

THE MARKET BULLETIN

“TELLING THE STORY OF WEST VIRGINIA AGRICULTURE”

KENT A. LEONHARDT, COMMISSIONER

www.agriculture.wv.gov

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June 2020

LEARNING TO PIVOT A COVID-19 LESSON

It was a busy spring for Jordon Masters, the founder of Micro Genesis. The Morgantown company known for growing microgreens, or young greens from vegetable plants that are harvested in the early stages of growth, usually within 10-14 days, was gearing up for peak season. His 5,400 square feet of greenhouse space was filled with basil and leafy greens like spring mix. His plants were almost ready to ship to restaurants and country clubs around the region. Then came COVID-19.

“I was a little naive to the situation. For years, there’d been Ebola and SARS and I thought COVID-19 wasn’t going to be too big of an issue. It won’t amount to anything,” said Masters. “I don’t think it started to hit me until two weeks before WVU’s spring break when I was talking to some of our interns and they were saying the University was talking about closing for a couple weeks after spring break with the possibility of the virus spreading.”

Even with the threat of the virus, his business went on as usual until West Virginia Governor Jim Justice announced a State of Emergency on March 16.

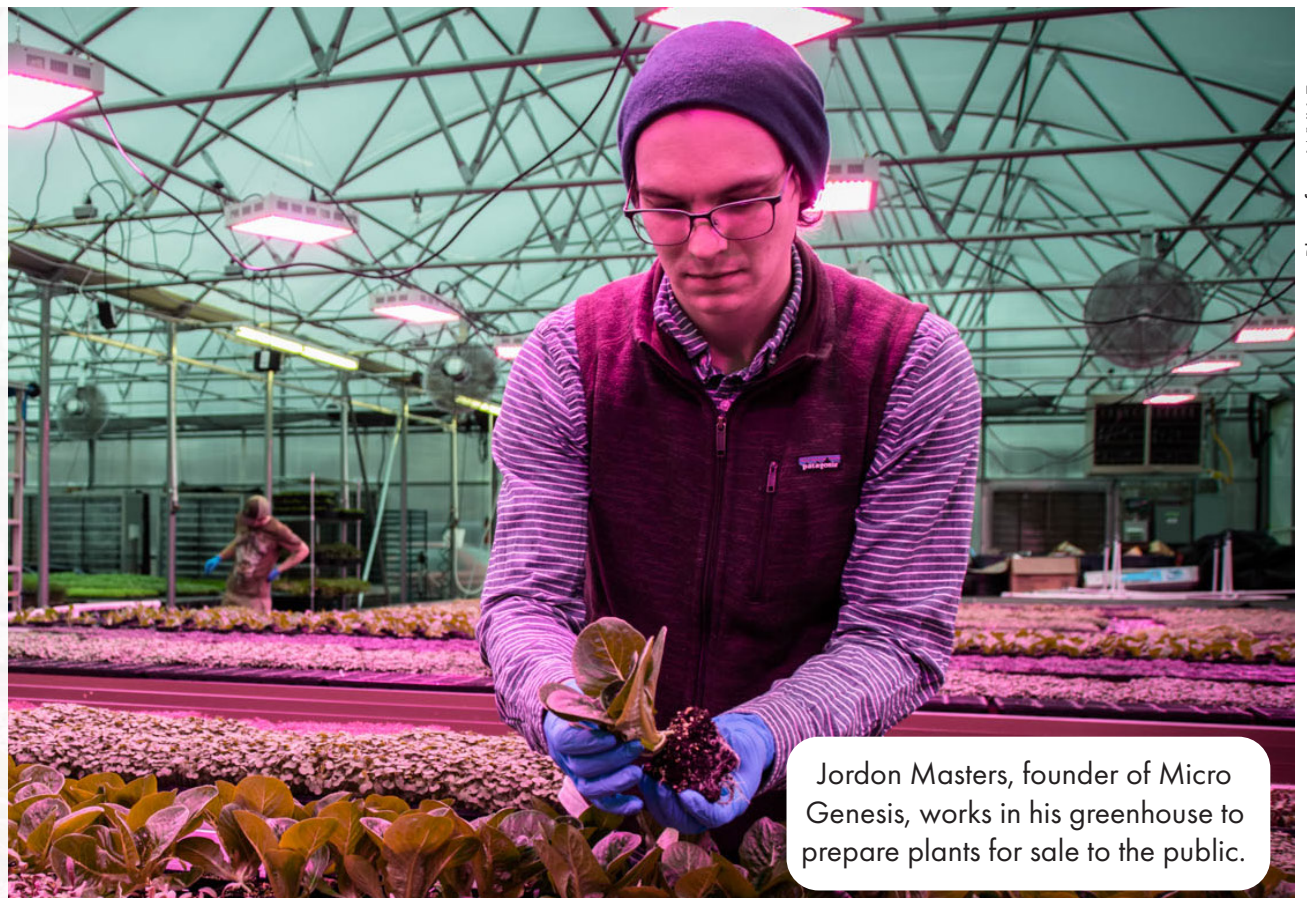
“That was a Monday. So, Monday morning we were able to get all our orders out the door. By Monday evening, we’d lost 50 percent of our sales. By Wednesday, we’d lost 75 percent and by Thursday, we’d lost 95 percent of our sales with no end in sight. I had to lay everybody off.”

