

# JEFFERSON INSTITUTE NEWS & VIEWS

[www.jeffersoninstitute.org](http://www.jeffersoninstitute.org)

## Helping Farmers Diversify

*By Rob Myers, Executive Director*

Our office continues to receive many calls from farmers looking to diversify their crops. An example of one of these callers is Bryan Von Holten (see story below). Bryan contacted me over a year ago, seeking ways he could improve his corn and soybean rotation in west-central Missouri. After much discussion and consideration of his specific conditions, we identified some diversified rotation sequences he could implement that incorporate four to six grain crops, with cover crops in the off-season. Bryan, though dedicated to no-till, felt cover crops and diversification could enhance his soil quality and conservation. He has begun the process of diversification by planting canola last fall, harvesting it in June, and has planted sunflowers as a double crop after wheat.

Of course a primary consideration for any farmer considering an alternative crop is the distance to market. Our office has developed a free marketing guide that lists

buyers for several alternative crops, some in Missouri, and some in other states. Sunflowers are the alternative crop with the greatest number of delivery points in Missouri. Call our office at 573-449-3518 for a copy of this alternative crop marketing directory if you would like one.

### Crop diversification funding.

Our office has received funding from a number of government and foundation sources, but we are especially grateful to Senator Bond for his work on behalf of crop diversification. Senator Bond was able to secure renewal of our USDA funding on crop diversification for the Jefferson Institute, pending final Congressional action in September. This funding supports many of our crop diversification activities, including market development, educational meetings, publication development, research, and field tours and demonstrations.

## Farmer's Corner: Bryan Von Holten, Cole Camp, MO

*By Cortney Miller & Alan Weber*

Bryan Von Holten, a Benton County, MO producer, has no-tilled 1,900 acres of soybeans, corn and a limited amount of wheat each year since 1988. In the 2002-2003-crop year, he decided to incorporate winter canola into his rotation. Although, canola is not typically no-tilled, Bryan decided to stick with his practice and was successful.

Wichita, a public canola variety, was seeded on September 9th. The canola was harvested on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and yielded 1,979 pounds per acre, a typical canola yield. According to Bryan, "Overall, I was happy with the crop and plan to grow canola again next year."

Before harvest, Bryan invited local farmers to his farm to talk about his growing experience and contract opportunities for canola. Several farmers and the Jefferson Institute staff spent the morning discussing and observing his canola field. (A big thank you to Bryan for sharing his time and expertise!)

Bryan raised canola under contract with J-M Farms (Miami, OK) in 2003. J-M Farms is a mushroom farm and buys canola from Midwest canola producers.

In addition to adding canola to his rotation, Bryan planted double crop sunflowers after his winter wheat this past June. "This is my first experience with sunflowers and I'm anxious to see how it turns out."

**Bryan (on the right) discusses his experience with canola to his neighboring farmers.**



## J-M Farms - *Miami, Oklahoma*

J-M Farms, Inc. is a mushroom production company with a constant need for whole canola seed. Founded in the fall of 1979, J-M Farms made their first delivery of mushrooms in March, 1980 to Associated Wholesale Grocers of Springfield, MO. Since that time, building expansions and changes in technology have allowed the farm to grow dramatically from its original size and growing capacity. J-M Farms, Inc. packs under the J-M Fresh label. They deliver product to Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa.

Midwest production of canola has been limited even though U.S. production has significantly increased. U.S. producers have gone from producing zero acres in 1984 to the latest estimate of 1,378,000 acres harvested in the year 2002. Although acreage has increased, the U.S. imports more than 246,000 metric tons each year. This level of imports means that the U.S. needs to increase production of canola by more than 1.2 million acres to meet domestic consumption.

