



P.O. Box 133
Whiting, Kansas 66552
(785) 873-3431
FAX (785) 873-3432
E-mail: ksrc@rainbowtel.net
Website: www.kansasruralcenter.org

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Mercedes Taylor-Puckett, Farmers' Market Project Coordinator
Kansas Rural Center
mercedes.taylorpuckett@gmail.com
785-840-6202

Statewide Farmers' Market Conference Scheduled for February 23 1/20/09

Topeka, Kans.— The Kansas Rural Center announces the statewide Farmers' Market Conference which is scheduled from 9 am to 4 pm on Monday, February 23 at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library at 1515 SW 10th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas.

Mercedes Taylor-Puckett, KRC's Farmers' Market Project Coordinator, said the "bigger and better" 2009 conference is titled "Growing Together" and is open to all involved with farmers' markets whether as a producer, market manager, board member or interested citizen.

Charuth and Kevin Loth, of ShadowBrook Farm in Lincoln, Nebraska, are the conference's featured speakers. The Loths operate a family-owned diversified vegetable farm incorporating cattle, dairy goats and flowers into the 34-acre, organic farm's rotation plan. The couple participates in three farmers' markets and the Nebraska Food Cooperative, as well as operating a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and on-farm market and dairy.

"Shadow Brook is an inspiring example a new generation of sustainable farms," Taylor-Puckett said. "Charuth and Kevin have explored many direct marketing opportunities over the past thirteen years and aren't shy about sharing what has and hasn't worked and why."

Steve Moris, Kansas Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Program Manager, will discuss the recent consolidation of food safety oversight to KDA and review the rules and regulations affecting farmers' market products. Representatives from Kansas Department of Commerce, Rural Development will also present resources to help grow farmers' markets and value-added businesses.

In addition, five afternoon breakout sessions will focus on topics including: cut flowers; launching or revitalizing your market; meat and dairy; marketing and display, and managers and boards.

Specific topics scheduled during the breakout sessions include: “Direct Marketing Opportunities for Meat Producers” by Jeff Adair, New Grass Bison Co.; “Know Your Customer: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication” by Lane McConnell, Missouri Department of Agriculture; “Born to Bloom: What to Grow for Beautiful Bouquets” presented by Brian Henry and Jozie Schike, Earth Flowers; “Issues and Opportunities Roundtable and Grow Your Market Workshop” by Jerry Jost, KRC Grow Your Farmers Market Workshop Facilitator, and “Capturing Your Market Share” by Jill Elmers, Moon on the Meadow Farm.

Markets and vendors are encouraged to share their experiences in "Flew or Flopped" presentations during lunch and to bring examples of their promotional materials.

Registration to cover the conference materials, continental breakfast and lunch is \$20 per person. Completed registration forms along with fees made payable to the Kansas Rural Center are due by Friday, February 13. Please mail to: Kansas Rural Center, PO Box 133, Whiting, Kansas 66552-0133.

Conference schedule and registration information are available for download from the Kansas Rural Center website at <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html> Conference brochures are also linked to the calendar maintained by KCSAAC – the KSU-based Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops – on the Web at <http://www.kansassustainableag.org/calendar.htm>.

For additional information, contact Mercedes Taylor-Puckett at 785-840-6202 or mercedes.taylorpuckett@gmail.com.

KCSAAC, Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Department of Agriculture and USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program provide support for the farmers' market conference, which is organized by the Kansas Rural Center.