

South Carolina MARKET BULLETIN

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

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Market Bulletin Office: 803-734-2536



Cabbages and Kids

Easley third grader wins scholarship from Bonnie Plants

Bonnie Plants, headquartered in Alabama, started the third Grade Cabbage Program in 2002 to inspire a love of vegetable gardening in young people. The company provides more than 1 million free cabbage plants to all 3rd grade classes across the continental U.S.

would never get to experience this fun project. The third graders at East End just received their cabbage plants, so they are getting started on the same journey as Jacob did last year.

As one of the first companies to sponsor a national vegetable gardening initiative for kids, Bonnie Plants has delivered over 11 million cabbage plants nationwide, fostering an interest in gardening, healthy eating, and the environment.

"The joy of gardening and the satisfaction of growing healthy food are gifts that kids never outgrow," says Cope. He is the grandson of founders Livingston and "Miss Bonnie" Paulk.

Why a cabbage? It was the first plant sold by Bonnie Plants in 1918. The cabbages are the O.S. Cross variety, which is known for producing giant, oversized heads, making the process even more exciting for kids. Seeds are donated by American Takii seed company, the breeders of O.S. Cross. This impressive old variety was an All-America Winner in 1951.



Photo provided
Jacob Wright proudly shows off his \$1,000 scholarship from Bonnie Plants. With him are his grandparents Peggy and Stephen Wright, Linda and Ed Hurley and parents Casey and Tim Wright.

In South Carolina alone, 117 classes in 309 schools participated. Of the nearly 25,000 participants, Jacob Wright was the winner of a \$1,000 scholarship. His cabbage weighed 26 pounds. Third grade teachers submit a class winner and a child is chosen via random drawing.

"The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program is a wonderful way to engage children's interest in agriculture, while teaching them not only the basics of gardening but the importance of our food systems and of growing our own," said Stan Cope, president of Bonnie Plants. This unique program exposes children to agriculture. The hands-on experience also provides them with valuable lessons in responsibility, nature and accomplishment.

Easley teachers and parents said if Bonnie Plants didn't provide the cabbages, their kids



Photo provided
Jacob's 26-pound cabbage is almost as big as he is.



Hugh E. Weathers
Commissioner

Farming Takes to the Skies

Move over, James Bond. The first time we saw what we now call drones, or unmanned aircrafts, was in one of the early James Bond movies about 40 years ago. A young Sean Connery watched as a small unmanned aircraft zoomed through the air, creating the havoc so well-known to 007 fans. Come to think of it, the first time many of us saw a jet ski zoom across the water was in a James Bond movie years ago.

Today, drones are part of a trend toward increasingly data-driven agriculture. Farming is blessed with engineering marvels, the result of years of innovative technology designed to grow more food with less labor. Agricultural drones, also called Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or UAVs, seem to be the wave of the future for agriculture.

Imagine the farmer being able to see his entire acreage from one spot, with high-resolution images being fed to him in easy-to-read programs. According to the numerous companies that build and promote drones, these unmanned aircraft provide information that can drastically increase crop yields while minimizing the cost of walking the fields or having an airplane on site.

Several UAV websites explain the benefits of using drones, such as farmers spending less time covering acreage, being able to spot potential problems involving crops or irrigation, seeing

See **Farming Takes to the Skies**, continued on page 8

State Farmers Markets Availability Listing

Seasonal In-State Featured Products

South Carolina SFM
3483 Charleston Hwy.
West Columbia, SC 29172
803-737-4664
citrus, flowers, greens

Greenville SFM
1354 Rutherford Rd.
Greenville, SC 29609
864-244-4023
apples, bedding plants,
citrus, dairy products

Pee Dee SFM
2513 W. Lucas St.
Florence, SC 29501
843-665-5154
apples, cabbage,
citrus, pecans

Log on to
agriculture.sc.gov
and click on
Daily Market News Reports

Coming Soon at a State Farmers Market Near You!

