



**Nov.-Dec. 2020**

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## Coming up

**Dec. 8** - A Decade of Spotted Wing Drosophila: Lessons for Management webinar. Noon EST. From the Sustainable SWD Management team. For details and to register, [click here](#).

**Dec. 18** - Farm to School Enterprise Budget webinar, 11 a.m. EST-noon. Free. For details and registration information, see **Page 3**.

**Jan. 19-21** - Indiana Hort Conference & Expo (virtual). For details and to register, [click here](#).

**Jan. 26-30** - Organic Association of Kentucky Conference (online). Discounted registration until **Dec. 15**. For conference and registration details, [click here](#).

**Feb. 10-15** - Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference (online). For details, [click here](#).

# KY Fruit and Vegetable Conference moves online

*By Matt Ernst, independent writer*

The 2021 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference will be held online, and the new virtual format offers plenty of opportunities for producers to keep up with industry research and developments.

The conference will convene each Tuesday in January, starting January 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants can either log in from home using the Zoom meeting platform or watch on-site at a Cooperative Extension Service county office. More than 50 Kentucky offices will host conference “watch parties” for producers without adequate online access at their home or farm.

Conference organizers ask that growers note at registration that they are interested in watching the conference at an extension office. Growers in counties without a live watch option can attend another nearby office. Conference registration and other details are available at the Kentucky Horticulture Council website: <https://kyhortcouncil.org/2021-ky-fruit-vegetable-conference/>.

Mail-in registration forms need to be received by December 18<sup>th</sup>; online registration will be available up until the final session on Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Because of the online format, all sessions will be recorded. Registrants will have access to those sessions after they are live. That means that if you register but miss the live presentation because of farm chores, work or family commitments, you will be able to watch the recording at a later date.

Growers who attended past conferences will recognize the basic format. “We kept the core educational tracks,” said Cindy Finneseth,

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## Farmers sign up now for 2021 Kentucky Virtual CSA Fair

CSA farmers, your businesses are invited to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Kentucky Proud® Virtual CSA Fair. This event will be promoted and held on Facebook February 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021. If you plan to offer CSA next season and would like to participate in the event as a partner farm please complete the [sign-up form](#) by December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The event will promote CSA opportunities to consumers across Kentucky. CSA (community supported agriculture) is defined as a food purchasing model where members purchase a share with a partner farm in advance of the season and then receive a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly box of seasonal vegetables, meat, or other farm products.

Prior to the live Facebook event, Kentucky Proud will invest in paid promotions for the event and CSA participation. These ads will reach statewide to more than half a million targeted consumers with an interest in local food. The Kentucky Proud Virtual CSA Fair will share a post in the Facebook event for each participating CSA farm, using farm photos or pre-recorded videos that you submit



during sign-up. There will also be an opportunity for attendees to join us on Zoom for live farmer sessions organized by geographic area. This will allow partner farms an opportunity to share more about their CSA program with a targeted audience, if you wish!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kentucky Virtual CSA Fair is free for consumers to attend and free for CSA farms to participate in. The event is hosted by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Proud, Bluegrass Farm to Table, Edible Kentucky, Kentucky Horticulture Council, and the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK). If you have any questions about the partner farm sign-up or event contact Katie Harvey, OAK's CSA program coordinator at [katie@oak-ky.org](mailto:katie@oak-ky.org).

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### Continued from Page 1

Kentucky Horticulture Council executive director. Those include protected agriculture production, tracks for both beginning and advanced fruit and vegetable production, business management and organic production. A virtual farmers market short course is planned for Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>.

This year's conference will also provide information from two companies expanding use of protected agriculture for commercial vegetable production in Kentucky. "This year we will have presentations about agritech, featuring two high tech companies in the state – Kentucky Fresh Harvest and AppHarvest," said Finneseth. Those presentations will occur in the opening session on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

Direct marketers will be able to learn about how to evaluate new enterprises for the growing season. In the January 19<sup>th</sup> business management sessions, Val Schirmer of Three Toads Farm in Winchester will present, "Is Adding Cut Flowers a Good Idea

for Your Farm?" Presentations that day will also include strategies for pricing, online ordering at the Franklin County Farmers Market and how to use the HortBiz Quiz, a tool for evaluating a new enterprise from the CCD.

