

News Release

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WEST VIRGINIANS LEARN TO EXTEND HARVEST, MARKET PRODUCTS TO INCREASE BOTTOM LINE

Producers from across the state are learning how to increase and extend their profits from vegetable and fruit harvests through programs offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Three workshops will provide even more opportunities to state farmers, explains WVU Extension Service Food Safety and Preservation Specialist Litha Sivanandan. A fruit drying workshop will be Tuesday, March 24, in Barboursville. Food for Profit workshops take place on Wednesday, March 25, in Fairlea, and Thursday, March 26, in Berkeley Springs.

"We are able to offer hands-on workshops that are beneficial to small scale producers," said Sivanandan. "We don't just help them produce these items safely - it's a total, comprehensive approach that includes marketing and business planning advice so that it becomes a true source of profitability and viability."

The Food for Profit program caters to farmers and home cooks who want to find a recipe for success by using their bounty to create, market and sell artisanal and value-added food items. Participants explore all aspects of starting a small food business, including planning, licensure, financing, food safety, packaging and marketing.

Food for Profit started as an award-winning program of Penn State University's Cooperative Extension and comes to West Virginia through a grant focused on advancing sustainable agriculture.

Producers who want to market their fruits through the off-season should also consider fruit drying workshops. Taught by experienced food-processing and marketing experts, the class covers all aspects of the process, ingredients, safety concerns, storage and marketing.

Sivanandan also noted that the fruit drying workshop is beneficial for those wanting to dry fruits for home use.

For information on these classes, contact your local office of the WVU Extension Service or visit fh.ext.wvu.edu/events.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.