Masters, who started Micro Genesis in 2016 after winning a business plan competition, was at a loss. How do you sell microgreens to restaurants and country clubs if they’ve been shut down not only in West Virginia but all across the country?

“We’re kind of lucky, the longest crop we grow is six weeks,” explained Masters. “But we had six weeks of crops growing and no idea how to move it. There was no market for any of it. Luckily some of our customers we had were able to convert over to take-out orders. But that was only about 25 percent of our crop going out the door. I was looking at how do we make money to pay for our utilities because we just couldn’t shut down production.”

That’s when Masters knew he had to pivot and do it quickly.

“I started looking at the calendar and was like we’ve got all these microgreens that are basically starter plants anyway. I saw I had just enough time to transplant all this stuff into



Jordon Masters, founder of Micro Genesis, works in his greenhouse to prepare plants for sale to the public.

pots and order some tomato and squash seeds and start doing vegetable transplants.”

Masters got to work quickly tracking down seeds.

“I guess everyone wants to grow a garden now. Most of the seed companies were out of everything. Luckily there are companies like Johnny’s [Selected Seeds]. They’d stopped private seed orders, so if you weren’t a commercial seed grower, you couldn’t get any seed. They made sure us commercial growers got what we needed,” said Masters.

That’s when he got down to business repotting plants and potting seeds. Within a few weeks, he had starter plants that were ready to go out the door and into someone’s garden. The question was how to get folks in the greenhouse door. He quickly found a solution.

“We worked up a deal with the WVU Horticulture Club to bring in their plants and flowers to sell them through our facility. That way the Horticulture Club could make their money on all the stuff they started, and we could use that as an advertisement to get people in our door to purchase plants we grew.”

The plan worked. Soon people were stopping by Micro Genesis to pick up spring plants for their flowerbeds and starter plants for their gardens. On top of that, basil, one of Micro Genesis’ original plants, was flying out the door.

“Basil sales doubled during the pandemic to our wholesale suppliers because a lot of people were eating pizza. So, our basil sales blossomed!”

With Micro Genesis back in business, Masters applied for and received a Payroll Protection Plan Program Loan or a PPP. It enabled him to bring back all his employees to help with growing and sales of the starter plants.

Now, more than two months into the pandemic, things are slowly starting to get back to normal. For Masters, the business is in a holding pattern.

“Today we’re in a little bit of a gray area. All the restaurants are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, so they’re opening up. They’ve been calling me to get products. Where I am with that is I’m not growing anything until I have a contract in place. I don’t want to take the risk of restarting plants that will be ready in four to six weeks and something happens where there’s another outbreak and everything shuts down again and I’m stuck in the same situation I was two months ago – a lot of produce and nowhere to move it.”

With contracts on the books, he can start growing again with the assurance his plants will move, no matter what. The outbreak has been a learning experience for Masters.

“I think something every company has had to do is pivot the best way they can.”

And Masters said he may continue to pivot until there’s a new normal.

For more information on Micro Genesis, visit their website at www.growntomatter.com.

Country of Origin Label Must be Revisited

My military experience has taught me two very important things. In a global economy, no country should ever want foreign powers to have influence over the access to food or energy. Right now, we are seeing this lesson play out right here in America during this pandemic. Gas prices have plummeted as OPEC and Russian companies have flooded the market to punish the United States' gas boom. At the same time, despite America being the largest beef producer in the world, we are seeing scarcity for protein in our stores. Both problems are the result of the mass imports despite our ability to produce within our borders. How we change this tide is we must strive for economic independence and stability to avoid crises such as these in the future.

As Commissioner of Agriculture, one of my top priorities is how we facilitate more protein production in the United States to reduce our dependence on foreign sources. Even though America is the largest beef producer in the world, we still import around \$3 billion of it annually. More troubling is many of these products are processed and packaged in the United States, and because of current laws, can be labeled as a "Product of the U.S." This is

because the U.S. no longer requires a "label of origin" which would rightfully identify where these proteins are originally produced.

