January 2015 Berrien E-news

Beginning Farmers Webinar Series Starts January 26
The MSU Extension 2015 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series is available for those looking to gain knowledge needed to plan your start-up farming operation, or add a new enterprise to an existing farm. A series of 20, two-hour evening webinars covering a wide variety of farm-related topics kicks off January 26. View any or all! Webinar recordings will be provided to all registered participants. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your own home or office. A fee of $10 per webinar is required, or you can register for the entire series for $100. Schedule and registration on line.

2015 Cooperative Executive Manager and Director Conference
This year’s Cooperative Executive Manager / Director conference topics include effective recruitment and training of young members for leadership roles in cooperatives, legal topics for boards, and training on policy governance for board members. The conference is scheduled for January 27-28, 2015 at the MSU Henry Center for Executive Development in East Lansing, Michigan. Mid-America Cooperative Council member fee $195.00, non-member $350.00.

4-H Tractor Operator Program begins January 27
There are still openings for the Michigan State University Tractor Operator Program which begins January 27. Youth 14 and 15 years of age are invited to participate January 27 - March 24, 2015. Classes will meet Tuesday evenings at the Old Baroda Township Hall, 9081 First Street, Baroda. The 4-H Tractor Operator Program is a major investment of time, but one of the most valuable experiences we offer that teaches young people safety, confidence and job skills to last a lifetime. Cost is $45/person. Payment and pre-registration is required. Call 269-944-4126 for details, or view on line.

Smart Choice for Health Insurance Webinar, January 29
This comprehensive, research-based, unbiased online educational workshop equips consumers with the tools they need to make the best possible decision when navigating issues involving the Affordable Care Act, the health insurance marketplace and how to choose a health insurance plan that makes sense for themselves and their families.

Ag Action Day, January 30
Ag Action Day 2015 will be held January 30, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m., at Kalamazoo Valley Community College in Oshtemo. There will be numerous educational sessions from Michigan State University experts on agriculture and home horticulture, and exhibitors from equipment vendors and ag-related organizations. A series of hops production sessions will be included as part of the education program this year. Restricted Use Pesticide exams will be given from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On-line registration is $25, and includes lunch.

Managing Hoophouses and High Tunnels for Year-round Farming Success On-line Series Begins February 2
Whether you are a seasoned hoophouse farmer or new to using hoophouses, this six week, self-paced course will provide you with cropping information, management strategies, and other resources from farmers and experts to put you on a path to success. Self-paced over six weeks. Registration fee $150.

Southwest Michigan Horticulture Days, February 4-5, 2015
Southwest Michigan Horticultural Days will be held February 4-5, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Lake Michigan College’s Mendel Center in Benton Harbor, hosted by Michigan Grape Society, Michigan State University, and Lake Michigan College. There will be a trade show, plus educational sessions by MSU Extension educators on issues related to
vegetable production, tree fruit, grape, and blueberry. Pre-registration is $25, on-site registration is $30. Registration is by mail. Call Diane Miner at 269-944-1477, x201, for registration packet.

**Tree Fruit IPM School**
Tree Fruit Integrated Pest Management School, a two-day program for growers, farm managers, and field scouts, will take place February 18-20, 2015 at the Eberhard Center in Grand Rapids. The focus for the 2015 School will be on how to develop and implement season-long horticultural and IPM strategies from establishment, dormancy, bloom through harvest, and post-harvest to support a healthy and productive orchard over the course of its lifetime. Registration is $225.00.

**Michigan Spring Peach Meeting, March 10**
Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, Benton Harbor. Contact: Bill Shane, 269-208-1652.

**Field Crops Webinar Series Starts February 23**
This free webinar series will prepare participants to enhance their field crop production systems in 2015 using the latest research-based information from MSU experts. Six topics with Restricted Use Pesticide Credit available. Free of charge.

**Pesticide Applicator Review and Exam Sessions**
Berrien County MSU Extension is hosting pesticide applicator testing and review sessions again this winter. Exam sessions will be on February 12, March 11, April 16, and May 20. Sign up for the exam sessions and view schedules at [Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development](http://www.michigan.gov/agriculture). Cost of the exam is $50 for private applicators and $75 for commercial applicators. The next review session, on March 11, begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Berrien County MSU-E office, and is $25.00 per person. To sign up for the review session, please call the Berrien MSU Extension office at 269-944-1262.

**Farm Bill Resources**
The Michigan State University Extension Farm Information Management Resources website features many articles and materials to assist you in decision-making. Find and download the updated MSU Farm Bill Analyzer version 1.8 there.

**Revised Bulletins Available**
Updated versions of the Tree Fruit Management Guide, Vegetable management guides, and Field Crops Management Guide are available. These publications and other helpful bulletins and reference materials can be obtained directly through the MSU Extension Book Store at shop.msu.edu, (517) 432-1859, or by calling or stopping by the Berrien County Office at 269-944-4126.

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