



MARKETING MATTERS

**Kentucky
Department
of Agriculture**

**A Consumer
Protection And
Service Agency**

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A Passion For Poultry

By *Bill Holleran*

Sandy Corlett didn't grow up on a farm. She dreamed of having a piece of land while living in Louisville. Now she's living that dream on her 56-acre farm in Shelby County where she raises chickens for both meat and eggs that she sells to restaurants and farmers' markets across Kentucky. Faith, hard work, determination, and a willingness to learn turned Corlett's passion into reality.

While attending Lawrence University Corlett was inspired by one of her instructors who practiced self-sufficient living. "Professor Ribbons practiced sustainable agriculture, and I developed a rather romanticized view of farming," said Corlett. "I bought a book called 'Farming for Self-Sufficiency on 10 Acres' and carried it around for 10 years before buying a farm." In just three years Corlett's Earth's Promise has become popular with farmers' market customers and chefs alike.

Corlett rotationally grazes her chickens in small paddocks with moveable pens on pasture. The birds have daily exposure to sunlight, pasture, and organic feed and benefit from the natural environment. Corlett takes 300 chickens to S&S Enterprises in Bowling Green every two weeks during peak season to be processed. S&S is currently the only licensed USDA-inspected poultry processor available for independent growers.

Whole fryers typically bring \$5.02 per pound retail or \$6.52 per pound for breast meat. Her broiler chickens are harvested at eight weeks of age and weigh around 3 1/2 pounds per carcass. She also raises turkeys for the Thanks-



giving market. These birds are supplemented with an organic feed and managed outside in moveable pens. Her laying hens are also managed in moveable pens on pasture. The certified organic eggs are sold for \$4 per dozen.

Last season Corlett obtained a farmers' market temporary food service establishment permit that allows her to serve ready-to-eat meals at registered farmers' markets. "My idea was to have an outdoor café with tables, real silverware, and cloth napkins where people could sample our products before buying them." This permit was new in 2007 as a cooperative effort between Community Farm Alliance, Kentucky Department for Public Health and KDA. She started with four tables and 16 chairs and has had tremendous response from market patrons. It takes four people to manage the market booth and the food business. She sells omelettes and chicken from 8 a.m. till noon

at several markets. Her café concept has been so well-received she's even considered opening a restaurant.

Corlett is interested in environmental stewardship and made a commitment to organic farming from the start. "It's more of a mission to me than anything else," said Corlett. Her farm is certified with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's "Certified Organic" program, which inspects and certifies organic farms throughout Kentucky. She and her husband, Jason Tucker, also raise organic vegetable crops that they sell at farmers' markets.

Corlett's advice to other new farmers is to do a lot of research and do your homework: "Try to think of potential problems before you start doing anything, and work out how you would solve them before they happen." Corlett demonstrates that you don't need an agriculture background to support agriculture and make an impact in your community. "Kentucky has an amazing opportunity right now with the tobacco settlement funds helping farmers diversify into new areas. Kentucky can set the standard of the interior of the country in the buy local food movement, and the best thing is the demand is already there—it's consumer-driven," Corlett said. Corlett is also a member of KDA's Kentucky Proud Program.

Earth's Promise farm has a listing on the "Local Harvest" Web site at www.localharvest.org. She also may be reached by calling (502) 647-8929.

Anyone interested in food service, meat, and egg regulations for farmers' markets should visit the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Farmers' Market Web page at www.kyagr.com/marketing/farmmarket/index.htm.

Kentucky Market Maker Celebrates One Year Anniversary

*By Chef Bob Perry
University of Kentucky
Food Systems Initiative*

Last year the Kentucky Market Maker team crisscrossed the state teaching farmers and consumers about this new program. We joked among ourselves that we would speak to any group of three or more people!

Kentucky Market Maker is a free, online, searchable directory for food from the farm to the store. It has listings for all the farmers' markets, restaurants, retail groceries, processors, wholesalers and most importantly farms that wish to sell their products directly to consumers and restaurants. All the listings except individual farmers' markets are from a purchased database; it is up to individual farms to register themselves. Farms that were already enrolled in the Kentucky Proud program were entered into the system, but we strongly encourage those farms to check their listing and improve or maintain their profile.

Registration for farms is free and ex-

tremely easy to do. If you do not have access to a computer, you can use one at any public library or your local county extension office, where agents can help with the process. The most important part of the registration form is the box titled "Additional description of your business or product(s)". This area allows farms to market themselves to potential customers by describing their operation in more detail. Text such as "we are fourth-generation farmers"; "all our products are pesticide-free", etc. help to entice customers to purchase from your farm.

Another great feature of the program is the demographic and business data that the user can search. You can search for groceries or restaurants to sell to, where the highest concentration of a particular ethnic group lives for special products or where the highest concentrations of families with children are for an agritourism event. The details of these types of searches can be summarized on a map and are easier to understand than just lists and statistical tables.

The Kentucky Market Maker team meets monthly to continually improve the Web site and plan to conduct a survey this spring to help their effort. We are working on a Buy-Sell Forum and password-protected listings so farms can change their listings.