**Pee Dee
Spring Plant and Flower
Festival**
Pee Dee
State Farmers Market
2513 West Lucas Street
Florence
April 9-12
Thur. - Sat.: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sun.: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
843-665-5154
batkinson@scda.sc.gov

**Midland's
Spring Plant and Flower
Festival**
South Carolina
State Farmers Market
3483 Charleston Highway
West Columbia
April 16-19
Thur. - Sat.: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sun.: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
803-734-0648
llester@scda.sc.gov

**Piedmont
Spring Plant and Flower
Festival**
Greenville
State Farmers Market
1354 Rutherford Road
Greenville
April 30-May 3
Thur. - Sat.: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sun.: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
864-244-4023
gmarket@scda.sc.gov



SouthCarolinaDepartmentOfAgriculture
CertifiedSouthCarolina
SCFarmersMarket



@certified_sc



certifiedsc

Upcoming Events

April

4/3-5 SOUTHERN TRAIL RIDERS HORSE RIDE, Timmonsville, ride, food, dance, vendors, auction, more. Stephanie Campbell; Florence; 843-346-3878

4/10 CLEMSON EXT BACKYARD POULTRY WORKSHOP, 10am-4:30pm Spartanburg Comm College, \$70 for class, food, & flash drive. Chris LeMaster; Cherokee; 864-489-3141

4/10-12 ANTIQUE TRACTOR PULL, Hwy 176, 8mis W of St Matthews, \$5 admission, 12 & under free. Charles Horger; Calhoun; 803-707-1493

4/11 6TH ANNUAL TOUCH A TRUCK, 10am-2pm, State Farmers Market, 3483 Charleston Highway, W Columbia, adm \$6/person, \$20/family 4-pack of tickets, children under 2 are free w/paying adult, www.jlcolumbia.org. Elizabeth Shuler; Richland; 803-734-0328

4/11 4TH ANNUAL "IT'S ALL ABOUT HERBS" FESTIVAL, 9am-4pm, free adm, plant sale, vendors, 3-\$5 ticketed edu seminars, more. Patricia Gates; Lexington; 803-530-7530

4/18 5TH ANNUAL SOUTHEASTERN GOAT & SHEEP SYMPOSIUM, Greenville, www.southern-goatproducers.org. Judy Langley; Greenville; 864-430-2265

4/25 ASHLAND ARENA PLAYDAY, 6pm, game & speed events, prizes. Juanita Ardis; Darlington; 843-332-7394

May

5/2 PEE DEE OUTDOOR DISCOVERY DAY, 10am-3pm, CU Research & Ed Center, past & present farm technologies, science & nature exh, more, www.clemson.edu/peedeec. Sarah Nyikos; Florence; 843-519-0478

5/16 18TH ANNUAL MCCONNELLS ANTIQUE TRACTOR & ENGINE SHOW, 8am-2pm, vendors, BBQ, wagon rides, petting zoo, more, free event. Michael Nance; York; 803-684-5161

5/23 6PM ASHLAND ARENA FUNSHOW, speed events, daily hi points. Juanita Ardis; Darlington; 843-332-7394

All equine must be accompanied by written proof of an approved negative test within the last 12 months for EIA when entering any public assembly of horses. These public assemblies include, but are not limited to shows, fairs, organized trail rides, rodeos, and other exhibitions as well as organized sales. Section 47-13-1315 and 1350 and 1370, SC Code of Laws. Note: Clemson University's Livestock-Poultry Health Division requires the following: All public equine auction/sales must be permitted by Clemson University Livestock-Poultry Health and be in compliance with SC Law Section 47-11-20 and SC Regulation 27-1016-C. Contact CULPH at 803-788-2260 Ext. 231 for information.

Ag Council's Spring Tour

The South Carolina Agricultural Council will be hosting a spring tour in Newberry County on April 24. The tour group will spend the day visiting a variety of agricultural operations in Newberry. Cost of participation is \$45 per person. Attendees should meet at Farm Bureau at 724 Knox Abbott Drive, Cayce, SC at

approximately 7:30 a.m. on the morning of the tour to load the bus.