Right now, this issue is being highlighted as many U.S. farmers' flocks and herds are being depopulated before they get the chance to enter the market. American farmers and ranchers are losing money on their livestock as large processing companies continue to bring foreign proteins into the U.S., all the while labeling it as U.S. product. Our agricultural sector produces an abundance which we are fortunate enough to share with the world, but we must ensure our farmers are competing on an even playing level. As consumers desire more information about the products they consume, we owe them the transparency of where their proteins were raised.

Although the USDA is making efforts to investigate our meat imports, we must begin taking action now. To build local food economies, consumers must demand American-grown products. Here in West Virginia, you can support these producers by purchasing products labeled "WV Grown." Asking your grocers to build or increase their locally grown section is another way to drive demand. As always, visiting your local farmers' market is a great

way to get to know your farmer. The power for change is rooted in people as our economy and constitution dictate.

At the federal level, we must revisit country of origin labeling. Consumers are more actively researching the products they purchase every day. This includes how and where something was produced. Like we always preach, know thy farmer know thy food and consumers will demand these changes, inevitably. In the meantime, this pandemic has shown the importance of country of origin labeling and how it can affect the health of our country. When we rid the ability of foreign influences over our nation, we will be a stronger country. Until federal leaders act, remember to embrace, support and do all things we can for our local food economy.



Kent Leonhardt, Commissioner of Agriculture

COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY EXPANDED PRACTICES FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

Disruptions to the national food supply chain have caused vendors and consumers alike to predict that 'local may be the new normal.' We must invest in our local farms to help them weather the current crisis and strengthen their operations for future growth and local food security. In addition to providing essential food access services, farmers' markets have always been viewed as a 'cultural bank,' a place to gather and socialize. Given the current pandemic, farmers' market managers and vendors should discuss ways to encourage customers to turn out while encouraging them to practice social distancing and sanitary practices in a farmers' market setting. Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus, not a gastrointestinal disease, so the risk of contracting the disease from eating contaminated food is low. According to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others is dependent on three factors - social distance, the duration of exposure and the effectiveness of health practices and sanitation. Expanded health, hygiene and safety practices for farmers' markets should address all three factors. Additionally, proactive steps in developing communications, preparing contingency plans and modifying operations will likely help keep the local food system functioning as close to normal as possible. A few best

practices are suggested below.

Farmers' market operators must provide up-to-date information to customers through market signs, social media, newsletters or emails. Emphasize the specific health and safety practices the markets are taking to prevent the spread of illness and the rules and changes in market procedures being implemented to help customers and vendors remain safe and healthy. Discourage vendors and customers who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or have come into contact with someone displaying symptoms, from attending markets. At least for the time being, encourage only one person per household to visit the market. Limit the number of customers entering market, limit customers to one per vendor at a time and keep customers walking in one direction into and out of the market. Help customers to maintain a social distance of at least six feet by having clear signage and visual cues for waiting lines or traffic flow.

Make sure to provide maps of vendors' stalls in advance of market day so customers can find their favorite vendors easily and quickly. Encourage customers to come prepared with a game plan in mind so they can shop quickly and efficiently; they can pre-shop the market's online site to see what will be available so they can prepare

a shopping list beforehand. When possible, encourage contactless payments including exact change, credit cards, tap-to-pay or preorder online for pickup or delivery. Extending sales hours to accommodate more customers without crowding is recommended. It may be considerate to designate specific hours for vulnerable populations, including elderly, pregnant or immune-compromised individuals.

Encourage customers to touch only items they will purchase. Alternatively, vendors can limit or discourage self-serve options by pre-bagging items in different sizes to accommodate different customer needs. Demos and sampling should be suspended to minimize touch points and crowding, and hot food sales should be restricted to take-out options only.

Provide prevention supplies at markets (hand-washing stations to include potable water, single-use towels, soap and catchment for gray water) and supplement with hand sanitizers (60-70% alcohol) at vendor stalls. Post hand-washing signs reminding vendors and customers about proper hand-washing procedures.

Space vendor booths at least ten feet apart. If space is an issue, consider temporarily redesigning market locations to allow for pre-ordered items to be picked up

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Funding for this article was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture. The views expressed in written materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does any mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organization imply endorsement by the United States Government.

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FOOD SAFETY CONT.

at the usual market times or other alternative distribution methods such as community or home delivery.

All vendors and market employees should be trained on new COVID-19 procedures and policies and retrained on existing health and safety standards for the market. In addition, vendors should sanitize hands and work areas after every transaction. Separate tasks if possible, so have separate market staff handle money/tokens/vouchers and food items. Remind staff about proper hand-washing procedures. Make sanitary gloves required for market staff and use CDC guidance and protocols for using and changing gloves and for wearing masks.

Vendors should use non-porous plastic tables that

can be easily disinfected if possible. Think about touch points (doorknobs, railings, tables, counters, credit card machines, cash registers, etc.) throughout the market and develop schedules for cleaning and sanitizing with a designated person to supervise and enforce health, hygiene and food safety practices. Disinfectants that may be effective against COVID-19 are available on the EPA Disinfectant Registration List.

