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Press Release

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Season Extension and High Tunnel Webinar Series Offered

Learn more about pest management in season extension production systems such as high tunnels by registering for a new webinar series sponsored by the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group, the University of Illinois Extension, and a North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Professional Development Program grant. There will be five 1-2 hour webinars produced on November 1st, 3rd, 8th, 16th, and 18th. The first three webinars will focus on an introduction to pest management in various season extension systems, focusing on tomatoes and winter crops. The last two webinars will be geared toward soil, water, and nutrient management, plus a summary of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) high tunnel pilot project initiated in 2010.

Why consider participating in the season extension and high tunnel production webinar series? Pest complexes in season extension production systems like high tunnels are different than field grown fruits and vegetables, and an understanding of that difference is needed to capitalize on early and late season markets. High-tunnel production can lengthen the growing season and provide producers with a means to enter the market earlier with high value crops. In addition, in several states the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is providing monetary incentives and assistance through EQIP to growers who use high tunnel production systems. Like Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan says “The adoption of growing crops using high tunnels provides ‘great potential’ ...to expand the availability of healthy, locally-grown crops”.

Webinar One is titled “Introduction to Pest Management for Season Extension” and will air on November 1, 2010 at 6:30-8:30 pm EST (5:30-7:30 pm CST). Bill LaMont from Pennsylvania State University, will provide an overview of season extension methods and the pros and cons of getting into season extension: low tunnels, row covers, high tunnels, greenhouses, extended storage and basic economics. Judson Reid and Meg McGrath with Cornell University will speak on basic pest management considerations in high tunnels for insects, mites and diseases, respectively. Brad Bergefeld at The Ohio State University will discuss best weed management options in high tunnels.

Webinar Two is titled “Pest Management of Tomatoes in High Tunnels” and will be offered on November 3, 2010 at 6:30-8:30 pm EST (5:30-7:30 pm CST). Matt Kleinhenz, with The Ohio State University will start with an overview of production systems and economics for tomatoes and other solanaceous crops. Shubin Saha, with Purdue University will address cultural controls, pesticide use, biocontrols, and organic methods for pest and mite management of tomatoes under

high tunnel production. Sally Miller, with The Ohio State University will discuss cultural controls, pesticide use, grafting, and organic methods for disease management.

Webinar Three is titled “Pest Management in Winter Crops”. This webinar will be held on November 8, 2010 from 6:30-8:30 pm EST (5:30-7:30 pm CST). An overview of winter crop production systems including a discussion of economics, sanitation, plastic management, production sequences, crop selection, sanitation for simple hoop house, greenhouse, in-ground, in container, row covers, and low tunnels will be given by Adam Montri from Michigan State University. Judson Reid will cover pest and mite management for winter crops and Ann Hazelrigg, with the University of Vermont will offer disease management options for winter crops. Vegetable storage management will be covered by Matt Kleinhenz.

Webinar Four is titled “Management of Nutrients, Water, Soil, and Other Production Considerations in High Tunnels” and will be broadcast November 16, 2010 at a different time than the previous three webinars. This will be a brown-bag lunch webinar airing from 1-2 pm EST (noon-1 pm CST). Mike Orzolek with Pennsylvania State University will be the presenter for this topic. The first 50 participants or organizations to include webinar four as part of their registration, will receive a free copy of the *High Tunnel Production Manual* published by Penn State.

Webinar Five is titled “Interpreting NRCS High Tunnel Project Guidelines”. This will also be a brown-bag lunch webinar on November 18, 2010 at 1-2 pm EST (noon-1 pm CST). The guidelines pertaining to the high-tunnel production pilot project will be outlined and discussed by Ruth Book, State Conservation Engineer, Ivan Dozier, Assistant State Conservationist, and Brett Roberts, State Agronomist, with NRCS in Illinois. Not all states in the North Central or North East region participate in this program, so check with your local state NRCS office for more details and applicability.

Pre-registration for this webinar series is mandatory and can be found at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/season_ext. The cost for the series is \$30 whether you attend one or all five webinars. Each webinar will be recorded and available on several state IPM or vegetable oriented websites for viewing soon after its original airdate. For people who do not have a broadband connection, we are identifying several sites throughout each state to host the webinar series. Please visit the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group website at <http://glvwg.ag.ohio-state.edu/index.php>, and click on *Projects* at the top of the page to find more information and a pre-registration link for this webinar series.

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