We have already conducted demonstrations at the Kentucky Horticulture Conference and the Bed & Breakfast Association of Kentucky annual meeting and plan to hit the road again this year giving demos and training sessions anywhere we are asked to come. So take a look at Kentucky Market Maker online, www.marketmakerky.com, and look for us out on the road.

The Kentucky Market Maker project is made possible by a unique partnership among the following public and private entities that have joined forces to promote and enhance Kentucky's local food economy by linking farmers to consumers: University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Governor's Office of Ag Policy and Allied Food Marketers.

Important Dates From The Division of Show and Fair Promotion

By Katherine Wheatley

In December, the Division of Show and Fair Promotion conducted its fourth annual Kentucky Proud Youth Points Program Banquet in Frankfort. This event honored over 300 youth exhibitors, animals, and producers for excelling during the 2007 Kentucky Department of Agriculture-conducted show season.

Every youth exhibitor, animal, or producer is automatically eligible for the program when an animal is shown at one of KDA's district, preview, and/or expo shows in addition to the Kentucky State Fair. The Points Program was developed to recognize and reward exhibitors and producers for their hard work and effort throughout the show season. The Awards Banquet was a huge success and will only get better in the future. Be sure to check out the new rules and regulations for 2008 on the web at www.kyagr.com.

The 2008 Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo will be February 29-March 2

at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville. This event is for all beef cattle enthusiasts across the nation. This year, the Beef Expo features 11 breed shows and sales, a trade show, a 4-H/FFA livestock judging contest and a Pen Heifer Show and Sale where registered and commercial cattle are sold in pens of two or three. On Sunday, the Expo concludes with the highly competitive Junior Heifer Show, Market Steer Show, and Market Heifer Show. The expo will include over 600 cattle from 11 different breed sales and the pen sale.

The animals being sold at this event are from the most elite and modern genetics and have all been screened for quality, conformation, and production. If you are looking at getting into the cattle business or just want to improve your herd, this is an event you won't want to miss! Check out the Web site at www.kybeefexpo.com.

The 46th Annual Kentucky National Dairy Shows and Sales are rapidly ap-

proaching. This year, Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Guernsey, Holstein, and Jersey cattle will be shown and sold April 3-4 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville. More than 300 dairy cattle from throughout the United States will come to Louisville. Dairy producers will compete for over \$40,000 in premiums and prizes.

In conjunction with the Kentucky National Shows and Sales will be the fourth annual Kentucky Kow-A-Rama. This event, scheduled for April 4-5, will be highlighted by a Junior and Open Dairy Show. The Kentucky Kow-A-Rama will host several hundred dairy cattle from all over the nation competing for over \$17,000 in awards and prizes. This will be a must-see event for anyone interested in the dairy industry!

For more information on any of these events, go to www.kyagr.com or contact the Division of Show and Fair Promotion at (502) 564-4983.

Magnolia Shrimp LLC Set to Launch

Magnolia Shrimp News Release

Magnolia Shrimp LLC has developed an indoor, state-of-the-art, ecologically friendly, recirculating shrimp farm in Beaver Dam, Kentucky, and plans to market fresh shrimp in the heartland of the United States, from Chicago to Atlanta. Its first crop should hit the market by February 2008.

Brian Boudreau, general manager and shrimp scientist, has over 20 years of experience designing and managing large outdoor shrimp farms in Central and South America. He says: "Our current facilities include a 14,000-square-foot hatchery that will house up to 2,000 broodstock that can produce more than 1 million postlarvae a week. We will select and breed shrimp designed to thrive in the high-density environment found in our system. Once the postlarvae reach sufficient size, they will be transferred to the nursery tanks in the company's 30,000-square-foot prototype production building." The production building has four growout tanks that hold 135,000 gallons of water each.

After about six weeks in the nursery tanks, the shrimp will be transferred into the growout tanks (35 x 150 x 3.5 feet) for approximately 12 weeks and then harvested at about 6 inches and more than 20 grams. When fully operational, the facility will yield consistent crops in excess of 1,000 pounds a week.

The company's site in Beaver Dam has room for two more production buildings. "We also hope to expand our business by creating a contract grower program under which Magnolia will provide postlarvae and production expertise to contract growers, creating an alternative farming opportunity for Kentucky farmers," said Boudreau. Under an agreement with the contract growers, Magnolia will then purchase the shrimp from the growers and distribute them through its marketing network. Boudreau said Magnolia's site in central Kentucky allows it to cost-effectively deliver fresh shrimp to a number of major markets in the heart of the United States.

Dr. Jim Anderson, president of Magnolia Shrimp and former manager of SyAqua's international operations, said that Magnolia would use a heterotrophic bio-floc system, oxygen

for aeration, shrimp feeds produced by Zeigler in Pennsylvania and genetically improved broodstock that was purchased from SyAqua. SyAqua has shrimp hatcheries in Mexico, Brazil and Thailand.

