LIVE from the CFAES Center for Cooperatives...it’s LIVE

CO-OP MASTERY BEYOND COOPERATIVES 101

By Ivory Harlow
Program Specialist, CFAES Center for Cooperatives

On June 1st, 2018, the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Center for Cooperatives, based at the OSU South Centers, launched Co-op Mastery: Beyond Cooperatives 101. Co-op Mastery is an engaging, online cooperative course for a variety of co-op stakeholders, including steering committee members of new and emerging co-ops, students of co-ops, and new co-op board members or employees.
“Co-op Mastery curriculum focuses on mid-level knowledge about the cooperative business model,” said Center for Cooperatives Program Manager, Hannah Scott. “Training modules build on existing fundamental materials by providing an in-depth look at governance, finance, taxation and other areas not typically covered by courses in fundamentals, yet challenging topics for stakeholders.”

The training features eight modules which include video interviews with numerous leaders in the cooperative movement:

- Logan County Electric Cooperative General Manager Rick Petty discusses cooperative principles and various functions of cooperatives.
- Dennis Bolling, retired President and CEO of United Producers, Inc., shares the benefits that cooperatives provide to members.
- Mid-America Cooperative Counsel Executive Director Rod Kelsay discusses effective education and training for a co-op’s Board of Directors.
- Ohio State University Extension Educator Dr. Chris Bruynis gives insight to key factors that contribute to a cooperative’s success.
- Nationwide’s VP of Sponsor Relations Devin Fuhrman shares the story of Nationwide’s history as a mutual cooperative company.
- Agricultural attorney Carolyn Eselgroth of Barrett, Easterday, Cunningham and Eselgroth, LLP addresses legal considerations when forming a cooperative business.
- Co-Bank Senior Relationship Manager Gary Weidenborner leads users through an interactive financial document exercise.
- Dr. David Hahn, Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University, explains cooperative taxation.

During the first 30 days the program was live and available to the public, Co-op Mastery directly impacted 268 individuals, through website visitors and cooperative education workshops taught by Center staff in Ohio and West Virginia. Workshop participants also received Co-op Mastery workbooks, a 48-page compilation of activities and examples, to supplement their online learning.

Co-op Mastery is a valuable digital tool for cooperative education. Microfarmers in northwest Ohio have used Co-op Mastery to learn about co-op governance. Co-op Mastery workbook business and financial worksheets help simplify the business planning process for farmers exploring the formation of a co-op.

In July 2018, Program Manager Hannah Scott and Specialist Ivory Harlow presented Co-op Mastery as a tool for cooperative developers and educators at the 2018 Association of Cooperative Educators Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Attendees from across North America learned how to utilize Co-op Mastery as a digital tool for cooperative education and development.

Co-op Mastery: Beyond Cooperatives 101 was made possible by a Cooperative Education Grant from the CHS Foundation. The training is free and can be accessed online at go.osu.edu/coopmastery.

To request a workshop or more information, visit go.osu.edu/cooperatives or contact the Center for Cooperatives at osucooperatives@osu.edu or 740-289-2071 ext. 111.
Sarah Swanson: The smiling face of South Centers

(Editor’s Note: The following is the latest in a series of feature stories highlighting The Ohio State University South Centers Staff)

By Bradford Sherman
OSU South Centers

Whether it’s the UPS man, fellow employees, familiar faces, or complete strangers, they all have one thing in common when visiting the Research and Extension Building at The Ohio State University South Centers – they are always greeted with a smile and a friendly “hello.”

That is thanks to Sarah Swanson, a Program Assistant who every day staffs the front office as its first point of contact, and greets all comers with a friendly demeanor and helpful disposition.

Swanson has been the smiling face of South Centers, having always been stationed at her familiar spot next to the sliding glass windows, since joining the staff in November 2014. She provides support services to the aquaculture and soil and water teams, assists with running the equipment for the center’s weekly telecasts, updates many parts of the South Centers website, and provides graphics support for all program areas.

Swanson says she enjoys her job at South Centers because of the variety of people she gets to work with, and because every day is a unique challenge.

“The work is different every day,” she explained. “It never gets boring. One day it may be general administrative work, and the next I might get to tap into my creative side through working on video production and graphic design.”

