

# UGA Extension Meriwether County ANR E-Newsletter

## September 1, 2017

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### SMALL RUMINANTS

#### **Georgia Small Ruminant Research and Extension Center**

A group of Meriwether County goat farmers visited the Fort Valley State University Meat and Dairy Technology Centers this Tuesday. The facilities are part of the Georgia Small Ruminant Research and Extension Center at FVSU. We were given a tour by Terrence Lewis of the meat slaughter and processing facility which handles approximately 50 cows and 370 goats and sheep per year. Livestock owners can arrange to bring cattle, sheep, goats and hogs to this USDA Inspected facility for slaughter. It is one of only less than 20 such facilities in Georgia. The meat can be processed in multiple ways. While we were there ground goat meat jerky was being prepared. We also saw ham being cured. Sausage, smoked meat and specific cuts of meat are other possibilities. In the dairy, after our tour, we were treated by Schauston Miller to goat milk ice cream which was some of the creamiest ice cream I've ever tasted. We were also treated to selections of goat milk soap. Ruby Ragan, who worked for the dairy for 30 years and has now been hired back part-time, is responsible for making soap, cheese and ice cream. She went to Mississippi State years ago to learn how to make these products from cow's milk and then came back to FVSU and experimented with goat milk to develop the wonderful products available today. Periodically the center will host a sale of meat products, cheese and soap but everything sells out incredibly fast. Two good events at which samples are given out every year are the Georgia National Fair in Perry and the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie (see more below). You can also arrange to tour the Center by contacting Terrell Hollis at 478-827-3078 or [hollist@fvsu.edu](mailto:hollist@fvsu.edu).



In the photo on the left are David Jenkins, Schauston Miller, Ruby Ragan with some of her hand-made goat milk soaps, Eric and Wendy Yawn. In the photo on the right Eric, David and Wendy watch goat meat jerky being made.

Meriwether County has a couple of locals that also make soap from the milk of their goats. You can visit Linda Seymour's website for her company **Southern Belles Soap Co.** at <https://sbsoap.com/>

Rena Abernathy of **Thalia Farms and Apiary** makes soap and other body care products on a seasonal basis. We are hoping to have a class on soap making with Rena later in the fall.

<https://www.facebook.com/Thalia-Farm-And-APIary-263057240426546/>

## Sheep and Goat Scrapie

Dr. Stan Crane of the Georgia Department of Agriculture will be here on September 19 at 6:00 PM to talk about scrapie disease, the national eradication program, how to get ear tags, and other topics. We will meet at County Line Café in Luthersville.

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## NRCS

### *Georgia's Land: Its Use and Condition*

This recent publication from NRCS documents the changes in land use that occurred between 1982 and 2012 in Georgia. A number of things are really interesting in this study including what hasn't changed. Basically the same amount of acreage remains in forest and pasture land. What has been impacted is cropland which has declined by a little over 6%. What has partly encroached into that acreage is development which probably doesn't surprise anyone. But what might be surprising is the encroachment of pasture land. Pasture lost some acreage to development too but gained acreage from cropland so overall there was little actual pasture land loss.

What the study doesn't say is that despite the loss in acreage for many crops, the yield of crops per acre has typically increased. Improvement in crop varieties and production practices have allowed farmers to produce more yield on less acreage. That production is still costing the state though in a loss of soil through erosion. The focus and mission of NRCS is to conserve resources such as soil and water. The statistics show that Georgia has not done a good job of protecting its soils. **Overall the rate of erosion is still the same as it was in 1982 which meant a loss of 20.4 million tons of soil in 2012.** Of course, this loss reflects the differences that occur in management practices for annual crops versus permanent or perennial crops but we still need to do a better job of protecting our soils with annual crop production. A lot of vegetable production over time has moved to plasticulture using drip irrigation which reduces water use-a good thing. But beds have to be made in straight rows so fields no longer incorporate a ridged planting system with rows that follow the contour of the land. Using a cover crop in the row middles of plasticulture beds can help stabilize the soil so losses don't occur in such a production system. Not every farm uses this practice year round though. So despite the improvements in our ability to produce more on less land there is still lots of room for improvement in protecting this very valuable resource.

To read the whole report please visit:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ga/technical/dma/nri/>

To learn more about best management practices in Georgia for agriculture please visit:

<https://gaswcc.georgia.gov/best-management-practices-georgia-agriculture>

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## MYSTERY INSECT

### *Romalea microptera*

At the Merry Weather Garden Club meeting in August some of the ladies in the Greenville area asked me about an insect that I didn't recognize from their description. It sounded a lot like the eastern lubber grasshopper but they said it was almost all black. And then David Strickland and Jennifer Phillips of WJM Farms mentioned a huge, dark grasshopper seen in the Luthersville area. So thanks to Sallie and Jim Mabon, who were kind enough to bring me a specimen, the answer for the mystery insect is the eastern lubber grasshopper! The black form is not as

common as the yellow but it does occur in lots of places besides Meriwether County judging from images posted on the BugGuide website. Female adults, which are typically bigger than the males, can get up to 2.5 to 3.5 inches long. They can certainly startle a person when they jump if you don't know that they are near you. Below are images of the black form on the left and the more common yellow form on the right. To see more images please visit:

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/2807/bgimage?from=0>



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## **FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY and FVSU EXTENSION**

### **Agricultural Field Day**

FVSU is hosting a Field Day on Thursday, September 14 from 9 am-3 pm at 46 Camp John Hope Road in Fort Valley. Featured events and presentations are:

- Taste of Ag Food Samples
- Peach Fertilization/Pruning
- Solar Energy Demonstration
- Peanut and Cotton Demonstrations
- Aquaculture demonstration
- GPS Tractor/Drone demonstration
- Bioenergy Crops
- Holistic Organic Farm

To register please contact Jean Willis at 478-825-6269 or visit:

<http://ag.fvsu.edu/index.php/events/agricultural-field-day-2017/>

For more information please contact:

Charlie Grace at 478-235-7091 or [gracec@fvsu.edu](mailto:gracec@fvsu.edu)

James E. Brown at 478-827-3118 or [brownj01@fvsu.edu](mailto:brownj01@fvsu.edu)

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## **GEORGIA NATIONAL FAIR & AGRICENTER**

### **Perry, GA October 5-15, 2017**

Visit the Georgia Grown Building, the livestock competitions, horse show, educational exhibits, art exhibits, as well as enjoy the fair rides, food, live music, fireworks, circus performance and lots more! I will be working at the Extension booth in the Georgia Grown Building on the morning of October 7. If you are there be sure to stop by and say hello!

<http://georgianationalfair.com/>

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## **SUNBELT AG EXPO**

### **North America's Premier Farm Show**

The Sunbelt Ag Expo is an agricultural-based trade show that is held at Spence Field in Moultrie, GA. The Expo's unique site has a 100-acre exhibit area adjoining a 600-acre working research farm. This year's event will take place October 17-19. Along with industry representatives, eleven universities and colleges, including UGA and FVSU, will help contribute research-based information in seminars. The latest in cutting edge technology and equipment will be on display and utilized in a farm setting. Field demos will showcase harvesting and tillage equipment used for row crops and hay. For more information and to purchase tickets please visit: <http://sunbeltexpo.com/>

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**Happy Labor Day!**

Susan