These strategies can help you navigate the current crisis but can also be used in the long term to improve health, hygiene and food safety standards at your market. If there are vendors or consumers who are not comfortable participating in a traditional farmers market because of COVID-19, consider temporarily redesign-

ing market locations to allow for pre-ordered items to be picked up at the usual market times or other alternative distribution methods such as a drive through market (customers stay in car and order or pre-order products to be placed in bags for customers) or online ordering and delivery to strategic neighborhood locations (curbside) or homes. The West Virginia University Extension Service is currently working on an online map to help facilitate this process.

Remember to stay up to date on current COVID-19 recommendations from your state departments of agriculture and health. For further information, please contact Dee Singh-Knights at dosingh-knights@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-7606.

WV Farmers' Markets Adapt to COVID-19



Health and safety is a top priority for Capital Market as customers return looking to shop for local goods and products.

For most people, the allure of a farmers' market is the open-air atmosphere and the sort of lackadaisical attitude that comes along with casually strolling past vendors. It's an invitation to relax, unwind and take in the beauty of local farms and the products they offer. Oftentimes, it's a family affair and draws in large crowds looking for a weekend outing. Many communities look towards their farmers' markets as a hub where locals and visitors can gather to experience the best that the region has to offer.

Farmers' markets are no exception to the many rules and regulations that have accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic. Evan Osborne, outdoor market manager for Capitol Market in Charleston, says consumers can expect the same products and vendors they're used to but should also look towards a slightly altered shopping experience.

"First and foremost, we have all of our farmers returning this year. So, say there are particular vendors that you like to get your ferns. You've got somebody else you like to buy your pepper plants from. Take comfort in knowing that they're still going to be there," reassures Osborne. "We like to think of ourselves as a community institution. Under normal circumstances we want the community to come join us, spend time and take in all the market has to offer. While we still want them to come and support our farmers, we also want them to come with an idea of what they want to purchase. Also, if possible, limit the size of their party and maybe how long they spend at the market itself."

Along with adhering to regulations, Osborne says the Capitol Market has added driving lanes for curbside pick-up orders in an effort to encourage social distancing. The Capitol Market isn't the only market within the state changing its course in hopes of being more approachable. In fact, markets in both Morgantown and Lewisburg have sought out alternative methods to continually provide to their communities. The Courthouse Market in Lewisburg has changed the location of their market completely and has seen a noticeable uptick in their business. Manager of the Courthouse Market, Mary Surbaugh, says that despite such a significant change customers were more than eager to visit the market.

"We wanted to ensure that our customers were at the optimal level of safe. Thus, we relocated to the West Virginia State Fair Grounds in the free parking area where we could distance our vendors 15 feet apart," said Surbaugh. "The public has embraced it. Our first day, which was the last Saturday in April, they rolled in probably 100 to 150 cars with an average of at least two per car. They were all smiles. Every single person acted like they were going on a field trip."

The community has welcomed the return of the market so much so that vendors have been routinely selling all of their products.

"The first week, we sold out of everything. The second week I think we increased our customer base by at least 30 percent. Again, the second week was a complete sell out. We've never sold out at the courthouse in downtown Lewisburg," Surbaugh enthusiastically mentions.

In Morgantown, Ayrton Walker, manager of the Morgantown Farmers Market, says that their market has opted for the drive through service as well. Although it takes away from what makes markets so memorable, it still hasn't stopped new and old consumers alike from showing up.

"You're not going to necessarily get the interaction that you would get at a normal market. So, you're not going to be able to get around and see all the produce and interact with all the vendors and all their products. I think a lot of customers miss that. I think that's the biggest difference and also the biggest frustration is the change in that pace and interaction and relationship," Walker mentions. "We have a really strong sense of community around our market. We still have the customers that continuously supported us and then we also have customers that are interested in supporting the local economy."

At the heart of it, a farmers' market is a focal point for a community. It's the bridge that connects consumers to producers. Farmers' markets bring regions closer together and closer to the food that sustains their economy. Osborne, and all the markets managers across the state, understand the role they play in the areas they operate, not only as providers of goods but within the regulation of those goods as well.

"We want to have a record season. We want to sell out every day. We want our vendors to have the most incredible growing season they've ever had. We also have to juggle the safety of every person that came in. We couldn't and that's why we have to put those measures in place," said Osborne. "We want to be here for the community, for our customers, for everyone that's a fan of the Market, but we also do a huge disservice if we don't do so in a manner that's safe and provide a comfortable atmosphere for everyone. So, to that end, we really appreciate your patience."

