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Thank you for your interest in the 2014 Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference! We hope you find this packet helpful. For more information, please visit us online at [http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/index.html](http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/index.html). For questions, please contact Mandy Stage, Conference Coordinator, at 352-392-5930 or mstage@ufl.edu or Lynn Max, Publicity Chair, at 352-281-3236 or lynnmax@ufl.edu. Thank you!
Gainesville, FL: The University of Florida’s (UF) Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and Florida A&M University’s (FAMU) Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Focus Team are pleased to announce that the sixth annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference will be held in Kissimmee, Florida August 1-2.

The goal of the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference is to provide farmers with up-to-date, research-based, in-depth educational information. As well, the conference aims to facilitate solutions-based collaboration by encouraging networking and an open dialog among members of Florida’s small farms community. Additionally, the conference is an excellent vehicle for increasing awareness of Florida’s small farms industry, which organizers accomplish by actively marketing to decision makers, supporting institutions and agencies, and other agricultural professionals.

The annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference has been successful from its inaugural year and is attended by a wide range of interested parties: small family, transitional, beginning, and experienced farmers; allied-industry representatives; educators; researchers; policy makers; small farm commodity associations; foundations; and others interested in continuing to strengthen capacity for local food systems and Florida’s small farm community. The majority of attendees and exhibitors return to subsequent conferences.

The conference is an outstanding opportunity for Florida's small farmers to hear noted experts speak about the latest science and research relevant to their industry while networking with other small farmers in a relaxed atmosphere and sampling locally grown foods prepared by Chef Tony Donnelly and his excellent staff. Florida's small farmers find that, in this forum, their diverse experiences, coupled with their universal challenges (economics, regulatory pressures, marketing, and so forth), create a unique opportunity for collaborative problem solving and resource sharing. It is also an excellent chance for exhibitors to demonstrate their products and services to some of the most forward-thinking small farmers, educators, and researchers in Florida.

Through educational sessions led by farmers, industry experts and noted researchers, the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference provides opportunities for attendees to learn about groundbreaking research and access educational support about topics such as operating sustainable and profitable enterprises, integrating cost-effective methods to meet state regulations, and the latest in specialty crop and livestock production methods, as well as natural resource conservation, farm biodiversity, and alternative energy.

For more information on this year’s Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference, please contact Mandy Stage, Conference Coordinator, or contact Lynn Max, Publicity Chair, at lynnmax@ufl.edu or 352-281-3236. Visit us online at http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms.
The Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Focus Team

Based in Gainesville, Florida, The University of Florida (UF) has a strong presence, not only in educating its own students, but also in offering high quality, purposeful educational opportunities to Florida’s public. UF’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is particularly involved in providing such educational opportunities to the state’s small farms community. UF-IFAS and Florida A&M University’s (FAMU) Small Farms Focus Team, have developed a partnership, involving a core group of over 50 research and extension faculty, known as the Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Focus Team, who execute educational programs statewide.

The Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Focus Team is dedicated to supporting Florida’s small farmers through education, public outreach, and networking. In particular, the Small Farms team focuses on those issues identified as almost universal challenges to the state’s small farmers: accessing profitable markets, developing business skills, understanding and utilizing technical information, and learning about alternative crops and enterprises. To better accomplish their goals, the Small Farms teams of UF and FAMU have launched a tremendously successful website, providing Florida’s small farmers with much needed resources and information. The website (http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/) hosts articles, resource materials, and links to outside information on such general topics such as “getting started” and “finding a market” to more specific subtopics including farm planning and management, livestock and forages, agronomics, hydroponics, forestry, freshwater aquaculture, organic production, and much more.

In addition to their academic efforts through the Small Farms website, the Small Farms teams are involved in annual conferences throughout Florida. Their cornerstone event is the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference, a two-day affair during which Florida’s small farmers attend and participate in educational seminars and hands-on training exercises while networking with industry partners, exhibitors, and colleagues. For information, please visit the conference website at http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/index.html and review the enclosed press release.

Visit us Online!
Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises conference:
http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/index.html
Small Farms Team website:
http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/
Conference Overview and History

The Hosts
The Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference is an annual event orchestrated by the Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Focus Team. This team, comprised of over 50 research and extension faculty from The University of Florida’s (UF) Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and Florida A&M University’s (FAMU), began holding the now-annual statewide conference in 2009 in response to overwhelming requests from the small farms community.

