



WEST VIRGINIA GROWN E-NEWSLETTER

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Spring—Flurry of Activity

With spring comes a flurry of activity. As the delightful colors of spring burst out, the countryside comes alive. A new crop of calves and lambs begin to appear and pasture fields grow greener by the day. Gardens get underway ensuring a supple supply of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season. Daylight Saving Time seems to make everything brighten up a bit. However, the weather has been slow to adjust with the change of the season. With our recent warm up, perhaps many of you will begin making preparations for the upcoming farmers' market and fairs and festivals season.

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We have an abundance of farmers' markets and fairs and festivals throughout West Virginia that serve as an excellent opportunity for West Virginia producers to direct market their quality products. While making your plans for the spring and summer months that lie ahead, we hope that topics in this newsletter will help in your marketing approach.

This is an e-newsletter for West Virginia fresh and value-added food producers. If you know someone who would like to receive this via email or you plan to switch to a new email address, please email bbrabham@ag.state.wv.us or call the office at 558-2210 with the new contact information.

Please share any marketing opportunities you find with us and it may appear in the next issue of this newsletter. If you discover any interesting market information at tradeshow, reading trade publications or through your own research and would like to share it, please submit it to bbrabham@ag.state.wv.us or call our office at 304/558-2210 with the details to have it considered for publication.

Agritourism Update

West Virginia Department of Agriculture's Agritourism Conference, held on February 7, 2007 at the Days Inn Conference Center in Flatwoods, WV, was a foundational success despite the hazardous wintry storm we endured. The enthusiasm was electrifying. Nationally renowned agritourism expert, Jane Eckert provided insight into growing tourism 'country style'. Attendees also learned about hospitality training available through the WV HEAT program, tourism tools for agritourism ventures, and liability and insurance issues. The highlight of the conference was the unveiling of the new "AgVentures" logo that will identify agritourism ventures throughout the Mountain State.



West Virginia's new "AgVentures" logo created to promote agritourism throughout the state. Available for use by agritourism ventures with permission from WVDA.

The "AgVentures" logo is now available for use by West Virginia agribusinesses interested in agritourism promotion. Like the WV Grown logo, companies are allowed to use the material but must indicate on what publications and/or items they will use it on through the agreement/ acceptance process. Agreement forms are available now for companies developing summer marketing materials. Email Connie Tolley at ctolley@ag.state.wv.us.

This logo does not replace the "WV Wild and Wonderful" logo used on state tourism grant program materials. Usage of the agritourism logo combined in place of the tourism logo according to the legislative standards will result in forfeiture of all eligible grant reimbursements. We do, however, encourage qualified companies to use the logo on printed, broadcast and internet materials and it can be used in combination with the tourism logo as long as it is submitted for approval and the copy follows placement and size requirements. Any questions about the forms should be directed to Director Jean Smith at jsmith@ag.state.wv.us.

The West Virginia Agritourism Resource Guide is currently being updated. Any revisions or additions should be submitted by May 1, 2007. The next agritourism conference is slated for September 28-29, 2007 at Lakeview Resort in Morgantown, WV. Contact Cindy Martel at 304/469-9738 or cmartel@ag.state.wv.us for more information about these exciting agritourism developments.

Trade Show Participation

Last quarter, we discussed the benefits that West Virginia companies have found from participating in the International Fancy Foods Show in New York. The account of these benefits caught the interest of several West Virginia companies. However, there is more to participating in a tradeshow of this magnitude than having an interest. Companies must be prepared.

Where there is trade, there is a trade show! Every day of the year, thousands of trade shows are being conducted in Holiday Inns, giant exposition halls, fancy resorts and just about anywhere with a meeting hall. The cost of exhibiting often represents as much as 25% to 100% of a company's "marketing budget." It also represents a significant hidden expense in time and effort preparing for the convention and follow up.

Is participation a good investment? Can you quantify the results? Could the investment have been better spent in additional business advertising or the hiring of one or more sales persons? There is no pat answer, because each industry is different and each vendor of products or services has unique marketing problems. Generally speaking, however, there is an obvious conclusion that can be reached. If trade show participation were not economically beneficial to exhibitors, there would be no exhibitors. Most businesses don't continue an activity that does not contribute to profit. Furthermore, many businesses depend on trade shows to provide a significant number of leads that will be worked during the following year.

The WVDA's Marketing & Development strives to help West Virginia companies assess their readiness to participate in specialty trade shows. If you are interested in expanding your marketing efforts to a national or international level, contact our office at 558-2210 to speak with a marketing specialist today. We can help identify prominent trade shows and potentially identify resources to help minimize your out-of-pocket expenses.