A Slice of Pie

Who likes to eat pie? Just about everyone! This month we're featuring mouth-watering pie recipes to start off your summer. Cherries, blueberries and rhubarb can all be found right here in West Virginia. Whether you're growing rhubarb in your backyard or visiting a you-pick farm for your blueberries, now is the perfect time to bake a pie, or you can freeze your fruit and enjoy one later on in the season. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, send it to marketbulletin@wvda.us.



Mini Cherry Pies

1 pastry for a 9 inch single crust pie
1 (15 ounce) can pitted sour cherries, drained

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
½ cup white sugar
teaspoon almond extract

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Unroll the pie crusts, and cut 2 6-inch rounds from the dough; cut the remaining dough into 1/8-inch strips for a lattice crust. Fit the rounds into 2 5-inch mini pie dishes. In a bowl, stir together the cherries, tapioca, sugar, and almond extract; let the filling stand for 5 minutes to soften the tapioca. Stir the filling again, and spoon into the pie shells. Use the strips to weave a lattice crust on each pie, and pinch the crusts together. Bake in the preheated oven until the crusts are golden brown and the filling is bubbling and thickened, about 30 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

Rhubarb Pie

4 cups chopped rhubarb
1 cups white sugar
6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon butter
1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch double crust pie

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Combine sugar and flour. Sprinkle 1/4 of it over pastry in pie plate. Heap rhubarb over this mixture. Sprinkle with remaining sugar and flour. Dot with small pieces of butter. Cover with top crust. Place pie on lowest rack in oven. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees F and continue baking for 40 to 45 minutes. Serve warm or cold.

Blueberry Pie

¾ cup white sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

4 cups fresh blueberries
1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch double crust pie
1 tablespoon butter

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Mix sugar, cornstarch, salt and cinnamon, and sprinkle over blueberries. Line pie dish with one pie crust. Pour berry mixture into the crust, and dot with butter. Cut remaining pastry into 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide strips, and make lattice top. Crimp and flute edges. Bake pie on lower shelf of oven for about 50 minutes, or until crust is golden brown.

WVDA Continues Search for Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) is an invasive, sap-feeding insect from Asia that was first detected in Pennsylvania in 2014. It has since spread to parts of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia and now West Virginia. This insect prefers to feed on tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), but will also infest a wide variety of woody plants and vines, including many fruit and forest trees. It can be particularly damaging to grapes.

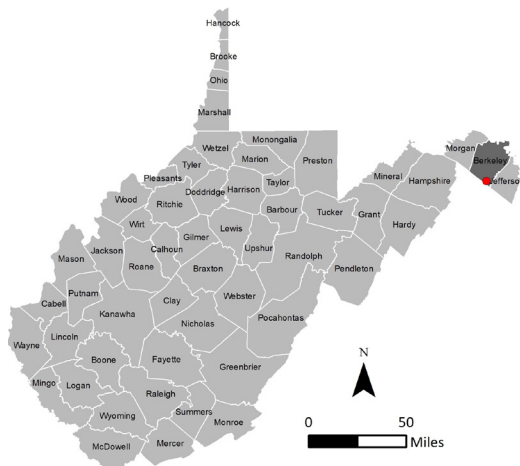
In October 2019, a small population of spotted lanternfly was detected in West Virginia, near Bunker Hill in Berkeley County. As a result, monitoring efforts have intensified, especially along the northern border and eastern panhandle counties. These efforts, conducted by WVDA and USDA staff, include visual surveys, as well as multiple trapping techniques.

Spotted lanternfly overwinters as eggs in a gray, putty-like egg mass. Egg masses are placed on smooth surfaces of host plants or on man-made items, such as vehicles, trailers, outdoor equipment and patio furniture. Eggs hatch in spring. Nymphs (immatures) are wingless and occur in spring and summer. Young nymphs are black with white spots, while older nymphs are red and black with white spots. Adults are relatively large (approximately 1 inch) and occur from mid-summer through fall. Their forewings are gray with black spots and reticulated lines near the tips. Their hind wings have contrasting patches of red and black,

partially separated by a white patch. There is one complete generation of this insect per year.

Landowners are encouraged to look for clusters of adults and/or nymphs on vegetation throughout the growing season. Extra attention should be given to monitoring any tree-of-heaven located on your property. In addition, outdoor items should be inspected for egg masses prior to movement. This is a hitch-hiking pest that can be spread long distances when people move infested material.

For more information on spotted lanternfly or to report an infestation, please contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Plant Industries Division at (304) 558-2212 or e-mail bugbusters@wvda.us.