The virtual format, necessitated by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, will make it harder for one of growers' favorite aspects of the conference: connecting in person. Organizers hope the socially distanced watch events at extension offices, and some online interaction, will meet some of the need for making connections.

Organizers are also trying a virtual wine and cider tasting on January 5<sup>th</sup>, at 6 p.m., to provide a less formal way for conference registrants to interact. That event will be led by UK's Patsy Wilson and Jeff Wheeler. Even those who are not wine or cider aficionados are welcome to "listen in with any beverage of your choice from the comfort of your own home," to learn about Kentucky's wine and cider industry, according to the conference agenda.



# All KY-grown snack food in development for Kentucky schools

By McKenzie Fox, Kentucky Horticulture Council

As part of their recently awarded USDA Farm to School grant, the Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) is partnering with FoodChain of Lexington to develop and distribute a shelf-stable, all Kentucky-grown, healthy snack food for Kentucky students. The snack food will consist of dried apples and blueberries, popcorn, and honey.

In early November, KHC staff members Cindy Finneseth, Bethany Prekopa, and McKenzie Fox headed to the UK Research and Education Center at Princeton to pick approximately 6,000-plus pounds of 'Fuji' apples for use in the snack food. The blueberries came from the Kentucky Blueberry Growers Association, and KHC is still interested in identifying a few more popcorn and honey producers (contact information is below if you are interested or know any contacts). FoodChain will be processing and packaging approximately 10,000 units of the snack food, but first will do taste tests and trials to determine the best recipe to meet school nutrition requirements and be tasty for kids!

A couple of weeks ago, McKenzie had the opportunity to visit FoodChain to learn how they are processing the apples. After washing the apples with cold water, they are cored, sliced thin with a mandoline, and then laid out on trays to then be placed in the dehydrator. The apple slices will stay in the dehydrator for approximately 12 hours before being taken out and combined with dried blueberries, popcorn and honey. KHC will be completing an economic analysis to determine the feasibility of getting the snack food into Kentucky



Photo by McKenzie Fox

Apples are processed at FoodChain of Lexington as part of a Kentucky-grown snack food being developed for Kentucky schools. The Kentucky Horticulture Council is looking for additional popcorn and honey producers to participate in the project.

schools. We are very excited at the prospect of this alternative sales route for our local farmers and the possibility of getting a Kentucky-grown and healthy snack food into the schools for our youth to enjoy.

We want to thank the UK Research and Education Center at Princeton for their donation of the apples and for helping us pick them. We also want to thank Clem's Refrigerated Foods (Lexington) for allowing us to store the apples there before being processed by FoodChain. Look out for snack food updates on KHC's Facebook page in the near future!

For more information, contact KHC at [info@kyhortcouncil.org](mailto:info@kyhortcouncil.org) or (859) 490-0889.

## Webinar on using budgets coming up on December 18<sup>th</sup>

From the Kentucky Horticulture Council website

Join the Kentucky Horticulture Council and University of Kentucky Extension for a free Enterprise Budget Webinar at 11 a.m. on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. This training is intended for growers interested in Farm to School in and around Knox, Laurel and Whitley counties (KY), but we welcome all those who are interested in learning more about enterprise budgets or farm to school to join. Learn how to make and use an enterprise budget so your business is profitable, particularly with your farm to school market channels. Pre-registration required. [Click here to register](#). Questions? Contact McKenzie at [mckenzie@kyhortcouncil.org](mailto:mckenzie@kyhortcouncil.org).