J-M Farms offers acreage contracts to producers through a bid system. Producers that wish to grow canola determine at what price they are willing to market canola and then provide a bid to J-M Farms by August 15<sup>th</sup>. J-M Farms will evaluate the bids and determine which producers they will offer contracts. Producers can contact Scott Engelbrecht, J-M Farms, at (918) 540-1567 for additional bid and contract details or visit the Jefferson Institute website at [www.jeffersoninstitute.org](http://www.jeffersoninstitute.org) for details about canola production.

## Jefferson Institute Staff Update

Two of our staff have moved on to new opportunities. Jim Quinn, who has been a crop specialist with the Institute, will be taking a new position as an extension associate in horticulture at the University of Missouri. He will have a focus on greenhouses and high tunnels. Darrell Yuen, our project development specialist, has moved to New York and is working with a development consulting and engineering firm. We wish them both success in their new endeavors!

## Mark August 21st on Your Calendar for Our Alternative Crop Field Day!

In cooperation with the University of Missouri, we will be hosting our second alternative crop field event. The tour will be on Thursday, August 21 at the Bradford Research and Extension Farm in Columbia, MO. We will begin registration and serve refreshments at 8:45 a.m. with tours following at 9:00 a.m. The event will wrap up around 11:00 a.m. We will be featuring 20 alternative crops in a demonstration planting. We will also tour research trials with sunflowers and pearl millet.

Presentation topics include:

- *Grain and Oilseed Options*
- *Cropping System Study*
- *Sunflower Opportunities*
- *Sunflower Planting Dates Study*

The event will occur rain or shine. If rain should occur, we will move the presentations indoors. For more information and a map, call the Jefferson Institute at 573-449-3518 or go to [www.jeffersoninstitute.org](http://www.jeffersoninstitute.org).



Farmers participate in a wagon tour of crops during the 2002 Alternative Crop Field Day.



## **Educating Consumers and Kids About Agriculture**

In a previous issue, we provided a story about the new educational farm we are developing in Columbia, MO. We have received about half the funding for this facility, and are continuing to plan it. A key part of the facility will be an education building that provides both exhibits for buildings, and classroom space for hands-on activities with school groups.

The interior of the building, illustrated above, will include high quality exhibits about crops and their uses, conservation practices, and the role of plant breeding and genetics in improving food production. We will also have a special exhibit on Thomas Jefferson and his connection to agriculture as a farmer and scientist.

In addition to displays developed specifically for our visitor's center, we have a tentative agreement to bring a Smithsonian exhibit on agriculture to our new facility. This \$1 million Smithsonian exhibit has been traveling the country, but the museum will make the Jefferson farm either a temporary or permanent stop for their excellent displays.

Two other features of our education building will be a reading room and teaching greenhouse. The reading room will have books, magazines, and other reference materials about agriculture and horticulture, both for children and adults to browse through. A teaching greenhouse attached to the education building will provide space for year-round demonstration of plants of economic importance to Missouri, with a special focus on field crops.

*For up-to-date information about the educational center, go to [www.jeffersoninstitute.org](http://www.jeffersoninstitute.org).*

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## Calendar of Events

**August 7, 2003**

Greenley Research Center Field Day  
Novelty, MO

**August 7-17, 2003**

Missouri State Fair  
Sedalia, MO

**August 21, 2003**

Alternative Crop Field Day  
Columbia, MO

**August 26, 2003**

Graves Farm Field Day  
Corning, MO

**September 2, 2003**

Delta Center Field Day  
Portageville, MO

**September 4, 2003**

Hundley-Whaley Center Field Day  
Albany, MO

**September 9, 2003**

FFA Field Day  
Columbia, MO

**September 11-12, 2003**

Southwest Research Center Field Day  
Mt. Vernon, MO

**October 3, 2003**

Wurdack Farm Field Day  
Cook Station, MO



*This newsletter is printed on 100% kenaf paper,  
an alternative fiber crop.*

The Thomas Jefferson Agricultural Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit education and research center based in Columbia, MO. For more information, contact us at (573) 449-3518 or by email at: [info@jeffersoninstitute.org](mailto:info@jeffersoninstitute.org).



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