

Orr's Farm Market Integrates Green Growing Practices

MARTINSBURG, W.VA. – May 14, 2008 – Words such as “organic” and “sustainable” that were once reserved for a small population of foodies or environmentalists are now making their way into everyday vocabulary. As a result, Orr's Farm Market in Martinsburg, W. Va is reacting to this new shift in food culture and announces their involvement in a new and innovative sustainable agriculture program.

Many people believe that there are only two types of farming: conventional and organic. However, Orr's Farm Market has implemented integrated pest management (IPM) which is an effective and environmentally-sensitive approach to pest management that bridges the gap between the two.

IPM is based on a combination of common-sense practices. Its programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest-control methods, is used to manage pest damage by the most economical means, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

The Orr Family Farm has practiced IPM for years, however, new pest management strategies have recently become available that are safer for the environment, worker/applicator, and the consumer (less pesticides and lower toxicity pesticides used on food). However, most of these new tools are more specific in activity (affect one or two pests, rather than multiple pests); require more critical timing (pest-stage specific); command a greater knowledge base; and are more expensive.

Two years ago, Katy Orr-Trenary returned to the family farm to manage the farm's market.

“Our family has a responsibility to the future stewards of our land, and to future customers,” she explained. “That's why we are implementing new farming methods; we are flexible and open to change.”

So, how are these new strategies to be implemented? Dr. Henry Hogmire and Dr. Alan Biggs, Extension Specialists from the West Virginia University Tree Fruit Research Farm in Kearneysville, WV shared information with the Orr Family Farm about the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) which is providing the funding to help enhance IPM practices.

“We all benefit through greater conservation of natural resources and protection of the environment,” Dr. Hogmire said.

Phil Bolyard, who manages the IPM program, explains that the program is divided into three different levels. Level one is reduced-risk pesticides; level two is reduced-risk pesticides and mating disruption; and level three is reduced-risk pesticides, mating disruption, and advanced monitoring and management.

“We have 21 acres at level one and 732.6 acres at level three,” Bolyard said. “And, only apples and peaches are allowed in the program.”

Dr. Hogmire explains that the reason only apples and peaches are allowed is because that is their area of expertise.

George S. Orr & Sons is the largest participant in West Virginia with 527 acres of apples and 226 acres of peaches enrolled.

For three generations, The Orr Family Farm has been owned and operated by George S. Orr & Sons, Inc. Founded in 1954, throughout the years, the 1,000-acre farm has had many extended members of the family contribute to its overall operations; they plan to keep the farm in the family for generations to come. Today, Mike and Mark Orr manage the overall farm operations. So, it only makes sense that the farm puts into place practices that are not only responsible, but sustainable.

For more information, visit: <http://www.orrsfarmmarket.com>

Media Contact:

Katy Orr-Trenary

of Orr's Farm Market

304-263-1027

info@orrsfarmmarket.com