### ENTERPRISE BUDGET WEBINAR

FOR GROWERS INTERESTED IN FARM TO SCHOOL IN AND AROUND KNOX, LAUREL, & WHITLEY COUNTIES

Making and using an enterprise budget is an important step to ensuring your business is profitable, and there are different pieces of the budget you must think about for Farm to School. Learn how to use an enterprise budget and the perks they provide!

**FRIDAY, DEC. 18TH, 11AM-12PM**

Meeting Virtually over Zoom (must pre-register to receive link)

For more information & to register, visit  
[KYhortcouncil.org/F2S](http://KYhortcouncil.org/F2S)

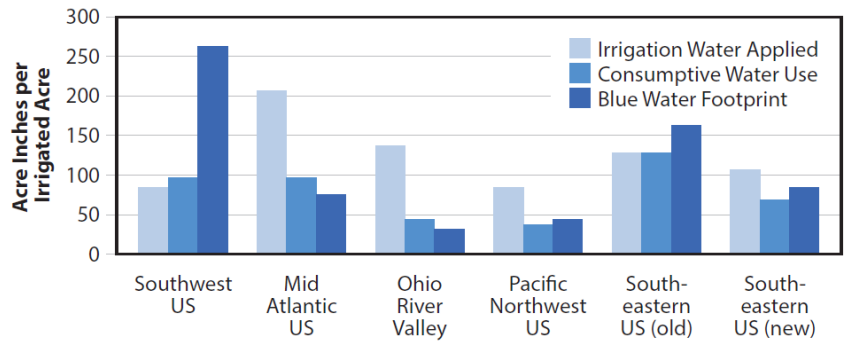


# Three new, updated extension publications available for nursery, greenhouse growers

By Joshua Knight, Senior Extension Associate, Horticulture

A new extension publication was developed this year from a recently completed 5-year USDA research project into current technologies and practices for reducing, recycling and remediating irrigation water, which included research into Water Footprint analysis. **HO-124: Water Use and Water Footprint in Container-grown Nursery and Greenhouse Crops** (<https://ncer.ca.uky.edu/water-management>) was written for growers to better understand the process of Water Footprint analysis, which allows for broad comparison of water use between sectors and processes. Water Footprint has become a global standard for agricultural water use as well as industrial and residential water use that may well drive policy and market decisions in the foreseeable future.

This publication shows a comparison of different production systems across a variety of geographic areas with seasonal water scarcity as well as maps of seasonal water scarcity in Kentucky. Water Footprint is a calculation of water use which considers environmental impact as well as both geographic and localized seasonal availability of water at the time of use. While this publication is



targeted toward nursery and greenhouse growers, the basic process of Water Footprint analysis explained in the article could be applied to any agricultural production system. As water scarcity is projected to increase in the future, we should expect further Water Footprint research and analysis in agriculture.

Two other publications were recently updated, **HO-89: Characteristics of Kentucky's Nursery and Greenhouse Industries** and **HO-108: Economic Impacts of the Kentucky Green Industry** ([https://ncer.ca.uky.edu/new\\_grower\\_resources](https://ncer.ca.uky.edu/new_grower_resources)) with new data from recent research.

While all of these publications (and more) are accessible on the **Nursery Crop Extension Research** site, (<https://ncer.ca.uky.edu/>) hard copies can also be requested through your county extension office.

For more information about the larger USDA research project, see the nationwide extension website for the project at <https://www.cleanwater3.org/>.

## High tunnel survey publication among new resources from the CCD

The CCD recently published a report from a survey of high tunnel growers from multiple states, **High Tunnel Production and Marketing Survey: Data Summary (CCD-SP-17)**. The survey was conducted in part through the USDA SSARE Project 'Cover Crops Under Cover: Evaluating Costs, Benefits, and Ecosystem Services of Cover Crops in Year-Round High Tunnel Production Systems.' The CCD recently developed a **Leaf Amaranth profile** and updated our **Poinsettias profile**. Don't miss the remaining webinars in our fall series, Offseason Marketing and Customer Retention (Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>), and 2021: Looking Ahead for Farmers Markets & COVID-19 (Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>). Register at <https://www.uky.edu/ccd/2020-Fall-Webinars>.



