



Profile from the Field

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Resources that Help Sustainable-Organic Vegetable Growers Select, Use, and Evaluate Microbecontaining Crop Stimulants (MCCSs) More Effectively

Project Titles: Resources that Help Sustainable Organic Vegetable Growers Select, Use, and Evaluate Microbecontaining Crop Stimulants (MCCSs) More Effectively

Coordinators: Matthew Kleinhenz

Location: Ohio State University, Ohio

SARE Grants: \$198,842

Duration: 2016-2019

To read the full project reports, go to www.sare.org/projects and search for project number LNC16-380.

The decomposition of organic matter relies on bacteria and fungi that are commonly referred to as soil microbes. Matthew Kleinhenz, The Ohio State University professor and extension specialist, says many microbes are included as leading components of microbecontaining crop stimulants (MCCSs) advertised to enhance soil and crop health, accelerate soil nutrient cycling, and improve crop quality.

“MCCSs appeal to ever-greater numbers of sustainable-organic farmers (SOFs),” said Kleinhenz. “The challenge, however, is that MCCSs are numerous, diverse, and often expensive to apply. Also, most MCCS labels offer little help when selecting or using products.”

In 2016, Kleinhenz received a \$198,842 NCRSARE Research and Education grant to identify and develop resources for selecting, using, and evaluating the benefits of MCCS to help SOFs and their advisors. The project is ongoing, but Kleinhenz is currently partnering with SOFs, organizations, MCCS manufacturers, and extension-research colleagues to develop technically rigorous, consensus-based, and user-oriented resources.

“Overall, we will improve farmers’ immediate capacities to sensibly and reliably integrate MCCSs into their

toolboxes,” said Kleinhenz. “Material, digital, and human networking resources will insure that new research-based information is widely available in user-friendly formats.”

The team has created a list-serv, hosted call-in conversations about practical issues around MCCSs, and has developed a “Bugs in a Jug” website where they’ve posted recordings of the call-in conversations as well as other resources. Visit the site online at <http://u.osu.edu/vegprolab/researchareas/vegebiostimsferts/>.

For more information on Kleinhenz’s NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher grant project, visit the SARE project reporting website. Simply search by the project number, LNC16-380, at www.mysare.sare.org, or contact the NCR-SARE office.

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