From the VET ONE HEALTH

What is One Health? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes One Health as an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment. One Health is not a new concept but has become more important in recent years. The growth and expansion of human populations, disruptions in environmental conditions, and increased international travel and trade has contributed to more people living in close contact with animals and their environments. This has provided more opportunities for diseases to pass between animals and people. One Health issues include zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, food safety and food

security, vector-borne diseases, environmental contamination and other health threats shared by people, animals, and the environment. The CDC uses a One Health approach by involving experts in human, animal, environmental health, and other relevant disciplines and sectors in monitoring and controlling public health threats. By promoting communication, coordination, and collaboration across all sectors, a One Health approach can help achieve optimal health outcomes for people, animals, and plants in a shared environment. For more information about One Health, please visit the following reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/index.html>.

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- Indian Water Maple Company

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- Neighborhood Kombuchery
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- Zeb's Barky Bits

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- Cool Hollow Maple Syrup
- Rocky Knob Christmas Tree Farm

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\$6/2 tsps. \$8/3 tsps.; all **plus** first class SASE. Bill Hailer, 2031 Hiner Mill Rd., Sugar Grove, 26815.

Pole beans, flood beans, black & purple limas, lg. bird egg Kentucky fall., piney braown half runners, turkey crawl, more, \$13/100, ppd. Scott Whitacre, 2290 Braddock School Rd., Slanesville, 25444; 496-8665.

Plant Wants

Bloody Butcher field corn, 2-3 bu. for cornmeal. O. Thomas, 116 Gatewood Ave., Oak Hill, 25901; 573-8330.

Sheep Sales

Reg.: ram & ewe lambs, \$250/up; Suffolk yrlg. lambs, \$350/up; market lambs, \$200. Lucy Kimble, P.O. Box 241, Cabins, 26844; 257-1442.

Polypay/Dorset cross '19 fall ewe lambs, 15, would make good addition or starter group of ewe lambs, \$330/ea., will sell ini smaller groups. Hannah Nelson, 438 Bungers Mill Rd., Lewisburg, 24901; 646-6209.

Coopworth: '20 spring lambs \$250-\$275; adult ewes, proven rams yrlg./up, \$325; Jacob: rams, \$175-\$200; 5-mo. -6-mo. & yrlg. rams, \$275-\$300; rams 4/4 horns, \$350. Debbie Martzall, 2576 Laurel Crk. Rd., Tanner, 26137; 462-8043; heartsofthefield@gmail.com.

Katahdin young rams 2, \$400/both or \$250/

ea. Tyler Miller, 1105 West Little Kanawha Hwy., Creston, 26141; 681-229-2880.

Katahdin 3-yr. ram, all black, proven breeder, \$175. Traci Stroupe, 531 Schoolhouse Rd., Lost Creek, 26385; 745-5690.

Miscellaneous Sales

No riding habits or other clothes; appliances or furniture; antiques or crafts; hand power tools or equipment; food processing or preservation items or equipment; general wood working tools; firewood. Only dogs recognized by the AKC as herding or working can be accepted.

Trailer, 16' dual axel w/title, \$1,000. Patsy Arrington, 4487 Painter Branch Rd., Liberty, 25124; 586-0735.

Hay, June cutting, mostly orchard grass, limed/fert., easy access, \$2/bale/in field; \$3/bale in barn. Paul Blake, 471 Jenkins Fork Rd., Fayetteville, 25840; 574-0842.

Trailer, 2 horse, excel. cond., \$5,000. Gail Butler, 14582 US Hwy. 33 W. Normantown, 25267; 354-7178.

Acreage: Kanawha Co., 133 A., clearings, fruit & nut trees, city water & elec. avail., free gas possibilities, cell coverage, paved county rd./school bus access, woods, Elkview area, \$1,350/A./neg. Patrick Campbell, 59 Windy Point Rd., Ghent, 25843; 741-9062.

75% Great Pyrenees 25% Anatolian, excel. livestock guardian dogs, vacc./wormed, out of working parents & grandparents guarding sheep & goats, \$250 discount for prs., \$200. Jeremy Cantrell, 243 Cantrell Lane, Duck, 25063; 395-1343.

Plastic tree shields for seedlings, protection from deer damage, \$.50/ea. or \$40/100. Doug Cooper, 9121 Dry Branch Rd., Valley Head, 26294; 339-6309.

CKC reg. Collie pups, sable & white, vacc./wormed, parents on premises, will make good arm dog/companion, \$400/plus \$50 deposit. Kevin Cummings, 110 Walnut St., Evans, 25241; 372-8615.

Acreage: Putnam/Jackson Co., 125 A., woods, pasture, sm. pond, hay, semi paved rd., elec., free gas, septic, drilled well, stream, Liberty area, \$1,500/A./neg. R. Good, 8818 Sissonville Dr., Sissonville, 25320; 336-573-9475.

Maple syrup, pure WV, \$16/qt., \$10/pt., \$6/½ pts. Karen Hartman, 1761 Burgess Hollow, New Creek, 26743; 788-1831.