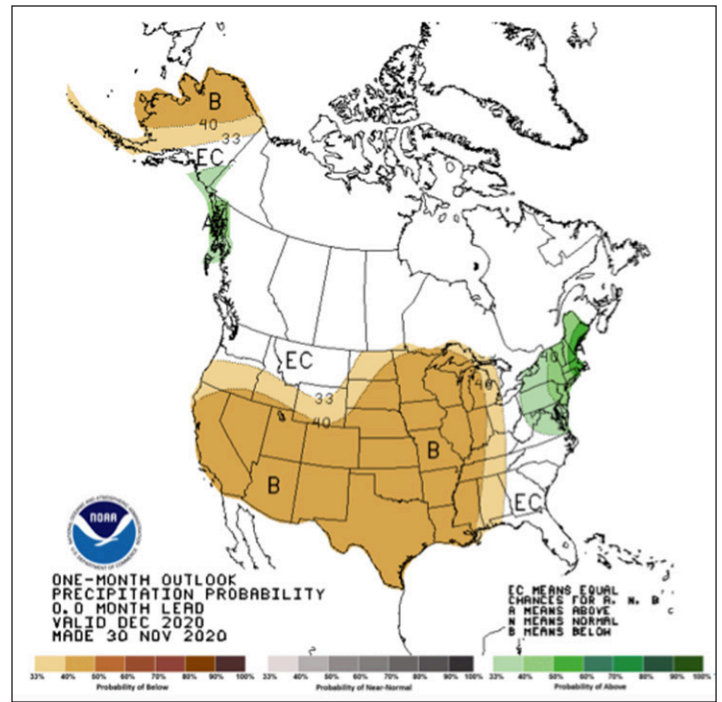


# Expect cooler than average start to December, and dry overall

By Joshua Knight, Senior Extension Associate, Horticulture

Though the first week of December is predicted to be cooler than average across the Commonwealth, that system from the southeastern U.S. is expected to yield to providing warmer than average temperatures after the second week of the month. This trend of warmer than average temperatures is expected for December overall.

The forecast for precipitation is much simpler. Current models show the entire month of December with a high probability of drier than average conditions, though this is especially true for the first half of the month.



# Farm sales of Kentucky organic products triple from 2016-2019

From the USDA, NASS, KY Field Office

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the results of the 2019 Organic Survey, which show Kentucky total farm sales of \$38.50 million in organic products, up \$26.28 million, or 216%, from 2016. There were 185 certified organic farms, up 85% from 2016, which accounted for 19,499 certified acres, up 90% from 2016.

Highlights from the report include:

- Livestock and poultry products: \$26.70 million, up 382%
- Milk: \$7.17 million, up 61%
- Fruits and berries: \$46,501, down 53%
- Livestock and Poultry: \$1.76 million, up 42%
- Field Crops: \$6.36 million, up 126%
- Corn for grain: \$1.69 million, up 86%

Marketing practices in the certified organic farming sector showed that \$1.80 million in organic products were sold directly to retail markets, institutions, and local/regional food hubs. Another \$2.13 million in organic products were sold directly to consumers at farmers markets, on-farm stores and stands, roadside stands or stores, u-pick, community supported agriculture farms, and online markets.

The 2019 Organic Survey, a 2017 Census of Agri-

## Register now for 2021 OAK Conference

The 2021 Organic Association of Kentucky Conference will be held online Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Discounted registration is available until Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. For details and to register, [click here](#).

culture special study, is a census of all known U.S. farms with certified organic production in 2019, as well as those transitioning into organic production. Additional survey results as well as the results of previous NASS organic surveys are available at [www.nass.usda.gov/organics](http://www.nass.usda.gov/organics) or in NASS's online [Quick Stats database](#).

## Thanks for reading!

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