Dr. Michael Timmons, a co-founder of Magnolia Shrimp, has worked in aquacultural engineering for 20 years as a researcher and extension specialist. He currently occupies the J. Thomas Clark Professorship of Entrepreneurship and Personal Enterprise within the Biological and Environmental Engineering Department at Cornell University.

Over the past year, Magnolia has conducted a series of trial production runs using facilities at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, one of the top five aquaculture universities in the country. The trials, conducted under a joint research agreement with KSU, helped Magnolia perfect its production system and prove that it could produce tasty marine shrimp at an inland location. Magnolia and KSU will continue to conduct joint research on shrimp growout. Magnolia is also working with the University of Kentucky in Lexington on some of the engineering challenges with indoor shrimp production systems.

Information Source: Brian Boudreau, (270) 799-3401, or brianboudreau01@yahoo.com, Web page www.magnoliashrimp.com.



Beekeeping School Set

Beekeepers at every experience level will benefit from the Bluegrass Beekeeping School March 8 at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

National and international beekeeping experts will deliver presentations on production, business issues, value-added beeswax products and more. Dr. Rick Fell, professor of entomology at Virginia Tech University, will conduct the opening session. Other presenters include Dr. Stu Jacobson of the University of Illinois at Springfield, Adony Melathopoulos of the Lacombe Research Centre in Beaverlodge, Alberta, Canada, and Tennessee State Apiarist Mike Studer. Dr. Tom Webster of Kentucky State University will conduct a beginner's track of classes for new and novice beekeepers. A vendor trade show will be offered.

Pre-registration is \$20 and should be mailed by March 4. Registration at the door is \$25. Registration includes lunch. Family rates and discounts for children are available.

For more information, go to www.kyagr.com and click on Beekeeping or contact state apiarist Phil Craft at (502) 564-3956 or phil.craft@ky.gov.

Farm Tourism Web Site to Launch

Staff Report

The new Web site for farm-based tourist destinations in Kentucky will be unveiled at the 2008 Kentucky Agritourism Summit Feb. 21 at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset.

"The new web site www.kentuckyfarmsarefun.com will enable Kentucky agritourism operators to market their attractions quickly and efficiently," Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer said. "Tourists from near and far will be able to find Kentucky farm destinations that the whole family will enjoy."

Also at the summit, farm destination operators can get valuable tips for business planning, insurance, signage, using Market-Maker: Kentucky and Kentucky Proud as marketing tools, and utilizing the media to promote their farms.

The owners of four successful Kentucky agritourism businesses will lead a panel discussion.

Registration is \$20 until Feb. 7 and \$30 after that date. The registration fee includes lunch.

For more information, contact Stephen Yates, agritourism director for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, by phone at (502) 564-4983 or by e-mail at stephen.yates@ky.gov.

Transitioning From Tobacco to Trees

By *Bill Holleran*

Bob Bedford has been a full-time farmer in Harrison County for 35 years. He currently raises cattle, corn, soybeans, hay, and seven years ago he started Longview Nursery on his farm. He once grew 10 acres of tobacco along with 100 acres of tobacco plants and 50 acres of tobacco plugs for other farmers in the area, and when the tobacco quota started being cut, he looked for something else to grow. He now has two acres of nursery production in the field as well as four large cold frames, some of which were converted from growing tobacco plants to growing landscape plants.

“When the quota started being cut, I went to a cooperative extension meeting in Montgomery County, and they were talking about different things you could do besides tobacco. Some people in Fleming County were talking about growing trees, and it sounded like something I could do. I have always enjoyed growing things, and this seem to fit the bill,” said Bedford.

Bedford talked to the University of Kentucky and some Tennessee folks when he was getting started in the nursery business. “I asked people what to grow, and no one could tell me.



There’s a lot of guesswork because you’re always looking two or three years down the road. There are trends in this business, but it’s the most unpredictable business I’ve been in,” Bedford said.

To minimize risk, Bedford started small and began with a large variety of plants. He also installed a pot-in-pot system so he could market his plants year-round. This system requires intensive irrigation during the summer, but he believes it has helped with fall sales. He markets his plants to landscapers and garden centers within a 50-mile radius of his farm and has also sold plants to the Louisville parks system, Berea College, and large horse farms around central Kentucky.

Bedford farms his 165 acres along the south fork of the Licking River by himself with no outside labor. He has

kept his operation profitable and manageable by remaining small-scale but highly diversified. “This is something I can do without help that I couldn’t do with tobacco,” said Bedford.

Bedford said it’s best to have a good variety of plants. “I like to grow odd stuff that other people don’t grow. Most people come for the unusual things and then buy additional plants once they are here.”

Bedford believes there is room for more nurseries in Kentucky, but his advice is to start small and work your way into it. “I knew there was a lot of potential but didn’t know how to capture it. It takes a long time for people to know you’re here,” Bedford said.

Bedford is a member of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s Kentucky Proud Program and regularly exhibits at the Central Kentucky Ornamental and Turf Association trade show in February. You can find a list of his products on KDA’s landscape plant availability guide by going to www.kyagr.com, clicking on directories and then clicking on Kentucky Landscape Availability Guide.

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