Black walnut kernels, vacuum sealed 1 lb. bag, \$12/bag, **plus** postage. Calvin Morrison, P.O. Box 877, Jane Lew, 26378; 884-7444.

Acreage: Putnam Co.: 74 A., very private, open fields, 80% woods, yr. round stream,

\$95,000; 24 A., woods, running stream, bldg. site, elec. avail, \$40,000. Bill Morton, 104 Marble Dr., Eleanor, 25070; 543-4575.

Eggs: brown, \$2.50/dz.; duck, \$3/dz. Charles Phillips, 45 Turkey Fork, Elkview, 25071; 965-0763.

Cherries: sweet & sour, you pick, 75¢/lb., bring containers, call for avail. dates. Paula Ruggles, 131 Ruggles Orchard Rd., Levels, 25431; 492-5751.

Hay round bales: 5', 2nd & 3rd cut, \$45; 6', kept inside, \$55. James Rowe, 5196 Malcolm Rd., Barboursville, 690-0126; 638-3321; evenings.

CKC Aust. Heelers, red & blue, health guaranteed, vacc./wormed, excel. farm & family dogs, \$400. Judy Saurborn, 454 Cobun Crk. Rd., Morgantown, 26508; 288-1179.

Miscellaneous Wants

Looking for Sheltie or Miniature Aust. Shep., undker a yr. old., female, reasonable price. Barabara Mike, 144 Sawmill Hollow Rd., Farmington, 26571; 825-1347.

Rabbits. Lisa Sheets, Rt. 1, Box 2, Dunmore, 24934; 456-4071.

Veteran of the Month: John Spangler



You might call John Spangler the King of Pop – popcorn that is.

“My specialty is popcorn. I grow more than anybody in the state,” he proudly says.

The owner of Spangler Farm in Monroe County has lived on a farm his entire life with the exception of the five years he spent in the Marine Corps.

“In the 80’s, opportunities weren’t that abundant in Monroe County and I thought there might be something I wanted to see and do. The Marines seemed like a place to start,” he says.

Spangler was stationed at Fort Lejeune, in North Carolina, but he spent a lot of that five years traveling the globe. He was deployed to Panama during the ousting of Manuel Noriega and then to the Middle East during the First Gulf

War. With a wife and children back in the states, he was ready to return to Monroe County.

“After traveling all the time and living out of a sea bag, the farm was a stable environment for raising my children. The farm, it’s a great way to raise children. Parents get the opportunity to be with their kids a lot, have quality time,” he stresses. “Even though you may be working, cutting wood or putting up hay, you’re there. You’re able to grow close to your kids. That’s not something I was able to do while I was in the Marines.”

With his wife, two sons and daughter by his side, Spangler created a successful farm business.

“We started a greenhouse and nurse, and in the 90’s, we had one of the largest certified

organic farms in the state of West Virginia. Then we changed it up and went into more of high tunnel production.”

Spangler says lessons he learned in the military were critical in running the farm.

“My leadership skills developed in the military, my independence. I knew trusting those abilities I could make this farm a success,” he says.

As his children got older and went off to school, they decided to follow careers of their own.

“They’re pursuing their careers on what they went to school for. I take great pride that my children don’t reside on the farm, but they’re still a vital part of what we do,” stresses Spangler. “My youngest son keeps insurance on the farm. He handles product liability. My daughter handles all our social media and brochures. My oldest son assists with food health. So, they still are very involved in the farm.”

A decade ago, Spangler decided to switch things up on the farm again and started growing popcorn.

“I started out my first year with just a loader bucket on my tractor. That was in 2010. It has grown to several tons now. Not only do we sell it in 1 lb. bags, we also do popcorn that blows off the cob in the microwave. We have also started popping it and selling the product ready-to-eat.”

The newest venture on the farm is elementary. “In the past year, we’ve moved into the farm to school arena because it is a whole-grain healthy snack.”

Spangler joined the Veterans to Agriculture program three years ago to help expand his business. Currently you can find Jumpin Johnny’s Popcorn all across West Virginia and in eight other states. He says he loves what he does.

“Farming’s not just a job, it’s a way of life and how you want to live.”

And he plans to keep on popping. For more information about Spangler’s farm and his popcorn, check out facebook.com/Jumpin-Johnnys-Popcorn/.

Japanese Barberry Regulations

During the 2018 regular legislative session an amendment was passed to the legislative rule dealing with Noxious Weeds in West Virginia (61CSR14A). This amendment included Japanese barberry, *Berberis thunbergii* DC, to the list of plants considered damaging to agriculture in West Virginia. The amendment allowed a "grandfather" period to allow existing stock to be depleted.

Sale or distribution of Japanese barberry will be prohibited effective July 1, 2020. After July 1, nursery inspection personnel will quarantine and issue stop sale orders for Japanese barberry when encountered.