The National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) sponsors three premier international food trade events in the US, the three Fancy Food Shows annually connect 54,000 motivated buyers with 180,000 specialty food products. [Click here for information about joining NASFT.](#) The WVDA along with the West Virginia Development Office and West Virginia State University will help sponsor a delegation of exhibitors for the upcoming show in New York, July 8-10, 2007. Participating companies include: DeFluri's Fine Chocolates, RusLyn dba Poochies Choice, Blue Smoke, Lui Lui, ThistleDew, Isis/WV Aqua, Frank's Batter Up and Vita Specialty Foods, Inc. For more information about international marketing contact Marketing Specialist Cindy Martel at cmartel@ag.state.wv.us or by phone at 304/469-9738.

Cindy Martel has been selected by the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) to lead a reverse trade mission for China during the New York Fancy Foods Show. She will coordinate meetings for six to eight Chinese companies with southern US companies to provide trade opportunities.

International Marketing Update and Opportunities

To participate in any international marketing events, contact Cindy Martel at cmartel@ag.state.wv.us or Mary Legg at mlegg@ag.state.wv.us or call the Oak Hill Field Office at (304) 469-9738.

West Virginia companies participating in the New York Fancy Food Show will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Chinese, Indian, and Russian buyers during their trip to New York. Each of these missions is part of ongoing activities in their respective country through the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA).

A group of Chinese Buyers will be in the Eastern Panhandle on July 10, 2007 looking for gourmet food products and new suppliers. If you have not participated in an international event, a reverse trade mission is a great way to meet with buyers, learn what a market is looking for in terms of food products and establish relationship with key decision makers. There is no cost to participate in this event and interpreters will be provided, when necessary.

Korean buyers will travel to the United States for one-on-one meetings in Maryland during the week of May 16, 2007 while traveling to the National Restaurant Association trade show. The focus will be on foodservice items and the cost is \$50.00 to participate. Please contact Mary Legg at mlegg@ag.state.wv.us if you wish to participate in this event.

SUSTA will be conducting a Chef Training program at the John Folse Culinary Institute in May for a group of chefs from Mexico. They are accepting products from southern US companies to incorporate into the training. Another training will be conducted in late July with a group from the Caribbean. Look for a "Heart of Appalachia" menu and training to be conducted with West Virginia products for this group. If you are interested in having your products featured at either of these trainings, please contact Cindy Martel.

The West Virginia Development Office invites you to participate in their trade mission to Monterrey, Mexico on May 20 - 23, 2007. Since the implementation of NAFTA, Mexican imports from the U.S. have increased exponentially, totaling over \$130 billion in 2006. West Virginia's exports to Mexico have more than tripled in the past 5 years. Participation fee of \$250 includes business meeting arrangements, in-country transportation, interpreters, bi-lingual mission brochure, and receptions. Travel, lodging, and personal expenses are the responsibility of each company representative. The estimated total cost of the program will be \$1,600.00. For more information, contact: Debra Martin with the West Virginia Development Office at dmartin@NOSPAM.wvdo.org or by phone at 304-558-2234

Local Food—the New Organic

A recent *Time* magazine article highlighted the growing trend of consumers seeking locally grown foods as an alternative to the commercial organically grown foods found in mega-stores, such as Wal-Mart. The organic versus local debate has become one of the liveliest in the food world. For more about this debate see the *Time* article at www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1595245,00.html.

Consumers, who are concerned with buying local food, find an ideal venue at farmers' markets or farm stands. West Virginia has over 100 farmers' markets and farm stands. Farmers' markets offer a variety of locally grown and produced food, plants and fresh produce; and in some instances these markets have growers that grow their produce in an 'organic' way. While many growers may not be certified by the federal government as organic growers, they may strive to grow food naturally, not using synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Many small farmers just feel that organic certification is too costly and time consuming. However, if West Virginia growers choose to become certified organic growers, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture offers reimbursement for up to 90% of the cost of certification.

An alternative to farmers' markets is purchasing a farm share in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CSAs are a wonderfully market-driven idea: you join with others in your community to invest in a local farm. At the beginning of the season, members pay the farmer a lump sum. Each week, or perhaps once a month in the winter, the farm delivers fresh vegetables, and in some instances items like fruit, eggs and flowers, to a central location. You don't choose what the farmer grows. He does. You might get lettuce one week and then--if, say, a hailstorm hits the lettuce patch--none for several weeks after. Also, you're locked into a fixed amount of food each week, so if you don't feel like cooking for a couple nights in a row, you might feel guilty. The benefit of CSAs is that the food is affordable and phenomenally fresh, because it is delivered very soon after being picked. West Virginia has a few CSAs that have been quite successful. To learn more about developing a CSA, contact Marketing Specialist Tom Clark at tclark@ag.state.wv.us.

