



## ***The Louisiana Organic Center of Excellence Building and Sustaining the Organic Economy***

**September 2007**

### **Background**

Centers of Excellence have been important resources for research, innovation and information transfer in the Automotive, Health and Technology industries.

In 2002, the USDA Rural Development announced funding to establish National Centers of Excellence in under-served rural communities. The objective of the Centers is to use new educational and technological tools to strengthen and assist local communities and business by expanding their economic and employment opportunities.

The National Center of Excellence program focuses on economic opportunity, sustainable community development, community-based partnerships and a strategic vision for change. The objectives of the Centers is to support strong information sharing and technical assistance links between Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities, state USDA Rural Development field staff, colleges and universities, civic organizations and other rural communities.

The announcement can be found @ [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd//2002/nces.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd//2002/nces.html)

## **Louisiana Organic Center of Excellence**

Magnaville Farm is well positioned to develop a Sustainable/Organic Agricultural Center of Excellence. The founding vision, mission and objectives, linked to the strong business and academic partnerships, expressed support from the Parish and State of Louisiana State government and the economic and agricultural needs of displaced victims of the hurricanes and the needs of the surrounding rural communities make a center in the southern United States a compelling proposition. There is no Agricultural Center of Excellence in the Deep South.

### **Concepts**

**The Louisiana Organic Center of Excellence will provide community centered rural development programs in several integrated venues.**

#### **Community Based Agriculture**

Small scale agriculture transferable to family farms, farmers markets and self sustaining rural communities. Appropriate Scale technologies—tillers, small tractor, cultivators and efficient hand tools.

Programs under consideration:

- Community Sustained Agriculture Projects
  - Farmer's Market
  - Community Garden Plots
  - Community Nursery
    - Native and perennial low impact plants, brambles, bushes& trees for the residents and surrounding communities
  - Community Scale Poultry and Egg production
  - Endangered Native Flora
  - Community Kitchen for preserving the residents' foods
- Develop the New rural community paradigm -- Information, technologies and methods transferable to similar rural and intentional communities.

## **Farm Scale Agriculture**

Conduct farm scale agriculture as research, demonstration and education center for small to medium family farms. Appropriate Technologies – farm scale tractors, rototillers (tractor mounted), cultivation, water management, and harvesting and storage equipment.

Programs to Implement and Commercialize:

Certified Organic Farm

Vegetable and Fruit Production

Sugar Cane

Feed Grain Production

Farm Scale Pork, Beef, Poultry, Eggs, Dairy and other livestock (goats etc)

Potential livestock breeding center.

Farm scale Aquaculture

Tilapia

Regional Preparation Center

Preparation of Field Vegetables for distribution

Regional (Cooperative?) Distribution Center

Integrate with Prep Center above

Consolidate, prep, package raw agricultural product for regional growers

Distribute to CSA's, Farmers Markets, Restaurants and Universities in

Baton Rouge and beyond

Greenhouses for year round vegetable production

Commercial Herb production

Retail Outlet

## **Food Innovation Center**

### **Ingredient and Branded product processing facility**

Certified Organic Commercial Food Processing Facilities

Fresh vegetables and fruit

Extended Life processing center

Shelf Stable Products

Aseptic Processing

Livestock and Fish Processing

Sugar Processing Center

Product Innovation Center

Livestock Production Innovation Center

Dairy

Eggs

Meats

Aquaculture

Commercial Compost Operation