



# NEWS RELEASE

Central State University  
College Of Engineering, Science, Technology, And Agriculture  
937-376-6677

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Lena Fields-Arnold

(937.376.6677)

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## CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION BEGINS FASTTRACK FARMING FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

**WILBERFORCE, OH**—Introducing underrepresented populations and military veterans to the opportunities in farming is the goal of the new Central State University Extension (CSUE) FastTrack Farming: A Beginning Farmer Training Program.

The FastTrack Farming program is available to individuals who have never managed a farm or who have managed a farm for less than ten years, says CSUE Associate Director of Extension Dr. Siddhartha Dasgupta.

“We are committed to assisting individuals who have never had the opportunity to own and operate a small farm,” he says. “Our team of Extension professionals are located across 55 Ohio counties. We will build relationships between beginning farmers as well as with agricultural organizations who will help teach farming skills, management techniques, and financial wellness and sustainability to program participants.”

Training will be offered through both remote and hands-on experiences consisting of:

- Workshops focusing on growing organic fruits and vegetables, aquaponics, hydroponics, beekeeping and hemp.
- Hands-on apprenticeships at incubator farms located throughout Ohio where participants will learn production, farm management, marketing, research-based agricultural practices, and more.
- Technical assistance to find farmland, apply for USDA grants, become aware of cost-sharing and loan programs, learn best management practices, as well as receive training on marketing, risk management, business development and more.

According to Dr. Dasgupta, new farmers will be required to work at an incubator farm a few times each month for one year. Experienced farmers may be exempted from this requirement. “Those new farmers who complete the apprenticeships will be offered a plot of land to farm on. While the participants

will not own the land, it will be reserved for their use during their participation in the program. Participants will also receive assistance marketing their crop through local vendors,” he added.

The program is made possible by a Capacity Building Grant (CBG) received by Central State University Extension. The program is implemented in partnership with Edgemont Solar Garden located in Dayton, OH and the City of Trotwood, OH. Partners help recruit local residents to be part of the education program and/or incubator farm.

“Central State University Extension is committed to developing a legacy for this generation and the next,” said Central State University President Dr. Jack Thomas. “As a descendant of farmers, I understand first-hand what a valuable skill farming is and the benefits of farming to communities. Extension may be new to Central State University, but innovation is in our DNA and this new program is just the beginning of the great things happening with Central State Extension.”

For more information about CSU Extension programs across Ohio, visit [www.centralstate.edu/csuextension](http://www.centralstate.edu/csuextension) or email [sdasgupta@centralstate.edu](mailto:sdasgupta@centralstate.edu).

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About Central State University: Central State University, located in Wilberforce, Ohio, is a regionally accredited 1890 Land-Grant University with a 133-year tradition of preparing students from diverse backgrounds and experiences for leadership, research and service. The University, which has been named HBCU of the Year by HBCU Digest, fosters academic excellence within a nurturing environment and provides a strong liberal arts foundation and STEM-Ag curriculum leading to professional careers and advanced studies globally.

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