Farm Businesses Lean on Social Media During Social Distancing

When the COVID Crisis struck in southern WV, many farmers were left wondering how the seeds they'd already sown, the hogs they'd already raised and the chicks they'd already ordered, would eventually end up on the tables of their loyal farmers market, restaurant and county school system customers. With the stay at home and social distancing orders in place, some farmer's markets had considered delaying opening, some shifted to curb-side service, some elected to offer a drive thru option, while many got social!

More, now than ever, farmers, farm businesses and farmers markets have seen an uptick in their customers finding them on social media and the web. With the ease and convenience of social media platforms like Facebook, where many potential customers are hanging out already, farmers are finding that with a few strokes of the keyboard and a couple nice photos, they can sell products to customers, near and far, while sitting from the comfort of their homes. In Lincoln County, all of Ray Ferguson's fresh strawberries & asparagus sell out in minutes following a social media

post, where previously he may have sat for hours at a market hoping to sell a few.

Social media isn't the only way that customer's and farmers are connecting online. With an official launch last year, Turnrow - Appalachian Farm Collective (www.turnrowfarms.org/), a collaboration of over 100 farms and organizations across WV and Central Appalachia, are also connecting customers with farm goods via a popular platform called the Local Foods Marketplace. Here, farms list their product availability weekly, and customers can browse from their computer, tablet or smart phone, just like they were shopping at the weekly farmer's market. Foods are dropped off and picked up at centralized locations each week.

An effort to help further connect farm and food businesses with customers online was initiated out of our Business Development Division at the WVDA, with the launch of a seasonal, Regional Local Foods Directory - a listing of the existing food and farm businesses, markets, restaurants and retailers, and where folks can connect with these businesses, online. With the first issue launching just last month, we've already heard from producers who've made sales to customers they've never even met, some from several states away. This is a resource we look forward to expanding in all regions across West Virginia.

If you would like to add to or update your local food or farm business in the directory, reach out to ldavidson@wvda.us.

Better Process Control School Offered Online

The University of Vermont Extension is offering a 16-hour Better Process Control School (BPCS) class through video conferencing. This class will be delivered in four, live video conferences of four hours each and will taught between June 8 and June 16, 2020.

The course is intended for all food manufacturers that process acidified foods. The registration for this class includes the textbook *Canned Foods: Principles of Thermal Process Control, Acidification, and Container Closure Evaluation* (8th Edition).

By taking this course, participants will learn the regulations for acidified and how to apply the principles of thermal processing to control the main hazards in acidified foods. For more information on the class, log on to <http://go.uvm.edu/bpcs>.

SEE A POTENTIAL INVASIVE PEST?

Send us a photo with your name and contact info to bugbusters@wvda.us or (304) 558-2212.

GARDEN CALENDAR

JUNE 2020

Source: WVU Extension Service

- JUNE 1** Seed lettuce as a companion plant to tomatoes.
- JUNE 2** Seed snap beans and carrots. Seed summer squash and corn for late crop.
- JUNE 3** Seed parsley. Seed cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli for fall crop. Seed lettuce.
- JUNE 4** Seed pumpkins and winter squash. Seed leaf and Bibb lettuce.
- JUNE 5** Plant celery. Monitor for garden pests.
- JUNE 6** Mulch garden to control weeds and conserve moisture.
- JUNE 8** Plant tomatoes. Seed bush limas. Summer prune apples and peaches.

- JUNE 9** Begin control measures for squash vine borer.
- JUNE 10** Seed sweet corn, beets, pumpkins and winter squash.
- JUNE 11** Begin bagworm control.
- JUNE 12** Side-dress sweet corn that is knee-high with additional nitrogen.
- JUNE 13** Deadhead annuals to encourage more flowers. Pinch blackberry canes.
- JUNE 15** Transplant thyme. Plant peppers.
- JUNE 16** Prune spring-flowering shrubs. Control cabbage worms.
- JUNE 17** Renovate (e.g., leaf removal, fertilize, etc.) strawberries after last harvest.
- JUNE 18** Pinch back garden mums. Seed dill.
- JUNE 19** Treat lawn for white grubs using

- systemic insecticide.
- JUNE 20** Seed pole limas and snap beans. Prune pine trees.
- JUNE 22** End asparagus harvest. Seed or transplant savory.
- JUNE 23** Harvest beet greens. Turn compost. Plant late tomatoes and peppers.
- JUNE 24** Add non-seed-bearing weeds to compost.
- JUNE 25** Seed peppers. Plant basil.
- JUNE 26** Stake peppers. Transplant rosemary. Plant cilantro.
- JUNE 27** Harvest summer squash.
- JUNE 29** Fertilize asparagus.