To pre-register or for more information, contact Steve Slice at 803-806-3820 Etx. 116 or Steve.Slice@sc.usda.gov or visit the South Carolina Agricultural Council's blog at www.scagcouncil.wordpress.com.

Pond Management Course April 28

Clemson University is sponsoring "Pond Management 101" on April 28 at 5:30 p.m. at Circle M BBQ, 345 Martin Sausage Rd. in Liberty.

Topics include: pond stocking, fish health, population balance, water chemistry, pond fertilization, aquatic weed identification, and

aquatic weed control.

The impact of Canada geese will also be discussed. Cost is \$30, and space is limited. A meal is included.

Contact Renee Watson at 864-878-1394 ext 114 or rwatso2@clemson.edu

Tips on Entering Ads in the Market Bulletin

Please include a complete address in each ad submitted.

Please follow the instructions under each category that has requirements.

Please make sure you place your ad in the correct category for the item you are advertising.

If you have any questions, call the Market Bulletin Office, 803-734-2536.

FRT END LDR, for '03 NH 4wd TN75. E Hardy; Richland; 803-331-9988

PTO DRIVE SHUCKER SHELLER, must be good working cond. A Horne; Horry; 843-756-0104

CATTLE TRL, 16 or 14ft factory built, BP, dual axle, lights, elec brakes, swing out gates, center gate. John Gossett; York; 803-222-7786

Wanted - Hay

FREE FESCUE, rye, wheat, oat straw or mixed hay, mold free, feed & wood shavings, to help rescued horses, will p-up. Trecia Brown; York; 803-230-6778

Wanted - Livestock

BEEF CATTLE, cow/calf prs, springers, calves & bulls. Josh Brown; Saluda; 864-910-5378

5-10 WEANED NANNY GOATS, any goat will do except Boer, pygmy or fainting. Thomas Waters; Colleton; 843-696-6627

FREE LRG PONY, or sm horse, for light riding, calm, no buck, kick, rear, will p-up. Trecia Brown; York; 803-230-6778

FLYING MALLARD DUCKS, w/in 50 mis of Six Mile. Roger Elliott; Pickens; 864-868-9060

BEEF CATTLE, cows, calves, bulls, whole herds. Brian Gibert; Greenwood; 864-980-6408

FREE LIVESTOCK, goats, cattle, pigs, mules, no horses, chickens or jacks, can p-up. William Knopf; Chester; 803-482-3891

CHICKENS, ducks, cows, goats yng or old, pigs, poultry, etc, will p/up. Mozelle Jones; Richland; 803-403-4292

FREE LIVESTOCK, goats, cows, sheep, emus, pigs, chickens, donkeys, ostrich, etc. will p-up. Joe Calwise; Laurens; 864-998-3405

BEEF CATTLE, cow/calf prs, springers, calves & bulls. Josh Brown; Saluda; 864-910-5378

Collection Date for Unwanted Pesticides Set for April 11

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) is partnering with the County of Lexington Solid Waste Management Department to accept unwanted or unused pesticides from farmers and homeowners from across the state at no charge. The County of Lexington is holding its Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event at CrossRoads Middle School. Although most of the recycling event is only open to residents of Lexington and Richland Counties, waste pesticides will be accepted from residents of any S.C. county.

Pesticides will not be accepted from any type of commercial business or commercial applicator. Other collection events are planned for later this year that will be open to commercial applicators in the state.

- Hours of operation will be 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on April 11.
- Location: CrossRoads Middle School, 6949 St. Andrews Rd., Columbia, SC 29212
- SCDA will have personnel on site to monitor pesticide collection.
- Quantities accepted will be limited to 2500 pounds of solid waste and 300 gallons of liquid at no charge.
- Rinsate will not be accepted.
- No fertilizer (unless it is combined with a pesticide such as weed and feed), compressed gas cylinders (metal cylinder with a valve), or empty containers will be collected.
- SCDA has final authority and will make the decision on whether or not to take waste from participants once vendor decides whether or not staff can properly dispose of product.
- Pesticide products include herbicides, insecticides, nematicides, fungicides, and other similar products used in agricultural production or around the home.

For more information regarding pesticide collection, contact SCDA's John Stokes at 803-737-9696. For more information on County of Lexington HHW Collection event, contact County of Lexington Solid Waste Management Department at 803-785-3340.

BLK EAST INDIES DUCKS, pr or trio. Lloyd Gerhart; Kershaw; 803-425-8796

FREE LIVESTOCK, horses, ponies, sheep, goats, pigs, cows, ducks, geese, turkeys, emus, etc, will p-up, more. Dennis Crosby; Orangeburg; 803-542-0638

FREE OR UNWANTED LIVESTOCK, poultry, & sm animals. William Claxton; Colleton; 843-909-4285

FREE LIVESTOCK, goats, sheep, hogs, pigs, chickens, ducks, cows, etc, no horses. Richard McDonald; Fairfield; 803-374-3310

PONY, horse, goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits, sheep, mules, donkeys, will p-up. Franklin Wright; Clarendon; 843-598-4132

Wanted - Miscellaneous

PINE SAWTIMBER, pine pulpwood & hdwd, we cut sm or lrg tracts, 8A or more. H Yonce; Edgefield; 803-275-2091

LAWNMOWER TRL, 5ftx10 or larger, w/ramps. Glenn Corley; Saluda; 864-910-2683

SOMEONE, to cut 20A of hay, would like to do 50/50 or by the bale, Woodruff area. Sonny Varner; Spartanburg; 814-504-1388

OLD-TIME DIPPER GOURDS, w/11-12-13in handles. Don Brunson; Sumter; 803-495-3885

PINE OR HDWD LOGS, pulp wood, fuel chips, chip n saw in low country, 5+a tracts, sm logger, pay top dollar. Brett Williams; Dorchester; 843-303-8626

PUPLWOOD SAW TIMBER, hdwd, pine, all types of thinning or clear cut, pay top prices, upstate counties. Tim Morgan; Greenville; 864-420-0251

FREE RND PEN PANELS, stall mats, gates, concrete mix, 2x4, 2x6 wood, posts, more, to help rescued horses, will p-up. Trecia Brown; York; 803-230-6778

USED CATTLE PANELS, 10ft, 12ft or 16ft & head gate. Dale Wilson; Abbeville; 864-378-8327

BLACKSMITH ANVIL, 100lbs or larger, cast iron dinner bell, hand crank corn sheller. L Gunter; Lexington; 803-532-7394

SHALLOW WELL PUMP, 1hp, 4gal bladder tank, pressure switch, \$200; 11.2x24 rear tractor tire, \$75. Ray Fields; Aiken; 803-564-3892

700LB HANGING COTTON SCALES, w/16lb weight; blksmith anvil, wash pots, farm/brass bells. R Long; Newberry; 803-924-9039

FERTILIZED CHICKEN EGGS, True Ameraucanas, not Easter Eggers, Welsummers, Buckeyes, Heritage RIR, RI Wht. Rhonda Poore; Chester; 803-242-6519

PULPWOOD, timber, pine, hdwd, thinning or cut, competitive prices, York, Chester, Lancaster, Fairfield Cos. Will Coleman; Chester; 803-789-3138

LAWNMOWERS, riding or push, yard equipment, tools, to provide free service to the handicapped, will p-up. Eddie Thomas; Lee; 803-459-4989

2015 Certified SC Grown U-Pick Strawberry Farms

All of the u-pick operations will open in either April or May, depending on the weather. All recommend calling ahead or checking their websites or Facebook pages for opening dates, hours of operation and directions. For more information, contact Ansley Rast Turnblad, arast@scda.sc.gov, 803-734-2210, www.certifiedscgrown.com.



Abbeville
Due West Strawberries
4428 Hwy. 20
Donalds, SC, 29620
864-446-8845

Aiken
Gurosik's Berry Plantation, Inc.
345 Briggs Rd.
North Augusta, SC 29860
803-278-0594
Email: strberripit@aol.com
Website: www.gurosiksberryplantation.com

Anderson
Callahan Orchards and Specialties
559 Crawford Rd.
Belton, SC 29627
864-338-0810
Website: www.carolinapeaches.com

Berry Acres LLC
230 Strawberry Rd.
Anderson, SC 29626
864-224-5441
Email: berryacresllc@gmail.com

Banrwell
Healing Springs Strawberry Patch
2101 Jones Bridge Rd.
Blackville, SC 29817
803-300-1628
Email: healingspringsstrawberry-patch@gmail.com

Beaufort
Dempsey Farms
1576 Sea Island Pkwy.
St. Helena Island, SC 29920
843-838-3656
Email: dempseyfarms@dempsey-farmsupick.com
Website: www.dempseyfarm-supick.com

Berkeley
Hickory Bluff Berry Farm
245 Hickory Bluff Ln.
Holly Hill, SC 29059
843-743-8244
Email: hickorybluff@gmail.com
Website: www.hickorybluffberries.com

Charleston
Ambrose Family Farm
2349 Black Pond Ln.
Wadmalaw Island, SC 29487
843-559-0988
Website: www.stonofarmmarket.com

Boone Hall Farms
Hwy. 17 North,
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
843-884-4371 ext. 22
Website: www.boonehallplantation.com

Chester
The Market at Cotton Hills Farm
2575 Lowrys Hwy.
Chester, SC 29706
803-395-7695

Chesterfield
McLeod Farms, Inc.
29247 Hwy. 151 South
McBee, SC 29101
843-335-8335, 877-789-9252
Website: www.macspride.com

Clarendon
Richburg Farms
4553 Paxville Hwy.
Manning, SC 29102
803-473-4844
Email: richburgfarms@gmail.com

Colleton
Breland Hill Strawberry Barn
15435 Lowcountry Hwy.
Ruffin, SC 29475
843-866-7403

Darlington
Dargan Farms
1301 South Charleston Rd.
Darlington, SC 29532
843-307-6105

Dorchester
Charpia Farms
126 Reed St.
Summerville, SC 29483
843-873-9645
Email: acharpia@aol.com

Florence
Poston Strawberry Farm
4472 Mill House Rd.
Johnsonville, SC 29555
843-493-2463
Email: jposton111@frontier.com

Greenville
Beechwood Farms
204 Bates Bridge Rd.
Travelers Rest, SC 29690
864-836-6075

Horry
Tyler's Produce
4800 Hwy. 378
Conway, SC 29527
843-397-6362, 843-397-2125
Email: curry_inc@sc coast.net

Lancaster
The Ivy Place
8603 Van Wyck Rd.
Lancaster, SC 29720
704-651-3700
Email: ivyplaceevents@gmail.com
Website: ivyplaceevents.com

Laurens
Stewart Farms
6474 Hwy. 92
Enoree, SC 29335
864-969-7270
Email: stewartfarms@prtcnet.com

Lexington
James R. Sease Farms #1
3807 Augusta Hwy.
Gilbert, SC 29054
803-359-3276, 803-892-2111

Marion
Atkinson Farm
1909 South Hwy. 917
Mullins, SC 29574
843-464-8637, 843-464-8320
Email: atknsn9@aol.com

Marlboro
McArthur Farms
1708 Hwy. 38 South
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843-479-3849, 843-528-3712
Email: rb29516@aol.com

Newberry
Lever Farms
5057 Hwy. 34
Pomaria, SC 29126
803-321-5952
Email: leverfarms@bellsouth.net
Website: www.leverfarms.com

