

Grow Your Farm Workshops Help Those Getting Started In Agriculture

COLUMBIA, MO.

University of Missouri Extension's Grow Your Farm is a step-by-step educational program for people new to farming or who are thinking of diversifying their operation. The course is available at various locations throughout the state.

The program focuses on four management keys: marketing, operations, human resources and finance, said project manager Debi Kelly.

"At the end of the course, participants are expected to have developed a complete business plan," Kelly said.

"They first must identify their values, asking the question, 'What is important to me?'" she said. From there, they take stock of their current situation, clarify their vision and develop a mission statement, which identifies their goals.

Goals lead to strategic planning and evaluation, and the final step, a written business plan, she said.

"Many people want to grow or raise farm products, but most do not think of the building blocks needed to write a successful business plan," she said. "You must ask yourself what skills and human resources you have, what market is out there for your product and how your business will be financed."

The curriculum includes eight weekly seminars and three farm tours. Instructors include extension specialists and farmers who have succeeded at their enterprises.

Cost is \$200 per farm business for two people. Each additional person is \$25. Fees include a set of course materials, including textbook and PowerPoint presentations.

"Farming takes a lot of work and family commitment," said Ted Cunningham, extension livestock specialist and one of the program organizers. "Participants are likely to be more successful if both spouses, or a parent and an adult child who will be involved in the operation, are part of the learning process."

Locations and times to date are as follows:

Central Missouri

Dates and location TBA

Contact: Jim Jarman

573-642-0725

jarmanj@missouri.edu

East Central Missouri

Cedar Hill

Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30,

Oct. 7, 14, 21, 27

Farm tours: Sept. 20, Oct. 11

Contact: Dean Wilson

636-797-5057

wilsond@missouri.edu

Northeast Missouri

Macon

October-December;

exact dates TBA

Contact: Joe Koenen

660-947-2705

koenenj@missouri.edu

Northwest Missouri

St. Joseph, Chillicothe, Maryville

Jan. 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12,

19, 26, March 5

Contact: Tom Fowler

816-279-1691

fowlert@missouri.edu

South Central Missouri

Mountain Grove

Sept. 16, 23, 30, Oct. 7, 14, 20,

28, Nov. 3

Farm tours: Sept. 27, Oct. 18

Contact: Ted Probert

417-741-6134

probertt@missouri.edu

Southwest Missouri

Mount Vernon,

Southwest Research Center

January-March 2009;

exact dates TBA

Contact: Gordon Carriker

417-581-3558

carriker@missouri.edu

West Central Missouri

Nevada

January-March 2009;

exact dates TBA

Contact: Wayne Prewitt

417-448-2560

prewittw@missouri.edu.