The relationships built on knowing the person who collects the eggs or grows the lettuce or picks the apples makes today's consumer feel good and have a sense of security in knowing where their food comes from. This transparency will continue to move consumers past 100% organic eggs or lettuce or apples for the elegance and sustainability of locally grown foods.

Local Foods & Restaurants

Good cooks understand that quality and origin are related because of the toll extracted by transportation of fresh foods. The local food cook plans his menus the way preindustrial cooks did, according to whatever local vendors offered that day. Maintaining a local food menu has some drawbacks, chefs must revamp menus on a frequent basis according to the season. And if restaurants are open year round, certain foods can't be found locally in winter months or may only be available for a few months of the year. However, many local food chefs understand that a restaurant that is strictly local would be impossible anywhere outside central California or other climatic ideal regions. Cooks who strive always to find local products first may also consider growing their own herbs or buying locally processed fruits and vegetables. This is an emerging market in West Virginia with restaurants and culinary programs like the Stonewall Resort's Stillwaters and Fairmont State's Culinary Institute seeking to develop local food menus for their clientele.

A grass-roots organization called the Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia is developing a network of growers in West Virginia to target high-end restaurants and gourmet, naturally-grown, local food enthusiast throughout the Appalachian region. The group with the help of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture will soon be posting the website www.wvfarm2U.org. To learn more about becoming involved in this organization contact Marketing Specialist Brandy Brabham at bbrabham@ag.state.wv.us.

By the River Creations Finds 'Soapy' Success



Migrating from being bank tellers to opening their own business was a dream finally realized by co-owners of By the River Creations, Carolyn Buzzard and Susie Milam. They worked together for several years at a local bank. But, their true passion was making wonderfully scented products. Carolyn and Susie decided to make a go at their passion in 2004. Each woman has her specialty, but their work together brings new items to the business. Handmade items such as lye soaps, body butters, lip balms, candles, and their specialty "Baby Bakery Cakes", either by the two women or on consignment from local craft artisans, can be found in their shop in Elkview, WV.

Carolyn is a proud descendent of a family of craft artisans and has inherited that penchant for the older crafts that she hopes can be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. She makes lye soap, not quite the way her grandmother made it, but with the same heart and care. Over the years, they have accumulated a vast amount of soap recipes from Lemongrass to Lilac to Oatmeal and Honey Milk soap. Susie and Carolyn have learned to get creative. They have also developed some of their own recipes and scent blends. Two unique creations include Calendula Vanilla and Ylang Ylang and Rose Hips. To learn more about By the River Creations, visit their website at www.bytherivercreations.com.

Their company along with several West Virginia specialty soap producers was spotlighted in a December article of the *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine. West Virginia specialty soap makers are benefiting from the growth in market share that specialty bath and body products have experienced throughout the past several years. Other companies featured in the December article include Warm Springs Mountain Botanical Soapcrafters of Berkeley Springs, Willow Wood of Beckley, Herbs and Supplements of Huntington, and Appalachian Milk Soap of Parsons. For a complete list of West Virginia bath and body specialty producers visit the Department of Agriculture's website at www.wvagriculture.org/Brochures/Foods_and_Things/Bath_Body.htm.

To learn more about the specialty soap marketing go to http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FNP/is_1_41/ai_81305439.

Niche Marketing of Lambs & Goats

To direct market lamb and goats to ethnic and religious markets, a producer must understand cultural preferences and times of high demand. You must be able to explain what makes your animal superior, be it the breed, nutrition, quality of life, or freshness, anything that adds value to the product. In this time of raised consumer awareness regarding health and where food comes from, producers ought to sell their practices, their persona, and their farm at the added value to their products. One should actively seek feedback to learn about customer preferences, even following up on sales to ensure satisfaction. A direct marketer must be willing to adapt production to demand, but it helps to anticipate customer desires and expectations before the marketing even begins.