Orangeburg
Cannon Bridge Berries
410 Cannon Bridge Rd.
Orangeburg, SC 29115
803-707-0771

Shuler Peach Co.
5010 Old State Rd.
Holly Hill, SC 29059
803-759-0089, 803-609-7011
Visit us on Facebook

Pickens
Greenbriar Farms
766 Hester Store Rd.
Easley, SC 29640
864-855-9782
Website: www.greenbriarfarms.com

Hunter Farms and Greenhouses
607 Jameson Rd.
Easley, SC 29640
864-859-2978
Website: www.hunterfarmsonline.com

Richland
Cottle Strawberry Farm
2533 Trotter Rd.
Columbia, SC 29209
803-695-1714 (Farm), 803-260-1385 (Cell)
Email: cottlefarms@col.com
Website: www.cottlestrawberry-farm.com

Spartanburg
Strawberry Hill USA #1
3097 Hwy. 11 West
Chesnee, SC 29323
864-461-7225 (Farm)
Email: bethany@strawberry-hillusa.com
Website: www.strawberryhillusa.com

Gramling Farms
14445 Ashville Hwy.
Inman, SC 29348
864-809-3134
Email: treygramling@windstream.net

Sumter
Stafford's Strawberry Farm
4105 DuBose Siding Rd.
Sumter, SC 29153
803-469-3191

Willard Farms
1220 S Brick Church Rd.
Gable, SC 29051
803-938-2814

Williamsburg
Black River Berries
5760 US 521
Salters, SC 29590
843-372-4844

York
Black's Peaches & The Cotton Belt Bakery
1800 Black Hwy.
York, SC 29745
803-684-2333
Website: www.blackspeachesand-bakery.com

Bush-N-Vine Farm
1650 Filbert Hwy.
York, SC 29745
803-684-2732
Email: samuel@bushnvinefarm.com
Website: www.bushnvinefarm.com

Springs Farm
1010 Springfield Pkwy.
Fort Mill, SC 29715
803-548-3939
Email: buypeaches@springsfarm.com
Website: www.springsfarm.com

New and Existing Farm to School Programs Funding Available



South Carolina Farm to School encourages school districts to apply for funds available through the SC Farm to School Program for use toward farm to school initiatives.

The South Carolina Farm to School program facilitates partnerships between farms and schools to serve locally grown and minimally processed foods in school meals. Core goals of the Farm to School program include increasing the number of farmers who are certified to provide locally grown products into schools; providing education to food service directors, staff, and teachers on Farm to School practices; and promoting healthy eating among students through hands-on learning activities.

Participating schools feature at least two fruits and vegetables from local sources on school menus per month, incorporate nutrition and agriculture education into classroom curriculum, and maintain a school vegetable garden. Funds can be applied toward activities related to the development of farm to school programs as a strategy to promote healthy school environments. Research shows that farm to school programs can improve school nutrition by exposing students to fresh fruits and vegetables and promoting healthy eating habits. In a study of a California farm to school program, students and adults preferred the salad bar over the hot lunch by a 14 to 1 ratio. Applications are due May 1 by 5 p.m.

About South Carolina Farm to School
The SC Farm to School Program is a joint effort of the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, SC Department of Agriculture, SC Department of Education, SC Department of Social Services, and Clemson University. For more information about the South Carolina Farm to School program, please visit <http://scfarmtoschool.com/> or contact: Amy Weaver, Statewide Farm to School Coordinator, aweaver@scda.sc.gov, 803-734-0467

Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Being Accepted
South Carolina's Commissioner of Agriculture, Hugh E. Weathers, invites institutions and groups that support specialty crops within our state to submit applications for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Those interested in participating in the program are encouraged to visit the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) website, agriculture.sc.gov to obtain the grant information and application.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) is administered by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. The program is committed to help strengthen the market for specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture. Deadline for proposals is 5 p.m. on May 15. SCDA encourages organizations to develop projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, sustain the livelihood of farmers, and strengthen local economies by:

Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Being Accepted

• Increasing nutritional knowledge and specialty crop consumption
• Improving efficiencies within distribution systems
• Promoting the development of good agricultural, handling and manufacturing practices while encouraging audit cost-sharing for small farmers, packers and processors
• Supporting research through standard and green initiatives
• Enhancing food safety
• Developing new/improved seed varieties and specialty crops
• Controlling pests and diseases
• Creating organic and sustainable production practices
• Establishing local and regional fresh food systems
• Expanding food access in underserved/food desert communities

Projects can be up to three years in duration. The project must fall within the criteria as described in the application and must benefit groups of producers, not individuals. Funds cannot be used for capital expenditures such as buildings, equipment, or land. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is authorized under Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note.) and amended under Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Public Law 110-246 (the Farm Bill). SCBGP-FB is currently implemented under 7 CFR Part 1291 (published March 27, 2009; 74 FR 13313).

All questions and proposals should be directed to: Amy London, SCDA Grant Administrator, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, PO Box 11280 Columbia, SC 29211, 803-734-2210, Fax 803-734-2192 or alondon@scda.sc.gov.

Easter Bunny Makes Early Appearance



Staff photo

Children at the Commissioner's Cup BBQ Cook-off were delighted with a surprise appearance by the Easter Bunny on March 21. The annual event at the State Farmer's Market recognizes the best barbecue cook teams and individuals in the state, as well as showcases the fresh produce which is available year-round at the market.



Agritourism Venues

Upstate

Strawberry Hill USA/Cooley Farms

3097 Highway 11 West
Chesnee
864-461-3000
strawberryhillusa.com
Farm growing peaches, strawberries, blackberries, pumpkins, summer squash. Strawberry Shed, Hwy. 11, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., every day; Cafe, Mon.-Sat. 6 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; ice cream Parlor, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. every day; Gaffney market every day, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Sat., Sun. close at 7p.m.

Midlands

Cottle Strawberry Farm

2533 Trotter Road
Hopkins
843-260-1385
cottlestrawberryfarm.com
A local U-pick, We-Pick strawberry farm near Columbia and also convenient roadside stands set up around Columbia.

LowCountry/Pee Dee

Dargan Farms

1301 South Charleston Road
Darlington
843-610-4418
Strawberries, field trips, corn maze, nursery plants, pumpkins, sod and row crops, April and May strawberries 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and field trips

For more information, contact SCDA Agritourism Director Jackie Moore at jmoore@scda.sc.gov.

Farming Takes to the Skies

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integrated GIS mapping of their fields, and getting accurate information immediately. Seeing a field in color contrast actually shows how much sunlight is being absorbed by the crop canopy.

We had a workshop on UAVs at the S.C. AgriBiz Expo in January, and it generated a lot of interest. Almost everyone there wanted to know more about the technology. Chris Robson of Caron East Inc. explained that drones can be set up in the field in a few minutes. Some of the UAVs look a lot like model airplanes, and the user can launch them by hand. They fly a predetermined path, take photos, and feed data to the farmer, then return to a landing site.

3D Robotics promises mapping capabilities that provide fast, accurate aerial data which enables farmers to take targeted action. For example, it will show poor crop stands in remote areas, indicate when irrigation needs to be increased, or zero in on an area that is not getting enough nitrogen. The high-resolution cameras provide more detail than satellite imagery. In fact, 3D Robotics promises that once you see your operations from the air, you'll never approach work the same way again.

Agribotix is a drone-enabled software company that provides analysis for precision agriculture. It carries both true color and near infrared and is working on thermal cameras, which provide crop stress differentiation. A detailed overhead view of the field can be used to measure relative vegetation health. Other applications include crop scouting, weed identification, and yield estimations.

What a concept! If farmers can more accurately predict their yields, a whole new world would be open to us. Sure beats pulling ears and doing a kernel count.

