**Training for Resource Conservation Professionals**

**Organic Production, Hoophouse Production**

**Monday, July 23, 2012 near Goldsboro, North Carolina**

**Wednesday, July 25, 2012 near Asheville, North Carolina**

**Thursday, July 26 near Pittsboro, North Carolina**

**See details below**

Southern SAWG, with support from Southern SARE PDP and in collaboration with North Carolina NRCS and the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, will offer three separate one-day training events focused on Organic Horticulture and High Tunnel (hoophouse) production. These events are specifically designed for resource conservation professionals serving farmers who are practicing or interested in organic and/or high tunnel production. Farmers who themselves serve as trainers or mentors to other farmers or to technical service professionals are also eligible to attend.

The training events will be held on farms, and led by practitioners with personal and practical experience with commercial organic and high tunnel farm enterprises. The focus will be on production of specialty crops on smaller farms, and will include discussion of how NRCS cost share and technical assistance can be profitably applied on these farms, especially in operations with organic and/or high tunnel production. This training is intended to help resource conservation professionals better serve farmers, including farmers with or considering NRCS EQIP Organic Initiative or Hoophouse cost-share agreements.

There is no charge for this training for qualifying agricultural professionals, but registration is required. Lunch will be provided.

INSERT REGISTRATION INFORMATION HERE

   Topics to be covered include the following:

* Principles of organic and natural farming systems, and how the principles are implemented;
* Building and managing soil health and fertility in an organic system;
* Crop diversity and crop rotation, including complex rotations as management strategies;
* Weed, pest and disease management in organic systems;
* Organic standards and approved materials;
* Protecting organic certification in presence of potential contamination by air or water;
* High tunnel siting, construction, ventilation, and material/design options;
* Basic production in high tunnels, including bed design, irrigation, ventilation;
* Critical factors for profitable high-tunnel hoophouse production;
* How market opportunities influence natural resource management decisions;
* Economic viability on a small farm: Markets, customers, enterprise diversity, labor availability & cost;
* Working with small plot sizes and small equipment, including in hoophouses;
* Irrigation on small acreage;
* Program outreach to new audiences using a grassroots approach.

**Each training event will begin promptly at 9:30am and adjourn at 3:30pm. Lunch will be provided and eaten indoors off-site.**

**Monday, July 23, 2012**

**Location: Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) Small Farm Unit**

**201 Stevens Mill Rd., Goldsboro, N 27530-1056**

**Busha Green will host the event at CEFS on July 23.**

**Wednesday, July 25, 2012**

**Location: Thatchmore Farm**

**153 Dix Creek One Road, Leicester, NC 28748**

**Tom Elmore will share his farm and experience on July 25.**

**Thursday, July 26, 2012**

**Location: Dutch Buffalo Farm**

**1000 Jay Shambley Road, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

**Farrell Moose will share his farm and experience on the morning of July 26.**

**and on Thursday afternoon we will visit**

**Harland's Creek Farm**

**97 Plantation Drive, Pittsboro, NC 27312**

**Judy Lessler share her farmsand experience on the afternoon of July 26.**

Trainers:

Dr. Mark Schonbeck, an independent consultant in sustainable agriculture from Floyd County, VA has been conducting organic related research and developing organic resources in cooperation with land-grants, nongovernmental agencies and farmers for 22 years.

Mark Cain has been operating a successful diversified organic farm enterprise in Arkansas for over 20 years. Mark produces mixed vegetables, culinary herbs, blueberries, and specialty cut flowers for the popular Fayetteville Farmers Market and CSA distribution.

Andrew Williams is a retired NRCS conservationist from Alabama with 35 years of experience as a soil conservationist, district conservationist, RC&D, and state outreach coordinator.

On July 23 and July 26, Eric Soderholm, Organic Transitions Coordinator at Carolina Farm Stewardship Association will share information about organic certification.

On July 23 and July 26, Karen McSwain, Organic Initiatives Coordinator at Carolina Farm Stewardship Association will share information about organic certification.

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