that is most in danger. Most plantings for the summer crop will begin in a couple of weeks. Growers should be aware that downy mildew is present and that chemical control is necessary to control the disease. A disease control program that has worked well over the last couple of years is outlined below:

Tanos plus mancozeb alternated on a 5- to 7-day interval with Previcur Flex plus Bravo. Remember that mancozeb has a 5-day preharvest interval (PHI) and Tanos and Previcur Flex have 3-day and 2-day PHI’s, respectively.

Other products that have shown good activity against downy mildew of cucumber in North Carolina include Ranman and Gavel. Recent fungicide trial results can be accessed online at http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/cucurbit/control_temp.php. Downy mildew can infect plants at all stages of growth including just after emergence. Once infection occurs, the disease is much more difficult to control.

Remember that the Cucurbit Downy Mildew forecasting website (see http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/cucurbit/) contains information on field disease identification and a photo gallery. Disease outbreaks should first be verified by a reputable pathologist, then reported via the website.”

**Precision Vegetable Seeder Field Day**

Please save Thursday, August 16, 2006 at 3 PM (See the enclosed field day flier) to come to Richlands Farms in Onslow County to spend two hours learning the intricacies of the precision vegetable seeder that was purchased with the grant from the Rural Advancement Foundation Institute (RAFI). A two row version of the precision planter will be available for you to take apart, study and ask questions about. Please call in advance to indicate interest in participating in this field demonstration. I hope you can take time to come see it first hand on August 16, 2006

**Contact your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service office for more information.**

**If you have questions about any of the upcoming meetings, business strategies, or crop production management issues, please call me at the Jones County Extension Center at (252) 448-9621. I can also be reached by email at: Mark_Seitz@ncsu.edu.**

**Sincerely,**

Mark Seitz
Extension Area Specialized Agent
Agriculture—Commercial Horticulture