Swanson, who is originally from Chillicothe, earned Bachelor of Arts degree from Ohio University – Chillicothe in 2012 and an Associate’s Degree in Graphic Design from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh in 2014.

In her free time, she enjoys being outdoors, especially hiking, and engaging in activities related to the arts such as listening to music and photography.

Swanson and her husband, Justin, reside in Chillicothe.
Endeavor Center awarded EDA Grant

GRANT MONEY WILL BE USED TO CONDUCT FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Ohio State University South Centers was recently awarded funding by the U.S. Economic Development Administration to conduct an incubator expansion feasibility study. The EDA investment of $28,205 will be used to hire a consultant to complete an analysis and evaluation of a proposed incubator expansion to determine market demand and sustainability over time.

This study will help define the current and future uses and strategies of the Endeavor Center Business incubator. Completing market research will help us better understand the existing market and anticipated future market potential for business incubation in the region.

“This investment ensures the OSU Endeavor Center in Piketon has the resources it needs to help local businesses expand and bring jobs to the area.”

Senator Sherrod Brown

The funds for this study are a part of the EDA's Technical Assistance grant program, which helps local business incubators promote economic development and alleviate unemployment.

“Ohio small businesses support local economies,” said U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). “This investment ensures the OSU Endeavor Center in Piketon has the resources it needs to help local businesses expand and bring jobs to the area.”

This investment will assist the Endeavor Center to build on strengths, improve weaknesses, capitalize opportunities and identify threats. Financially, the study should provide projections for potential revenue generation and total project cost expectations. Finally, and most importantly, the study will assist in determining the need to increase business incubator space in our region.

The Feasibility Study will:

• Complete a market study to help the Endeavor Center understand what types of new spaces should be considered based on the potential for specific start-up companies in the region.
• Review the Endeavor Center’s financial position and provide suggestions regarding expansion feasibility and current / future cash flow.
• Review existing client selection policy and processes and provide feedback to strengthen the application process.
• Review tenant lease or license agreement that enumerates the shared services to be provided; delineates the incubator’s business assistance policy, including the provision of management, technical, and training policies.
• Review the Endeavor Centers business assistance policy and provide suggestions for new ideas and improvement of existing programs.
• Review current staffing levels of the Endeavor Center and business programs to ensure client / partner technical needs are being addressed.
• Develop an incubator performance plan that includes how the incubator will track the success of incubator partners/clients, specifically identifying what performance measurement data the incubator proposes to collect from tenants/partners and for what period of time during and after the service period the data will be collected. This should also include members of any over sight or policy board for the incubator that will be responsible for setting performance goals of the incubator, selecting or approving selections of staff, establishing and reviewing policy, and monitoring performance.
Manufacturers have the opportunity to place high school and career technical students as interns in their manufacturing operations. The Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) has created this internship program to assist manufacturers with their workforce needs and is providing financial assistance for participating Ohio manufacturers.

Advantages of having student interns:

- contribute to developing your future manufacturing workforce
- connect with schools to ensure students are work-ready
- be reimbursed up to 50% of student wages (up to $1,500/student)

How does the program work?

- We help you work with your local schools to select students for internship positions in manufacturing operations
- We will design a work-based learning experience with you that is school-approved and complies with state requirements
- You guide the student(s) through their internship experience
- You are reimbursed 50% of each student’s wage (up to $1,500/student)

For more information on this program, contact Bret Whitaker via email at whitaker.77@osu.edu.

By Christie Welch
Direct Marketing Program Specialist

Ohio farmers’ markets are thriving and many of them accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP); formerly known as the federal food stamp program. In Ohio there are currently 224 farmers’ markets and farm markets that accept SNAP benefits. This represents a 128.6% increase since 2012. While this has helped food insecure individuals access fresh, locally produced foods, farmers’ markets are at risk of losing this ability.

On July 2, 2018 Novo Dia Group, Inc. announced it would shut down the Mobile Market + Application. Novo Dia Group developed the Mobile Market + application for iPhones that allows farmers’ markets the ability to accept SNAP benefits wirelessly via iPhones, iPods, and iPads. According to the Farmers Market Coalition, “Novo Dia Group is the largest supplier of SNAP payment processing equipment to farmers markets in the country. Over 1,700 (or 40%) of farmers markets and farmers that accept SNAP nationwide are currently customers.” This ability is critical for farmers’ markets that are typically held in open air locations that lack access to land-line telephones and electricity. If the Mobile Market + app is no longer available, farmers’ markets will have few options. SNAP benefits in Ohio are administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and are known as the Ohio Direction Card. And while ODJFS offers access to wired terminals for Ohio farmers’ markets, due to the nature of where farmers’ markets, operate wired equipment is typically not feasible.

