



# NEWS RELEASE

College of Engineering, Science, Technology, and Agriculture  
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For Immediate Release

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## **Central State University Extension Premier Fastrack Farming 12-Month New Farmer Training**

*Learn how to farm with Central State University Extension's New Farmer Training Program.  
Registrations being accepted now!*

**WILBERFORCE, OH** – Designed for those who want to begin farming, the Central State University Extension (CSU-CESTA Extension) Fastrack Farming Program, will educate participants about the multiple aspects of managing a successful growing operation.

“Our Fastrack Farming program is well aligned with our priorities here in CSU-CESTA Extension,” says College of Engineering, Science, Technology and Agriculture (CESTA), says Dean Dr. Michelle Corley. “It is a part of our Value Added 21<sup>st</sup> Century Farming Technologies we are aiming to provide to our underserved farmers in Ohio.”

Participants who attend the 12-month training will receive a certificate of completion, says CSU-CESTA Extension Associate Director and Project Director Dr. Siddhartha Dasgupta.

“Prospective farmers should consider their participation as an investment in their future,” Dr. Dasgupta says. “The program is free, and participants will need to attend at least 12 months of training to receive a certificate of completion. Those who receive the certificate will have received knowledge of how to begin their own farming operation. Class topics include, but are not limited to: accessing land, making key farming decisions, soil management, beekeeping, hydroponics and aquaponics, vegetable and small fruit farming, integrated pest management, harvesting and sales.

Fastrack Farming Co-Director Dr. Alcinda (Cindy) Folck says the program focuses on beginning production and business planning.

As part of their training, student farmers will also attend workshops, training conferences, network with other farmers and USDA officials, and be provided with opportunities to access land and capital.

CSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator Michelle Wallace is based in northwest Ohio and is currently working with approximately 16 participants in the new program.

“The Fastrack Farming Program gives participants the ability to engage in hands-on farming education,” she says. “Participants learn the basics of operating a small-scale urban farm, including such areas as business planning, marketing, beekeeping, and food safety, without the expense of starting a business on their own. Farming is hard work and it’s not for everyone. The program is designed to help individuals not only learn to grow but to see if farming is their calling.”

CSUE Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator Logan Walter has an additional 20 participants in the Cleveland area and another 10 participants in Trumbull County.

Conferences will include the Rid-All Green Partnership, Agraria Conference, and New Farmer University Conference. Farm apprenticeships are available and student farmers will receive continued access to free educational programs through CSU-CESTA Extension for long-term success. “The Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Program at Central State University provides outreach, education and awareness to all Ohioans while enhancing sustainability of Ohio’s most valuable resources,” says Dr. Dasgupta. “Our mission is to become a premier community-based outreach and educational program leader, providing a holistic Extension approach to improve the lives of families in both rural and urban communities.”

For more information about the Fastrack Farming program, contact Dr. Dasgupta at [sdasgupta@CentralState.edu](mailto:sdasgupta@CentralState.edu) or Dr. Alcinda (Cindy) Folck at [afolck@CentralState.edu](mailto:afolck@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 135-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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### **CESTA/1890 Land-Grant Programs at CSU**