

Farm Science Review

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cards, and in-store signs are a few of the marketing materials that have been developed to support the brand.

A steering committee of hydroponic growers was instrumental in developing Nature's Flavors Produce. Members of the committee critiqued brand names and logos and provided information about hydroponic-produce buyers and consumers, produce labeling and benefits of locally grown hydroponic produce.

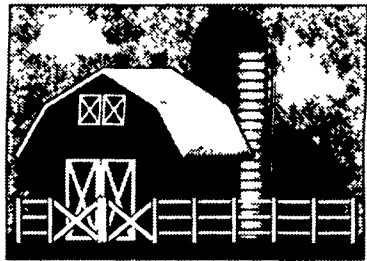
"We grow and process wonderful products in Ohio," Donnell said. "Branding and supporting marketing materials let producers and processors tell that story. During Farm Science Review, I will give producers some of the tools they need to develop a successful brand and product identity."

Along with information about brand development, Review visitors can learn more from Donnell about hydroponic vegetable production during an earlier session on Sept. 16 at 11 a.m.

For a complete listing of this year's presentations and events, go to <http://fsr.osu.edu/sched.html>.

Learn The Hoopla Over Hoophouses

Growers wanting the benefits of a greenhouse without the expense should look no further. Hoophouses-mobile, easily constructed greenhouses-extend growing seasons, can be maneuvered by one person and cost less



than a typical greenhouse, said Lucy Goodman, co-owner of Boulder Belt Organics in New Paris, Ohio.

Goodman will be discussing hoophouses during Ohio State University's Farm Science Review, Sept. 16-18, near London, Ohio. Her presentation will include a small hoophouse construction demonstration and will be held Sept. 17 at noon and 2 p.m. in the Center for Small Farms.

"Hoophouses enable us to get a huge jump on mid-summer crops," said Goodman, who has been using hoophouses for four years. "We can have tomatoes ripened by the end of June and by July fourth for sure. And that's compared to August, the typical month for tomato harvest."

Hoophouses, because of their easy construction and mobility, are perfect for the small farmer, especially organic produce growers, Goodman said. Organic producers have to move their crops in rotation to limit disease and insect problems and the hoophouses can follow movement of the patch.

One person can put the hoophouse together without the use of power tools. This keeps growers from struggling with long cords and having to stay close to electrical outlets.

Hoophouses consist of metal conduit bent into hoops that are placed to form a tunnel over the plants. Trenches are dug on both sides of the metal tunnel and plastic is draped over the hoop-like structures. The plastic is then put into the trenches and covered with soil to keep the plastic in place.

One of the biggest threats to these structures is wind, which can whip off the plastic, Goodman said. While it does not happen often, blown plastic can be easily re-draped over the metal

hoops.

While wind can be damaging to any type of greenhouse, fixing wind damage is cheaper for the hoophouse owner. The initial investment for a hoophouse is about \$300, compared to a typical greenhouse that ranges from \$1,500 to \$2,000, Goodman said.

The structures also withstand snow, which melts and rolls off the dome structure because of the heat built up inside. During the winter, sources of heat cannot be used in a hoophouse-a disadvantage compared to large greenhouses. However, buckets of water placed inside the structures attract heat during the day and hold heat at night.

"That's why we chose to use a hoophouse," Goodman said. "Because during the winter you can get out of the weather and be comfortable-it makes it easier to go out in the cold and harvest."

The hoophouses have to be established before winter because they cannot be dug into frozen ground. Most years, depending on the weather, growers can work in the greenhouses year-round, Goodman said. Most growers will work up until about December depending on what they are growing.

Growers cannot plant just anything and expect it to prosper. Plant selection is important based on the season that growers hope to extend, Goodman said. For instance, brussel sprouts, and other crops that survive frosts are good in cool-weather periods. Strawberries, spinach, and other plants are better at getting a jump on spring weather.

Farm Science Review Visitors Help Autistic Kids

Visitors to Ohio State University's Farm Science Review will be pulling their weight and donating time for the benefit of autistic children. People of all ages will assist in constructing weighted fabric vests and blankets, to be donated to the Madison County Fairhaven School at the end of the Review.

Volunteers will find sewing machines, construction lines and Master Clothing Educators in the McCormick Building daily during the Review, Sept. 16-18. Sessions discussing autism and the weighted vests and blankets also will be held Tuesday and Wednesday at 11 a.m.

and Thursday at 11:30 a.m.