Our Partners and Sponsors
Support in the form of sponsorship, competitive grants, and in-kind gifts are critical to the success of the Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference and ensure affordable registration costs to Florida’s family farmers year after year. The Small Farms Team is grateful to the University of Florida-IFAS, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for their continuous support since 2009. More information on these and other organizations whose support this event are found on the event website, at http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/.

Conference Attendees
Successful since its inaugural year, the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference is an opportunity for Florida’s small farmers to hear noted experts speak on the latest science and research relevant to their industry while networking with other small farmers in a relaxed atmosphere and sampling locally grown foods. Typically, the conference hosts an average of 800 attendees including a variety of interested parties: small family, transitional, beginning, and experienced farmers; allied-industry representatives; educators; researchers; policy makers; small farm commodity associations; foundations; and others dedicated to strengthening Florida’s small farm community. With the majority of attendees and exhibitors returning to subsequent conferences, this year’s conference has been eagerly awaited by newcomers and conference veterans alike.

The Goals
The main purpose of the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference is to provide farmers with up-to-date, research-based, in-depth educational information. As well, the conference aims to facilitate solutions-based collaboration by encouraging networking and an open dialog among members of Florida’s small farms community. Additionally, the conference is an excellent vehicle for increasing awareness of Florida’s small farms industry, which organizers accomplish by actively marketing to decision makers, supporting institutions and agencies, and other agricultural professionals.

The Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference provides a forum for discussions, not only on local issues, but also on those issues relevant to small farmers throughout the state. Although county and regional educational programs are extremely helpful in satisfying many of the educational needs of Florida’s small farmers, this conference is unique in its ability to allow the state’s small farmers to come together as a whole. Past attendees have reported that, through this conference, their diverse experiences, coupled with their universal challenges (economics, regulatory pressures, marketing, and so forth), create a unique opportunity for collaborative problem solving and resource sharing.
Conference Activities and Events

Through concurrent educational sessions led by industry experts and noted researchers, the annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference provides opportunities for attendees to learn about groundbreaking research and access educational support about topics such as operating sustainable and profitable enterprises, integrating cost-effective methods to meet state regulations, and applying the latest research to real-world problems. Attendees also participate in workshops, hands-on demonstrations, and organized networking activities, enabling them to share their knowledge while interacting with peers from all over the state. Activities run Friday through Saturday. Here are some of the topics addressed at the Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference.

Educational Sessions Include the Following Topics (and more!):
• Useful Laws for Farmers
• Managing a Successful Online Market
• Alternative Fruit Production
• Postharvest Handling and Cooling of Specialty Crops
• Hydroponic Nutrient Management for the South
• Transitioning to USDA Organic Certification: The Benefits, Challenges, and Processes
• What’s Bugging You? Part 1. Specialty Crop Pest and Beneficial Insect ID
• What’s Bugging You? Part 2. Specialty Crop Disease Identification
• Safe Handling of Dressed Poultry
• Weed Identification and Management
• Develop and Implement a Fertility Plan in Certified Organic & Sustainable Vegetable Systems
• Handling Beef Cattle: How to Work Cows Properly
• Soil Health in the Subtropics and Tropics
• Small Ruminant Production Part 1: From Hobby Farm to a Profitable Florida Goat Industry
• Small Ruminant Production Part 2: Parasite Control in Goats
• Small Scale Dairy Production Part 1: Starting an Operation
• Small Scale Dairy Production Part 2: Selling Products for a Profit

Additional Conference Highlights Include:
• Optional Pre-Conference Tours: Urban Farming, Livestock, and Farm to Chef Tours
• Keynote Address
• Innovative Farmer Awards
• Signature Luncheon - Florida's Finest: A Celebration of Local Food
• Educational Posters
• Large Exhibition Showcasing Products and Technologies
• Extension Learning Zone
• Networking Opportunities
Registration Information

Registration for the sixth annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference will be open in April! The conference will be held in Kissimmee, Florida August 1-2, 2014. Please register in advance to secure entrance to the conference, and remember that space is limited for Friday’s tours, so sign up for those when you register!

To register, and for more information, visit us online!
Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises conference: http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/
Small Farms Team website:
http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/
Publicity Blurb

Embrace opportunities and boost profits by attending the 6th Annual Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference. Join us August 1-2 in Kissimmee, Florida for farm tours, a trade show, networking opportunities, live plant and animal demonstrations, hands-on workshops, and delicious locally-grown food!

Don’t miss this chance to learn more about pest management, plant breeding, post-harvest handling, funding sources, marketing, organic certification, hydroponics, specialty crops, grass-fed beef and more. You will have the opportunity to interact with other farmers and industry professionals and get all of your questions answered. For more information: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu.