



Connection

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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The Ohio State University South Centers include:

- Piketon Research and Extension Center
- Endeavor Center for Business Incubation
- Enterprise Center
- OSU Learning Center South
- Small Business Development Center
- Manufacturing & Technology SBDC
- Ohio Cooperative Development Center
- Ohio Center for Aquaculture Research & Development

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The Ohio State University's President Gee visits Silver Bridge Coffee Company in Gallia County

By: Meagan Barnes, Program Leader, Business Development Network

In Gordon Gee's presidential acceptance speech at The Ohio State University a number of years ago, he committed to visiting all 88 counties in the state every couple of years. A challenging aspiration but one he continues to fulfill, bringing his congratulations for current successes and hope for the future of our state from county to county.

As part of that fulfillment, President Gee recently visited the Silver Bridge Coffee Company in Gallia County to congratulate owner, Lorraine Walker, on her continued business success as she moves forward in her newly completed facility. He also imparts encouragement to young folks about their educational pursuits.

Lorraine Walker explained to President Gee how she began roasting coffee beans as a hobby in her kitchen and grew it into a thriving business.

Lorraine thanked members of The Ohio State University South Centers Business Development Team in Piketon for the business counseling she received as she began her business endeavors as well as for their continued assistance as she expands her vision and her reach.



Lorraine Walker, Silver Bridge Coffee Company and Dr. Gordon Gee, President, The Ohio State University.

Dr. Gee commented on how Lorraine got involved with the university and how universities make a difference in people's lives and in Ohio's future.

Lorraine gave President Gee a tour of her new facility and a demonstration of the coffee roasting process. Silver Bridge Coffee Company offers whole or ground beans with a wonderful selection of Espresso, signature blends, single-origin coffee, rich gourmet flavored coffee, Fair Trade coffee, water-processed, and decaffeinated coffee. Coffee is available to retail customers online at www.silverbridgecoffee.com. Lorraine mentioned the name of one particular coffee that brought a smile to Gee's face – the Buckeye Breakfast Buzz. It was a wonderful day to be a buckeye.

For more information regarding confidential business counseling from The Ohio State University South Centers Small Business Development Center, contact Joy Bauman at 740-289-2071 Ext. 111 or e-mail bauman.67@osu.edu.



Gee and Walker touring the Silver Bridge Coffee facility.

OCARD Receives Award to Host Aquaculture Boot Camp (ABC)

By: Dr. Hanping Wang, Principal Scientist and Dr. Laura Tiu, Aquaculture Specialist

The Ohio Center for Aquaculture Research and Development (OCARD) at the OSU South Centers has received an award of \$550,000 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture to develop and operate Aquaculture Boot Camp (ABC). ABC is a program for training new and beginning aquaculture farmers in production techniques and business development skills in Ohio and adjacent states. This is a joint effort between the Aquaculture, Business Development, and Marketing programs at the OSU South Centers. OCARD is the first aquaculture unit to receive this type of project funding from the USDA.

Operators of small farms play an important role in agricultural production in Ohio and adjacent states. One-third of U.S. and Ohio farm sales originate from small farms. Many small farm owners and beginning farmers in traditional agriculture are seeking new enterprises and opportunities to increase revenues and maintain the family farm. Aquaculture presents a great opportunity for both rural and urban small and beginning farmers in Ohio. It has diversified and supplemented farm income for many small farm operations. Aquaculture can have a significant impact on Ohio's family farms, and can allow more farmers to maintain their current operations. The growing aquaculture industry has also allowed for the conversion of small, unprofitable veal, swine, and poultry operations to become profitable aquaculture operations.

Approximately 40% of aquaculture producers in Ohio reported being in business less than five years, and another 39% reported less than ten years in operation. Therefore, 79% of all Ohio aquaculture farms are considered new or beginning. These new and small aquaculture operations are in urgent need of training in production techniques and business management strategies that will aid in their current operations and achieve their long-term goals of farming success. Unfortunately, there are very limited opportunities to access aquaculture classroom training and hands-on practice for those new and beginning farmers. We will address this need by developing and delivering an Aquaculture Boot Camp. The ABC will offer integrated training in aquaculture production and business management strategies with "3-I" levels: Introductory, a general level where sharing of information is the goal; Intermediate, a mid-level involving participation in a variety of learning activities; and Intensive, an in-depth level involving immersion in a year-long hands-on training and mentoring program. The ABC project will serve the following Target Audience:

- Beginning and new aquaculture farmers with less than 10 years of any farming experience.
- Other new farmers attempting to diversify their existing farming enterprise.
- Potential future aquaculture farmers: students and those without a family farming history.
- Educators and others who influence the farming decisions made by potential fish farmers.

The ultimate goal of this program is to utilize a multi-faceted approach, including classroom and hands-on training, paired with industry mentoring, to improve the success rate of new and beginning aquaculture farmers in the State of Ohio and adjacent states. To achieve the long-term goal, the ABC 3-I training and partnership model will be utilized to pursue the following Specific Goals:

Provide tools for new and beginning farmers to enhance their aquaculture production success by developing and delivering production curriculum and hands-on practices.

Enhance the financial viability and business success of beginning aquaculture farmers by delivering business management and marketing strategies.

Strengthen the success of new and beginning aquaculture farmers through the ABC mentorship and partnership with the industry via the Ohio Aquaculture Association and other partners.

For more information or to register to participate in ABC training, please contact Laura Tiu at tiu.2@osu.edu.

FARMS, FORESTS & STREAMS**Two Visiting PhD Students in Aquaculture**

By: Dr. Hanping Wang, Principal Scientist

The Ohio Center for Aquaculture Research and Development (OCARD) has conducted an international training program for visiting scholars since 2005. The program has attracted about twenty international scholars and PhD students to work under Dr. Hanping Wang's guidance in the Aquaculture Research Center and Genetics Lab at Piketon. The two new visiting PhD students are from China and Egypt.

Zhigang Shen is a PhD student of the College of Fishery, Huazhong Agricultural University in China. Before he joined the OCARD training program at OSU South Centers, he had been working on sex-control technology in fish. Shen has published two papers in peer-reviewed international journals. For part of his dissertation, Shen will be doing research for two years in sex control in yellow perch and bluegill at the OSU South Centers Aquaculture Research Center and Aquaculture Breeding and Genetic Laboratory.

Nour Eissa is a visiting PhD student from Egypt. He graduated from Veterinary Medicine and received his Master's degree in fish diseases and aquaculture, and then received a scholarship from his government for two years to complete his PhD research under Dr. Wang's supervision at OSU South Centers. Nour's research was directed toward improving fish health through screening the effect of repeated handling stress under different temperatures to determine the best temperature to handle the fish with minimal stress. Also, he is working to improve aquatic animal health through probiotic application, which is considered as a new eco-friendly alternative measure for sustainable aquaculture to avoid drawbacks of chemical treatments.

Two Visiting Scholars in Soil, Water and Bioenergy Resources Program

By: Dr. Rafiq Islam, Research Scientist



Dr. Ekrem Lütfi Aksakal is a visiting post-doctoral scholar funded by Ministry of Education, Government of Turkey. Dr. Aksakal has been at the OSU South Centers since May 2012 and will continue his work through April 2013. He is employed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture at the Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey. This is his first visit to Piketon. During his time at the Ohio State University South Centers Soil, Water and Bioenergy Resources program at Piketon, he will be working on spatial variability and geostatistics, conservation tillage and cover crops; soil quality and carbon sequestration, crop water-use efficiency, and techniques of data analysis.



Dr. Kenan Barik is a visiting scholar funded by Ministry of Education, Government of Turkey. He is employed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture at the Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey. This is his second visit to Piketon. He came here as a short-term visiting scholar in 2007 and 2008. He arrived once again in June 2012 and will be at the South Centers until September. During his time at the Ohio State University South Centers Soil, Water and Bioenergy Resources program at Piketon, he will be working on soil quality and cover crops, tillage management and soil carbon sequestration to complement his professional development.

FARMS, FORESTS & STREAMS

Project Updates of the Blueberry Grant (USDA/ODA Specialty Crop Block Grant)

By. Dr. Gary Gao, Extension Specialist and Associate Professor

Blueberries are gaining popularity everywhere. Ohio is no exception. As one blueberry grower said “blueberries practically market themselves.” We at OSU South Centers are doing our part to help growers expand the blueberry acreage in Ohio to meet this ever-growing demand. As a part of our USDA/ODA (Ohio Department of Agriculture) Specialty Crop Block Grant project, “Revitalization, Expansion, and Season Expansion of Blueberry Production in Ohio,” we have established a blueberry research trial, hosted tours, and conducted educational programs at OSU South Centers.

A new blueberry planting was established at OSU South Centers this year. The main cultivar in this plot is Draper (MSU24), a variety developed at Michigan State University that is named after retired USDA breeder, Arlen Draper. Draper blueberries have high fruit quality, long-term storability, and are resistant to several rotting diseases.

Draper has very high fresh market quality. Plants of Draper are vigorous and upright. Canes are numerous, moderately branched and the fruit are well exposed. Its berries are moderately large, excellent powder blue color, delicious flavor, and excellent firmness. The size of the fruit is very consistent and is presented in a loose cluster.

MSU researchers assert that Draper ripens more regularly than the predominant mid-season cultivar, Bluecrop, has much better flavor, and will store longer. The fruit’s firmness suggests that it can be machine-harvested for the fresh market. The Draper variety should partially fill a production void after Duke, the major early-ripening cultivar is finished producing for the season.

The Draper blueberry appears to be a very promising cultivar. Hopefully, it will be a good producer for blueberry growers in Ohio. Another reason that I like the cultivar is that Dr. Arlen Draper’s son, Erik works for OSU Extension in Geauga County.

An “Introduction to Commercial Blueberry Production” workshop was offered in June 2012. Several new and existing growers attended this evening program. Many attendees expressed a strong interest in planting blueberries, with one of the families in attendance intending to plant one acre of blueberries this fall.

I also visited several blueberry growers this spring and summer. A new grower in Waynesville planted a little over 2 acres. I helped him diagnose nutrient and disease problems. Another existing blueberry grower I’ve met with plans to plant 5 acres of blueberries this year.

Ohio fresh blueberries also brought in good prices this season. The prices for you-pick berries ranged from \$2.75 to \$4.00 per pound. One blueberry grower in east-central Ohio does not advertise and was still able to attract hundreds of you-pick customers to pick blueberries at \$4.00 a pound this year.

Speaking of the popularity of blueberries, even McDonald’s, the fast food chain, has begun offering blueberries on their menu. According to an article that is entitled “Blueberries in Season at McDonald’s,” by Coral Beach in the May 7 issue of *The Packer*, “McDonald’s offered fresh blueberries with oatmeal in a seasonal promotion that lasted through Aug. 3. The blueberry-banana nut oatmeal debuted May 7 and is available all day on the McDonald’s menu. McDonald’s fruit and maple oatmeal, which includes fresh apple pieces, is still available. Naturipe Farms LLC is supplying snack-size blueberry packs to McDonald’s for the oatmeal deal, said Robert Verloop, executive vice president of marketing for the Naples, Fla., company. “We are providing them with our ready-to-eat fresh product,” Verloop said. “It is fantastic to see blueberries expand in distribution and reach into new channels.”

As you can easily tell, “I’m lovin’ it!”

Follow this link <http://www.thepacker.com/fruit-vegetable-news/Blueberries-in-season-at-McDonalds-150495285.html> to read the article in its entirety.

Visit our Horticulture Web page, <http://southcenters.osu.edu/horticulture/> for information on commercial fruit production.



A row of two-year old Draper blueberry plants in a raised bed. Sawdust was used as mulch. Photo by Gary Gao.



Blueray blueberries harvested from our high tunnel trial at OSU South Centers. Photo by Gary Gao.

FARMS, FORESTS & STREAMS**Mapping the Future for Agriculture Marketing**

By: Dr. Julie Fox, Program Director, Direct Marketing Specialist

With over 90 million smart phones now in use in the United States, utilizing this technology for agriculture marketing is now more important than ever. The good news for Ohio's agriculture producers is that the Ohio Direct Marketing Team just secured a grant to help producers take advantage of this technology to expand their visibility and increase profits.

The grant is titled "Maps and Apps." Funds will be used to develop tools to educate producers about risk management and how to improve market access by adding or improving their presence on Internet maps, in GPS systems, in maps linked to social media, and in mobile apps. The grant was awarded by the North Central Risk Management Education Center.

"The push to find local products by consumers has increased the need for Ohio producers to be included in these programs so their products can be found," said Julie Fox, OSU Extension Direct Marketing Specialist and leader of the Ohio Direct Marketing Team. "Team members will develop workshops, tutorials, and educational materials over the next year that will provide the tools for Ohio's agriculture producers to take advantage of these marketing opportunities."

In addition to the Maps and Apps project, the team is mapping the way for more Ohio products to be served in our schools through the Farm to School Program. A strong statewide advisory group, consisting of representatives from several key stakeholders, is guiding program development.

Ohio MarketMaker participation continues to grow and map connections with Ohio's producers and buyers through this web-based resource. The site received 65,322 hits in June alone. With the addition of a full-time Americrop VISTA member, Stacy Hought, and the recent release of a mobile site, Ohio MarketMaker continues to be the place where buyers go to find Ohio's food products.

The series of MarketReady trainings held throughout the state in the first half of this year received positive feedback from the participants. Over 150 producers received training to prepare them to sell directly to grocers, restaurants, and through other marketing channels. The Ohio Grape Industries Committee, with the assistance of MarketReady founder Dr. Tim Woods from the University of Kentucky, put together a MarketReady for Wineries program that trained 45 participants on marketing Ohio wine beyond the tasting room.

Information on these resources and additional marketing information can be found by visiting the team's website at <http://directmarketing.osu.edu>.

Local Food Celebrated throughout Ohio

By: Dr. Julie Fox, Program Director, Direct Marketing Specialist

June kicked off Ohio's celebration of the local food industry with Ohio Dairy Month as well as Ohio Wine Month, in which the state's 148 wineries hosted wine tastings, educational day trips, and tours. Throughout the year, local food festivals, events and special celebrations, such as National Farm to School Month in October, create opportunities across the state. Many organizations host local food events. For example, the Ohio Farm Bureau's "Grow and Know Series" invites members to experience the sights, tastes, sounds and smells of Ohio Agriculture, <http://ourohio.org>.

"Interest in buying local is still growing strong in Ohio" stated Fox, OSU Extension's Direct Marketing Specialist. "Consumers not only want to know who grows their food, but they are also interested in how it is grown. This drives local food opportunities for local food producers, retailers and food service providers."

In August, OSU Extension joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown for a special event, "Ohio Grown: Local Food Creating Local Opportunities," with keynote Speaker Kathleen Merrigan, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Topics included the local food economy, local food connections, local food policies and best practices. "The connections people made with one another reinforced that a strong local food economy is as much about relationships as it is about the food," said Fox.

Extension educators across the state are engaged in local food programs to improve the health of individuals, communities and the economy. OSU Extension recently designated Local Foods as a Signature Program. Contact your local Extension office, <http://extension.osu.edu> and watch for more updates in future editions of the OSU South Centers Connections newsletter. To receive a bi-weekly email update on local food events, send an e-mail to bean.21@osu.edu. At the OSU South Centers, the Cooperative Development Center and Farmers' Market program of the Business Development Network also help advance local food developments statewide. For more information on local food projects at OSU, contact Julie Fox, fox.264@osu.edu.

FARMS, FORESTS & STREAMS

Get on the Fish Bus!

By: Dr. Laura Tin, Aquaculture Specialist

I love to learn new things about the aquaculture industry in Ohio. I typically learn the most when I spend some time with the fish farmers themselves. I had that opportunity June 24, 2012 when the Fish Farmers of Ohio Association (FFOA) sponsored a bus tour of farms in northern Ohio. Thirty-five people boarded the bus to visit a variety of operations.



Woodside farm systems

Originally, we were to visit the Castalia State Fish Hatchery. However due to some bus issues, we ended up touring John Yoder's farm in Fredericksburg, Ohio. And what a delight that was! I got to see my first spring-powered aeration system. John raises largemouth bass and bluegill for the food market. His largemouth bass put on quite a show-feeding aggressively for the group.

Next, we visited Woodside Farms in Bellevue, Ohio. Woodside Farms is one of Ohio's largest indoor aquaculture facilities. They use recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) to raise tilapia for the Asian markets and spotfin shiners for the baitfish market on Lake Erie. They are on the cutting edge of aquaculture technology and have plans to expand their operation greatly in the near future, particularly in the arena of live food production for larval fish.



Tom Yingling with group

Our next stop was Calala's Water Haven in New London, Ohio. Bob Calala and his two brothers are second generation fish farmers with a large diversified operation. While they focus on the production of crayfish for bait, the farm also produces a variety of fish including large and small mouth bass, bluegill, and yellow perch. Calala's is also home to Ohio's only freshwater prawn nursery. Bob shared his aquaculture experience with the group, as well as showing off some equipment he has designed and built. He and his brother also gave a demonstration of how they harvest crayfish from their ponds.



Machamer spotfin pond

The tour ended back in Wooster Ohio on the banks of a pond managed by Tom Machamer, the FFOA President, for spotfin shiner production. Tom shared his technique for spawning and collecting spotfin shiner eggs as well as a demonstration of how aggressive this particular species feeds.

Visiting an aquaculture facility is a great way to learn more about the industry and the people growing your food. We plan to organize another bus tour in the fall to continue this valuable tradition.



Spring-powered aeration system



Crayfish harvest at Calala's Water Haven



BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Cooperative offers operation cost reduction and opportunity to compete for work on a national scale

By: Kimberly Roush, Program Assistant, Business Development Network

Ohio Cooperative Development Center client, James Luebke is the founder and owner of West Milton based Liberty Services, Inc. He has a 22-year history in the commercial kitchen hood exhaust cleaning industry. He began in the industry working for a family member and later worked with both American Steam Cleaning and Commercial Services. James has been operating his own business for 12 years.

James noticed a couple of developments in the exhaust cleaning industry that, as a business owner, he felt he needed to address. Customers were asking for exhaust cleaning certification, and he was finding it difficult to compete with the low bids that national companies were submitting for jobs.

To achieve certification for Liberty Services, James chose to have his technicians certified through the industry's leading certification program, the International Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Association (IKECA). IKECA is dedicated to certifying members in leading processes, application of codes and standards, and evidence of liability and workers' comp insurance. Luebke said, "IKECA has been a great resource."

To help his company become more competitive in the bidding process, James decided to look into forming a cooperative with other exhaust cleaning companies as a possible solution. The primary purpose of a cooperative business model is to work together to benefit the member businesses with shared purchasing, marketing, resources, and networking opportunities.

James met with Tom Snyder, Program Manager of the Ohio Cooperative Development Center at The Ohio State University South Centers. After a number of discussions, they came to the conclusion that a cooperative business model made sense. James and Tom pulled together a group of seven privately-owned commercial exhaust cleaning companies across the United States and began developing the framework for the new cooperative, Uni-Serve USA, Inc.

Uni-Serve USA was developed with help and guidance from Ohio State University. It is a network of hood cleaning companies across the nation with the ability to compete with the national subcontractors in the field. The national subcontracting companies, in James' opinion, have little to offer compared to Uni-Serve USA. According to James, "We have the best hood cleaning company in your area, not the cheapest. We stand behind our work, not behind a corporate blanket if there is a problem. Instead of simply being subcontractors, Uni-Serve members are owners of Uni-Serve."

The cooperative allows a restaurant group to have the convenience of centralized billing and reporting - that comes along with the national coverage, as well as the customer service and immediate response that you get from a local service provider.

According to Luebke, "Like IKECA, Ohio State University has been a source and a great partner for our owner/members. They taught me how to manage this great company. First, we developed a board of directors and the board started to work on our preferred vendors list and potential owner/members. After months of meetings, we ended up with 20-plus companies as cooperative owner/members and a preferred vendors list that reduces the cost of doing business by acting as one company instead of several small companies."

The Uni-Serve USA cooperative then was joined other cooperatives in order to offer additional benefits and services to its owner/members such as the ability to participate in benefits offered through the United Regional Purchasing Cooperative (URPC) along with BizUnite and Employee Perks. This cooperative-among-cooperatives arrangement allows Uni-Serve USA owner/members to get deep discounts from national vendors such as Sprint, Grainger, ADP, and many more. Luebke declares, "Uni-Serve has reduced the cost of doing business for our owner/members. Therefore, our marketing plan will soon be able to compete with the National Subcontractors." Luebke continues, "I feel that by applying this model, we have basically changed the landscape of companies across the country for the best interest of our industry. It has given us the ability to reduce costs without eliminating our quality customer service."

For more information on Uni-Serve USA, check out the website at www.uni-serveusa.com, email info@uni-serveusa.com, or call 877-631-9288. If you would like your commercial exhaust hood cleaning business to join Uni-Serve USA, contact James Luebke, President and CEO, Uni-Serve, Inc. at 937-698-3322.

For information on cooperative development counseling, visit the Ohio Cooperative Development Center website at <http://ocdc.osu.edu/>, email Snyder.11@osu.edu, or call 740-289-2071 ext. 220.

Commercial exhaust hood



Before
cleaning


After
cleaning



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