



David Wells, HENOSIS Farm. An innovative approach to agriculture that combines sustainability, environmental responsibility, and food production through mushroom cultivation. By Latasha Holloway

In this newsletter
you can expect:

What's Happening

I was excited to interview David Wells last month, where he provided a tour of HENOSIS Farm. When I asked what inspired him, he shared that his journey began in 2013, influenced by the work of mycologist Paul Stamets and the idea that mushrooms can play a key role in regenerative agriculture. This vision led to the development of a system that bridges agriculture and environmental sustainability. Support from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant program provided the opportunity to explore and test these ideas in a practical, real-world setting.

Early work in a home-based laboratory focused on cultivating mushrooms through trial and error in a controlled environment. The goal was to explore how mushrooms could be used not only for food production but also to improve soil health and reduce agricultural waste. Through SARE support, this early experimentation was strengthened by providing resources that allowed for deeper research and development.

What's

Happening

David Wells,
HENOSIS Farm

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As the operation expanded into a commercial setting, the focus shifted toward a circular production model. This system uses agricultural waste streams—such as crop byproducts—to grow mushrooms, which are then processed into compost and soil amendments. SARE funding played a key role in supporting this transition, helping to demonstrate how sustainable practices can also improve farm efficiency and profitability.

The farm has also developed efficient systems for scaling production. Using grain spawn, small amounts of fungal culture can be expanded exponentially to inoculate larger growing mediums. Controlled environments and light management techniques allow the farm to regulate production and meet market demand. With the support of SARE, these systems were refined and tested, helping to build a more reliable and scalable production model.

Today, the farm supplies mushrooms to between 25 and 30 restaurants in the Nashville area and partners with distributors to reach larger institutions. In addition, the farm participates in local farmers' markets and operates a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, offering products directly to consumers. SARE's support helped bridge the gap between experimentation and market readiness, allowing the farm to grow its customer base and expand its reach.



Lion Mane Mushrooms



Chestnut Mushrooms

The next phase of the project focuses on advancing sustainability through the use of biodigesters. These systems mimic natural biological processes to break down organic materials and produce methane gas, which can be used as a renewable energy source. This innovation represents a step toward creating fully integrated, circular farming systems. SARE funding continues to play an important role in allowing farmers to explore forward-thinking solutions like this without bearing the full financial burden.

The interview also emphasized the importance of preparation and collaboration when applying for SARE funding. Farmers are encouraged to review past projects, begin planning early, and work with grant writers or technical experts to strengthen their applications. SARE not only provides funding but also encourages knowledge-sharing and collaboration across the agricultural community.



Inside Henosis Farm with David Wells



Controlled room for storage



Grow Room



Harvested Mushrooms



Packaging for shipping



Latasha Holloway and David Wells

To find out more: https://projects.sare.org/sare_project/fs21-331/

Grant List

- Graduate Student Grant (currently closed)
- Research and Education Grant (currently closed)
- Education Grant (currently closed)
- Professional Development Program Grant (currently closed)
- Producer Grant (currently closed)
- On-Farm Research Grant (currently closed)

Funded Projects

Title: Enhancing Sustainability and Productivity of Organic Wheat-Soybean Double-Crop Systems in the Southeastern USA

Project Type: Graduate Student

Funds awarded in 2023: \$16,200.00

Projected End Date: 08/31/2025

Grant Recipients: University of Tennessee

Region: Southern

State: Tennessee

Graduate Student: Dr. Ravi Teja Neelipally

Major Professor: Dr. Sindhu Jagadamma

This study explores the potential of organic double-cropping, specifically growing soybean after wheat, as a way to improve productivity and sustainability in the southeastern United States. It compares this system to traditional full-season soybean production while examining the effects of reduced tillage and no-tillage practices on soil health, crop growth, and weed control. The research also evaluates how environmental factors like temperature, moisture, and sunlight influence crop performance. Overall, the project aims to provide practical, research-based recommendations to help farmers increase productivity, improve soil health, and support sustainable organic farming systems.

👉 Click below to learn more and view the full project details.

[LINK
HERE](#)

Resources & Learning

Resource: A Farmer's Legal Guide to Humane Handling Requirements

A Farmer's Legal Guide to Humane Handling Requirements (2025), created with SARE support, provides farmers and ranchers with important information on humane handling regulations. The guide outlines the legal requirements for small slaughter and processing facilities, including those operating under exemptions. It also offers practical recommendations to help farmers manage risks, especially in the event of a plant shutdown due to violations. Overall, this resource supports producers in maintaining animal welfare, meeting regulatory standards, and protecting their business operations.

👉 Be sure to explore the link below for full details, videos, and additional learning resources.

[LINK HERE](#)





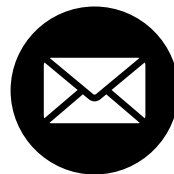
Contact Information

SOUTHERN.SARE.ORG

More information on the SARE program in our region:

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