

On the road again...

with University of Illinois Extension

June 19, 2009 – Friday

Jed's Farm

Thompsonville

Ernie and Judy Duckworth found a better way to grow strawberries that uses fewer chemicals and extends the growing season. A visit to see their operation is the second sustainable agriculture tour sponsored by University of Illinois Extension. The tour of Jed's Farm in Thompsonville in Franklin County will take place on Friday, June 19.

Jed's Farm, which is actually an acronym for Judy-Ernie-Duckworth, has been in operation since 1983. On 43 of the 80 acres, the Duckworth's have a cow/calf operation. "We have 20 to 25 head of cows," said Ernie Duckworth. "We have about 20 acres in hay for the cow herd and have 43 acres divided into 12 paddocks for rotational grazing. The cows get a fresh paddock every three days."

Although just three of the remaining acres are devoted to a strawberry and vegetable business, Ernie said that the strawberries are more lucrative than the cows. "One acre of strawberries out-produced 43 acres of cattle."

One of his secrets is allows him to plant in July rather than September. "About six years ago we started using black plastic with compost made from manure rather than the methyl bromide that other fruit growers use," said Duckworth. The compost is created over the course of a year - recycled from the manure in the cow operation. "We try to use as little pesticide as possible. We have three high tunnels for early production and a greenhouse to start our own plants. We gain two to three weeks of growing at the beginning of the season."

The tour will include a luncheon presentation by John Pike, Extension Educator, Community & Economic Development, Carbondale Center entitled "Innovative Specialty Crop Marketing: Farmers Markets, Agritourism, and More!"

DIRECTIONS

Exit 71 (Benton Exit) off Interstate 57, go East 1/2 way around square. Continue East on US 34 past the high school approximately 6 1/2 miles. JEDs on the North side of road. There will be signs on the highway. Coming from the East JEDs is approximately 4 miles West of Thompsonville

A fee of \$20 per person will be charged for each tour, which includes lunch. Registration at least one week in advance is required. Visit www.extension.uiuc.edu/smallfarm/ to register and for more details about each of the tours, including a map and agenda. To register by phone, contact Donna Cray at 217-241-4644. For more information, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (217-968-5512; cvnghgrn@illinois.edu).



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University of Illinois - U.S. Department of Agriculture - Local Extension Councils Cooperating. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Donna Cray at 217-241-4644.

The tour is sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension, University of Illinois Extension Franklin County Unit, Agriculture and Tourism Partners of Illinois (ATPI), Food Works, North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program, Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP) at the University of Illinois and the Peoria Chapter of the Initiative for the Development for Entrepreneurs in Agriculture (IDEA).