There are a number of religious celebrations throughout the year for which lamb and/ or goat is a traditional part (see Table below for dates and types desired). Religious and ethnic niches account for much of the total U.S. consumption, but producers must be prepared for the nuances that come along with marketing directly to religious niches. For instance, both price and supply of slaughter tend to peak at certain times, specifically around the second quarter due to increased demand around the Easter and Passover holiday season, but Western/Roman Easter and Eastern/Greek Easter may occur as much as a month apart, depending on the year. Marketing savvy is especially necessary when selling to Jewish and Muslim customers because they are frequent consumers with specific dietary laws for which special arrangements must be made. For more information about marketing lambs, go to <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/iidea/PDF/lambfactsheet.pdf>. For marketing information about sheep and goats go to www.sheepandgoat.com/market.html. To learn more about marketing options for your lamb

and goats or other livestock, contact Marketing Specialist Tracy Fitzsimmons at tfitzsimmons@ag.state.wv.us.

Important Ethnic Holidays & Lamb & Goat Preferences

Eid al-Fitr	Eid al-Adha	Ramadan begins	Cinco de Mayo	4 th of July	Christmas	Roman Easter	Greek Easter	Passover	Rosh Hashanah Begins
10/12/07	12/20/07	9/12/07	5/5/07	7/4/07	12/25/07	4/08/07	4/08/07	4/03/07	9/12/07
9/30/08	12/08/08	9/01/08	5/5/08	7/4/08	12/25/08	3/23/08	4/27/08	4/20/08	9/29/08
9/20/09	11/27/09	8/21/09	5/5/09	7/4/09	12/25/09	4/12/09	4/19/09	4/09/09	9/19/09
Goat: 50-80 lbs lwt	Goat: unblemished intact male 60 100 lbs lwt	Goat: 60 lbs w/ milk teeth	Goat: 20-35 lbs lwt milk fed	Goat: yg bucks, does, kids, wethers – 1 or no adult teeth	Goat: 20-45 lbs lwt milk fed	Goat: 20-50 lbs milk fed & fat	Goat: > 20-50 lbs milk fed & fat	Goat: 20-50 lbs milk fed & fat	Goat: 50-100 lbs
Lamb: 60-80 lbs lwt	Lamb: 60- 80 lbs old crop	Lamb: 60-80 lbs			Lamb: > 18 lbs milk fed	Lamb: 30-45 lbs lwt milk fed & fat	Lamb: 40-45 lbs milk fed & fat	Lamb: 30-55 lbs lwt milk fed & fat	Lamb: forequarters weaned lamb 60-110 lbs

Kosher & Halal Food Laws Important to Marketing Food Products

Knowledge of the kosher and halal dietary laws is important to food companies that wish to market to Jewish and Muslim populations, while also marketing to other populations. The kosher dietary laws determine which foods are “fit or proper” for Jews and deal predominantly with three issues: allowed animals, the prohibition of blood, and the prohibition of mixing milk and meat. These laws are derived from the Torah and the oral law of Moses on Mount Sinai. Additional laws cover other areas such as grape products, cheese, baking, cooking, tithing, and foods that may not be eaten during the Jewish festival of Passover. Halal laws are derived from the Quran and the Hadith, the traditions of the prophet Muhammad. As with Kosher laws, there are specific allowed animals and the prohibition of the consumption of blood. Additionally, alcohol is prohibited. For a comprehensive look at these dietary laws go to the Institute for Food Technologist’s publication at www.blackwell-synergy.com/toc/crfs/2/3. Learn more about kosher and halal food marketing in West Virginia contact Marketing Specialist Teresa Halloran at thalloran@ag.state.wv.us.

Retail Opportunities—Ashland Company Store & More

On April 9, 2007, the Ashland Company Store held a grand opening in Ashland, WV in McDowell County. The store is a restored coal company store that is a project of the non-profit group, Travel Beautiful Appalachia, Inc. It is an effort to provide economic development opportunities to people in McDowell, Wyoming and Mercer Counties. The store currently features products from 29 West Virginia companies and 25 local artisans’ products for purchase. The newly renovated retail outlet provides marketing opportunities to West Virginia producers. For more information about how your company can market to the Ashland Company Store, contact them at 304/862-4800.

Other retail outlets to contact about carrying your West Virginia Grown products can found at www.wvagriculture.org/Brochures/Foods_and_Things/Retail_Outlets.html. For further retail marketing assistance, contact a WVDA marketing specialist at 304/558-2210.

Upcoming Events

2007 West Virginia Fairs and Festivals

All roads lead to a West Virginia Fair or Festival and 2007 marks an important milestone in the history of the West Virginia Association of Fairs and Festivals. For 75 years, members of the WVAFF have made West Virginia a truly wonderful place to visit or live. From county fairs and local events to our State Fair, fairs and festivals add to the culture and rich history that is West Virginia.

Check out their website at www.wvaff.com for a complete list of upcoming fairs and festivals. A printed copy of the WVAFF's Calendar of Events can be obtained by contacting Board of Directors Secretary Debra Gard at dgard@citynet.net. The listing serves as a valuable resource for you as you consider all of the exciting marketing opportunities that await you in the Mountain State.