There are, however, a few barriers to the drone revolution. According to the Small UAV Coalition, the main obstacle is government regulation. The Federal Aviation Administration's 2015 recent announcement gave some indication of what will be allowed. Safety and privacy have to be balanced out with the benefit of this technology.

One of the problems is that drones use National Airspace, along with piloted aircraft. Human pilots know what to "sense and avoid," as aviators say. They are constantly on the lookout for other aircraft, physical barriers like telephone poles and wires, and unforeseen problems. In a drone, sensors take over. As an article in the publication "The Kernel," says, "We are just not that good at controlling drones, and drones are still largely incapable of flying without our help."

Our colleague Jody Martin at Palmetto Consulting Solutions has a great idea: permits and licensing for drones. Anyone who hunts, drives a car, or pilots a plane has to apply for a permit, undergo training, and then demonstrate that he is competent. Why not do the same for UAVs?

I am confident that the many precision-ag companies working on drones will soon solve their problems. One of my neighbors used a drone to scout his cotton last year, and we are eager to visit him and other users this summer and see these technological wonders in action. We'll keep you posted on these exciting machines and their constant advancements.

Greenbrier Farms Specializes in Farm-fresh Food

Some folks just seem to do everything right. Greenbrier Farms in Pickens County is a perfect example of an agritourism venue that has it all.

According to owners Roddy Pick and Chad Bishop, the farm does three things: protein, produce, and events. They raise beef, pork and chicken, sustainably grown produce, and host a variety of special events in their onsite event barn.



Staff photo

Roddy raises grass-fed, grass-finished beef and pastured pork, while partner Chad grows over 130 varieties of produce. Chad's wife, Amy, handles the farm's special events. Not only do they sell their products to high end restaurants in Greenville and Charleston, but they also take requests from chefs. Customers can also purchase their products at the Downtown Greenville Farmers Market, and on-site farm store, shop at select local retail outlets or participate in their Community Supported

Agriculture Program.

The farm's 175 head of cattle are 100-percent grass-fed and grass finished. Greenbrier's farm-raised "step 4" pastured pork is also available at Whole Foods Stores throughout South Carolina 51 weeks out of the year! This year they will slaughter about 2,800 hogs and cultivate sustainably grown produce in their 10 acre garden and three greenhouses. Greenbrier handles all the food for the events they host, in addition to catering off-site, with everything grown or raised on the farm. No commercial food trucks for them! It's all Certified SC.

Their stunning event space is booked every weekend in the spring and fall, for anything from wedding receptions to an annual Campfire Social, to Farm to Table dinners and corporate functions. Their small store front practically runs itself, selling fresh produce and farm goods in the high season. The 125-member Community Supported Agriculture Program, offers customers vegetable and/or produce shares that can be picked up weekly, 26 weeks out of the year, offering diversity and homegrown goodness.

A popular feature is the Department of Health and Environmental Control service kitchen in the event space. Folks can rent the kitchen to bottle their goods, can their produce, or cook.

Roddy, who is 38, hopes to inspire other young farmers. A great steward, he takes care of the land. "That's why we farm the way we do," he said. In fact, the 300-acre farm is under a conservation easement, which ensures it will never be developed for other uses.

The three full time employees are like a family, eating lunch together at least three times a week. Roddy said, "If we can't take a few minutes to eat and enjoy the fruits of our labor, then we are doing something wrong." In peak season they add six to nine interns from Clemson and Furman universities.

In addition to their Plant Show on April 18, Greenbrier is hosting a Brick Oven Brunch on April 25, a Founders Brewing Farm-to-Table dinner on May 21, and Birds & Biscuits tour on June 20. Visit www.greenbrierfarms.com for details.

Commissioner's School Deadline

The deadline for the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture is April 17. This summer academic program is for rising high school juniors and seniors who are interested in agriculture and natural resources. The application is available online at Clemson.edu/cafls/sccsa.