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Once Novo Dia Group made their announcement about the shutdown of the Mobile Market + app, farmers’ market supporters around the country began looking for solutions. On July 19 the National Association of Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs announced it would provide funding to keep the Mobile Market + app functional for an additional 30 days in hopes a more permanent solution could be identified. And while this news was welcomed by farmers’ markets, it was a temporary solution.

Then on July 27th New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced, “an agreement has been reached with Novo Dia Group to enable SNAP recipients to continue to use their benefits at farmers markets across the state, and *nationwide* through the rest of the farmers market season.” In a press release of that day, the Governor went on to say, “This agreement also lays the groundwork for other states that rely on cellular-based transactions at farmers’ markets to continue their services as well.” You can read the full press release here: governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-plan-protect-snap-recipients-access-farmers-markets.

On August 2, 2018 Novo Dia Group provided a Frequently Asked Questions list on their website, mailchi.mp/novodiagroup/mobile-market-status-2160213?e=529d05a582. To help farmers’ markets across the country remain up to date on the fate of Mobile Market + application and/or other solutions that may become available the Farmers Market Coalition has created a webpage dedicated to providing the current information available. You can find the information at: farmersmarketcoalition.org/novo-dia-group-shutdown-info-page-now-live.

The OSU Extension Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Team is following the situation closely and providing updates via our Facebook pages, @OhioDirectMarketing, and @OhioFarmersMarkets. If you have questions or concerns about your local farmers’ markets’ ability to continue to accept SNAP benefit wirelessly, please contact Christie Welch via email to: welch.183@osu.edu. We will provide additional information or assistance as it become available.

SUPPORTER OF COOPERATIVES INDUCTED INTO OHIO AG HOF

Dennis Bolling, a passionate advocate for cooperatives and a supporter of the Center for Cooperatives in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, was inducted into the Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame on August 3 at the Ohio State Fair.

As the Ohio Agricultural Council shared:

“Dennis Bolling has dedicated his life to the betterment of Ohio agriculture and the agricultural cooperative field. Bolling served as the long-time president and CEO of United Producers Inc. (formerly Producers Livestock Association). Under his leadership, Bolling orchestrated mergers, led the organization through financial challenges, and ensured director education and development. Today, as one of the largest livestock marketing cooperatives in the country, United Producers Inc. serves 30,000 members across the Midwest.

“Throughout his career, Bolling has been a generous contributor of his time and leadership to improving agriculture through education and developing agricultural leaders. In 2003, he helped launch the Mid-America Cooperative Council to address the lack of education on cooperatives as a way of doing business.

“Bolling has been repeatedly recognized by his peers for his contributions to agriculture. He is a recipient of the Industry Service Awards from the Ohio Pork Council and Ohio Cattlemen’s Association. In 2016, he was inducted into the National Cooperative Hall of Fame in Washington D.C.”

Congratulations to Dennis on this distinct honor. We are happy to count him as one of our advocates for cooperative business and as a member of the advisory committee for the CFAES Center for Cooperatives.
By Rafiq Islam, PhD
Soil, Water and Bioenergy Resources Program

Dr. Rafiq Islam visited Ghana as one of The Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange Components in June and July 2018. The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders – the flagship program of the U.S. Government’s (State Department) Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) – was created in 2014 to invest in the next generation of African Leaders.

Under the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program, young African leaders attend top US colleges and universities for a six-week academic and leadership institute in one of the following areas: Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, Public Management, and Energy.

Programs draw from each university’s unique set of expertise and resources. Academic study is augmented by workshops, mentorship, and networking opportunities with recognized leaders in each field and interaction with everyday Americans. Each academic host institute will also offer insights into American society through site visits, community service, and cultural programming.

The Reciprocal Exchange component provides Americans with the opportunity to travel to Africa to “build strategic partnerships and professional connections developed during the Mandela Washington Fellowship in the United States.”