Genetic Partners Club Pig Sale & Field Day

A Club Pig Sale and Field Day will be held on June 2, 2007 beginning at 12:30 p.m. at the WVU Reedsville Farm Complex. Seminars will be conducted on nutrition, showing, selection and artificial insemination. The sift takes place, 5 p.m., Sale, 6 p.m. Contact Marketing Specialist Tracy Fitzsimmons for more information at tfitzsimmons@ag.state.wv.us.

Tamarack Workshops

3rd Annual Empowering Women Conference-June 7, 2007—THE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER will be hosting their 3rd annual conference at Tamarack in Beckley on June 7, 2007. The conference will focus on issues relevant to women in today's society. Deborah Copeland, author of *Attitude Therapy* will open the conference with an inspiring and motivational message. The conference will feature several different speakers on topics such as money management, enhancing your professional image, time management, business ownership, and stress and its effect on your health, work and personal life. The conference will host a Showcase of Tamarack Women Artisan and Specialty Food Producers. West Virginia women artisans will display and sell their West Virginia products at the Conference. Cost of the conference is **\$59 per person if paid before May 15th and \$69 after May 15th**. Reserved tables of eight are also available and this is a great way to reward employees or special customers with a fun and educational day. For more information or to register visit our website www.westvirginiawbc.org or call 800-766-4556.

FastTrac[®] workshop—A workshop will be held on **June 12** at Tamarack for West Virginia artisans who want to will learn how to better manage the business side of their craft. The West Virginia High Technology Consortium (WVHTC) Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation will partner with the Tamarack Foundation to offer an internationally recognized business education program—FastTrac[®] Listening to Your Business[™] entrepreneurial and business education program.

The program is offered to help provide a more solid business foundation for artisans who create, showcase and sell their handcrafted items. The Tamarack Foundation will pick up the cost of the workshop for juried artists that have been approved to display and sell their work at Tamarack.

Tamarack will organize registration and details for the workshop. For further information, contact Ron DeWitt at rdewitt@tamarackwv.com. FastTrac[®] is offered in 50 states and on three continents and has graduated more than 200,000 people in the U.S. alone since 1993.

2007 West Virginia Master Gardener Conference

The 2007 West Virginia Master Gardener Conference will be held in the southern region of West Virginia. Greenbrier Valley Master Gardeners will host the conference at the State Fair of West Virginia fairgrounds in Fairlea, WV on June 1-3, 2007. The conference is open to current Master Gardeners and guests. To learn more about the conference go to www.wvu.edu/~agexten/hortcult/master/upcoming.htm.

The Master Gardener program and training is conducted by the West Virginia University Extension Service through the county extension offices. The training provides gardeners with the opportunity to improve their horticultural knowledge and skills and then share their experience with the public through organized volunteer activities. The program topics covered include: botany, plant problem diagnosis, soils, ornamentals, pest management, fruits, vegetables, and plant propagation. Contact your [county extension office](#) for class availability and schedule.

WVDA Marketing and Development Activities

May 2	Soil Conservation Day, Glenville, WV
May 8	Webster Co. Beekeepers, Cowen, WV
May 10-12	SIAL China Food Tradeshow, Shanghai, China
May 12	Agriculture Day @ Appalachian Power Park
May 12	Southeastern Beekeepers Field Day, Lewisburg, WV
May 19	Tucker County Beekeepers Field Day, Parsons, WV
May 19	Ecoli Workshop, State Fair of West Virginia fairgrounds, Fairlea, WV
May 21	Nicholas Co. Beekeepers, Summersville, WV
June 7	Beef for Fathers' Day, State Capitol, Charleston, WV
June 10-12	National Livestock Grading & Marketing Assoc. Annual Conference, Lewisburg, WV
July 5-8	Mt. State Art & Craft Fair, Ripley, WV
July 8-11	Fancy Foods Show- New York City, NY
July 26	WV Poultry Festival Ladies Day, Moorefield, WV
July 28	Clay County Agriculture Fair
August 10-19	State Fair of WV, Fairlea, WV
August 25-26	West Virginia Honey Festival, Parkersburg, WV
August 25	Dave Miller's Agriculture Field Day, Preston County, WV
September 21	WV Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting, Jackson's Mill, WV
September 22	WVDA Honey Festival, Capitol Market, Charleston WV
October 4-7	WV Pumpkin Festival

For more information about these activities contact the Marketing & Development Division of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture at 304/558-2210.