"When you do something for somebody else, you get warm and fuzzy feelings," said Bridgette Sloan, Ohio State University Extension consumer and textile sciences program manager. "In this particular project, you get positive feedback and service learning for all ages and backgrounds. It's eye-opening to kids and exposes them to different perspectives and cultures to help them better understand."

Peg Johnson, director of Madison County Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities Children Services, agrees and is anxious to educate volunteers on weighted vests and blankets and their calming effect on autistic and other hyperactive children. The weighted articles apply pressure and stimulate the child's sensory system, which helps them to relax. This situation is similar to that of infants. Because of their immature sensory system, infants are comforted by even pressure from a blanket and swaddling.

"The vests and quilts offer sensory input and help the child to calm down and interpret all that is going on in their environment," Johnson said. "It's really amazing. Even when we wear them off the vest, some children will wear the empty vest just because it puts them in their comfort zone."

The special vests and blankets have pockets where weights are added. Weights are put in plastic bags and inserted into the pockets, which are then shut with Velcro.

Weights, which range in price depending on their substance, include everything from rice to beans to clay, Johnson said. The type of weight chosen for the vests depends on cost and the age of the child. For instance, beans should not be used in vests for younger children because they could cause a safety hazard if the pockets and bags are opened, she said.

Modeling clay is more expensive, but it heats up when the child is wearing the vest and easily molds to the child's body, Sloan said.

For the blankets, old T-shirts can be used to stuff the pockets.

The vests and blankets constructed during the Review will be made with bright, fun material. The vests will be made with pastel and primary colors, like normal vests, so to not draw attention to the child, said Sloan, who also is one of the project's coordinators.

Under therapeutic supervision, the vests are often worn during certain times of the day, such as play time. Using fun material will help the child enjoy the vest that much more, Sloan said.

"The vests are expensive, ranging from \$60 to \$100," Sloan said. "A lot of parents can't afford to purchase the vests, so they are only worn at school. This is a wonderful opportunity to give to those parents, or rather give to the therapists to distribute to the parents."


Sloan and her colleagues hope to construct 50 vests and blankets during the Review to donate to Fairhaven, which accommodates 140 children. Vests and blankets that are not used by the school will be taken to the Ohio Autism Conference later in the fall. A group of 4-H'ers will distribute extra vests at the conference and talk about the start of the project by a Missouri county 4-H club in 2000.

"I can see our parents who know their child needs a vest and can't afford it just being overwhelmed by this," Johnson said. "A lot of time families feel like they are out there all alone and projects like this remind them that they are not," she said.

Currently in the United States, about 400,000 people are affected by autism, Johnson said. Autism affects four times more boys than girls and symptoms usually occur before age 4.

To learn more about autism, attend the Review's daily session, "Weights Work Wonders: Special Clothing for Special Kids" or go to www.autismtoday.com.

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WELCOME TO NC+ DAYS

Wednesday, Sept. 17 - 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
 Gerald Hursh Farm - Wood Corner Rd.
 1 Mile South of 322, Ephrata, PA

Chicken Barbecue Elvin Hursh 717-733-3538

Wednesday, Sept. 17 - 2 PM to 4 PM
 772 West To Erisman Rd. Go Right 1/2 Mile
 To Plot On Left At Garman Mulch
 Manheim, PA

Refreshments Arthur Auker 717-665-6627

Thursday, Sept. 18 - 9 AM To 11 AM
 200 White Oak Road
 West Of Nickle Mine Rd., Vintage PA

Refreshments Troop Consulting Service 717-278-7794

Jim Cisco
 NC+ Agronomist
 from Iowa

Rich Ronick
 Specialist On
 Silage Inoculants,
 Root Worm Resistant Corn,
 RR Corn, Alfalfa, RR Beans,
 Corn Borer Resistant Corn

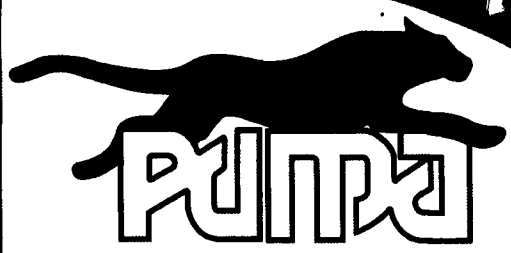
District Manager
Harvey Doyle
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Ivan Zimmerman
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