Mavis Akom is a principal technologist of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Crop Research Institute (CSIR-CRI) of Ghana and attended The Ohio State University as one of the Mandela Washington Fellows, who was mentored by Rafiq Islam.

As one of the Reciprocal Exchange Awardees, Islam had the unique opportunity to implement a co-designed project with Akom (Mandela Washington Fellow) to form a partnership, expand markets and networks, and increase mutual understanding between the United States and Africa (Ghana). Our former USDA-FAS Borlaug Fellow, Emmanuel Amoakwah, was very instrumental in organizing the workshop.

The purpose of this project was to help develop a collaboration between The Ohio State University and Ghana CSIR-Crop Research Institute on “training educators and professionals” with the most up-to-date approaches for applied research and outreach capacity building on climate-smart agriculture.

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Advanced Soil Health Systems Training for Indiana USDA-NRCS

By Rafiq Islam, PhD
Soil, Water and Bioenergy Resources Program

Several members of our Soil, Water, and Bioenergy Resources Program staff and The Ohio State University Extension educators recently organized a field day on “Hands-on Soil Health” for farmers and two-day “Advanced Soil Health Systems” workshops for USDA-NRCS personnel in Indiana. The field day and workshops were held in Wenning Farms, Greensburg, and Brocksmith Farms, Vincennes, Indiana, respectively from July 24 to 26, 2018.

On the first day (Field day), topics covered included: “What Insects where? Analysis of pit fall trap (insect trap) contents from fields in a soil health management system vs. conventionally tilled/managed fields”; “How healthy is my soil? In-field use of OSU Soil Health Test Kits to measure CEC, Active carbon, Aggregate stability, and other key assessments of soil health and function”; “What is working? What is in the plots? Reports on Wenning’s current experimental plot work”; and “What can I change? How different cropping practices can positively (or negatively) affect soil health and function?”

Dr. Rafiq Islam shows off the results of a soil health testing kit performed on various soil samples. (Photos: Yogi Rout)

Dr. Rafiq Islam and Alan Sundermeier from The Ohio State University, Barry Fisher from USDA-NRCS National Soil Health Division, Stephanie McLain from USDA-NRCS Indiana State Soil Health Program.

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The objectives were to (1) organize a “train-the-trainer” workshop for agricultural scientists, educators and professionals; (2) train the trainers to acquaint with OSU rapid soil quality/health tests; and (3) conduct a three-hour “brain storming session” to identify the most emergent agricultural issues in Ghana and help write applied collaborative field research proposals expected to be funded by international donors.

To achieve these goals, the most relevant and high quality educational materials were provided to all 42 participants on Rethinking Agriculture in the 21st Century; Crop rotation and cover crops; and Sustainable agriculture decision tools during the workshop. Moreover, all the participants conducted on-site rapid soil quality comparative tests on Ghanaian and U.S. soils, and wrote test interpretation and management recommendations. Participants were asked to identify a much needed problem in 2-3 words and place the sticky note on the wall. About 42 sticky notes were finally grouped into the three most important current agricultural issues in Ghana: climate-smart crop breeding (drought resistant) research; (2) sustainable soil-crop management practices; and (3) extension and outreach programs. The participants in the three groups were mentored to complete the drafting of the pre-proposed on the selected issues and presented to justify their research proposal for funding.

Several professional and academic presentations were delivered by Islam to the scientists of the Crop and Soil Research Institutes and graduate students and faculty members of the Department of Natural Resources Management and Department of Soil and Crop Sciences of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

Islam met administrators, officials, and scientists from several universities and CSIR Institutes including Dr. Stella A. Ennin, Director of CSIR-Crop Research Institute; Prof. Emmanuel Otoo, Chief Research Scientist, CSIR-Crops Research Institute; Prof. Hans Adu-Dapaah, Chief Research Scientist, CSIR-Crop Research Institute; Dr. Mohammed Moro Buri, Director, CSIR-Soil Research Institute; Drs. Akwasi A. Abunyewa, Victor R. Barnes, Evans Dawoe, and Andrew Opoku, Senior Lecturer, CANR, KNUST; and Dr. Kwame A. Frimpong, Senior Lecturer, Dept. Soil Science, University of Cape Coast.

The key highlights of the Reciprocal Exchange are: (1) greater understanding and learning experience on Western Africa, (2) successful organization of the professional development training workshop, (3) enhanced team building capacity for collaborative research on climate-smart agriculture, and (4) development of sandwich academic and research program for graduate students and scientists in Ghana for capacity building.

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Joe Rorick from Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, and Roger Wenning, Host and Soil Health Farmer of the Wenning Farms, spoke to the farmers and demonstrated several soil health field tests.

On the second and third day (Advanced soil health systems) workshop, the training provided opportunities to build applied soil health systems knowledge and skills.
Gao welcomes two new members to fruit research & extension team

By Gary Gao, PhD
Extension Specialist and Associate Professor
OSU South Centers

Dr. Gary Gao, co-leader of the Center for Specialty Crops at OSU South Centers, is very happy to announce that Dr. Pengfei Wang and Mr. Ricardo Bordignon Medina have joined the fruit research and extension team.

Dr. Wang is an associate professor of pomology at the College of Horticulture of Shanxi Agricultural University in Taigu, Shanxi, China, where he has been conducting breeding research on Chinese dwarf cherries and also teaches pomology classes.

He received his PhD, MS, and BS from Shanxi Agricultural University and has many years of knowledge and experience working in fruit science.

Dr. Wang will be involved in all of the fruit research projects at South Centers with a focus on blueberries, elderberries, and wine grapes.

Dr. Wang examines ripening elderberries at South Centers.

Medina is currently a PhD candidate of Plant Physiology and biochemistry at University of São Paulo, Piracicaba, São Paulo, Brazil.

He also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in fruit science to the fruit program. Medina received a MS in Horticulture, working on blueberries for his MS research. He also received his BS in agronomic engineering and studied citrus at the University of Florida.

Medina will conduct several research projects on raspberries while he is at The Ohio State University. He first found Gao while searching for raspberry research and extension programs in the United States. He has also done quite a bit of extension work in Brazil. He organized workshops for commercial growers and students.

“I am very excited to have both as members of our team,” said Gao. “Both Dr. Wang and Mr. Medina will be staying with us for one year.”

Medina was born in Campinas, São Paulo. He likes many sports including basketball, football (soccer), and volleyball. He also likes plants, fruits, and travel and has two brothers and two sisters.

Dr. Wang is married and has two daughters.
OSU South Centers hosts one of 5 Hops Field Nights

By Bradford Sherman
Ohio State University South Centers

Veteran hops growers and those looking to get started, alike, received valuable information, witnessed demonstrations, and more as part of a Hops Field Night held on August 8 and hosted by The Ohio State University South Centers.

Featuring Horticulture Specialist Brad Bergefurd, the educational opportunity included dinner and a tour of the South Centers hops field. Informational items and demonstrations covered as part of the tour included: galvanized trellis systems, hop mechanical harvesting demonstration, drying demonstration, insects and disease, pest management, nutrient management/fertigation demonstration, and drip irrigation management.

Approximately 30 participants took part in the field night activities; it was a significant number considering that the same program had been held twice around the state previously, and will be held in two other locations in the coming weeks. Many potential attendees chose to attend earlier or later sessions due to their closer location.

It speaks volumes about the growing popularity of hops in the Buckeye State.

“The number of hops growers in Ohio has quadrupled within the last five years, and there is a major need for educational programs such as these,” explained Charissa Gardner, Program Coordinator for Bergefurd’s Horticulture program at OSU South Centers.

“Because it’s a relatively new industry for Ohio, there is not a whole lot of information about it readily available,” she said. “There is a thirst for information from the public; that is why these events are so popular, they fill a major need.”

A main ingredient in beer manufacturing, hops provide a bitterness that balances the sweetness of the malt sugars and provides a refreshing finish. Hops educational programs are some of the South Center’s most popular events and are designed to help growers and anyone interested in hops to learn more about Ohio hops and the Ohio craft brewing industry.

The same program will be held in Bowling Green on August 15 and in Wooster on August 23.

“We are holding them at various locations because: one, they are popular, and, two, there is a lot of interest all over Ohio,” Gardner added.

To preregister for the remainder of the 2018 hops field nights, you can call Gardner at 740-289-2071, ext. 132, or email her at gardner.1148@osu.edu.
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