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## WSU Vegetable Horticulturist Set to Move North

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. - Washington State University vegetable horticulturist Carol Miles, currently stationed at the WSU Vancouver research unit, will relocate to the WSU Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center near Mount Vernon on July 1.

She will continue doing applied research on fresh-market production, organic crop production, alternative crops and soil and fertility management.

Some of the alternative high-value crops she has worked on are edamame (vegetable soy beans), baby corn, pea shoots, wasabi and bamboo.

Dan Bernardo, dean of the WSU College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, said Miles' relocation won't change the focus of her work and that in her new location, she'll be able to collaborate with researchers in the new state-of-the-art research facilities at Mount Vernon.

Miles, who describes the relocation as "a fantastic opportunity," said she's particularly pleased that research on organic production is specified in her responsibilities. It's the first job description at the university that specifically mentions organic research.

"The organic vegetable sector continues to grow rapidly, and more research will help growers to take advantage of the expanding market," she said.

Organic grower Anne Schwartz, president of Tilth Producers of Washington, is pleased that Miles will be working at the Mount Vernon research center.

"Carol is a top-notch scientist who's very productive," she said. "I'm very excited she's coming north. She'll bring a good viewpoint, which the other researchers are open to."

The Mount Vernon research center has five acres of certified organic research land, and Miles will also be working with local growers to establish on-farm trials.

Pat Meyer of Stoney Plains Organic Farm near Tenino described Miles as a very conscientious researcher.

"She's willing to help you with any problem you might have or provide you with information you might need," Meyer said. "If you have a question she doesn't have an answer for, she'll make sure to get the answer for you."

Miles will still be available to southwest Washington growers and encourages them to call her at the Mount Vernon center when she starts working there this summer. The main number for the center is 360-848-6120.

Debra Inglis, interim director of the Mount Vernon WSU research center, said that having Miles as part of the faculty there means area growers will have access to a more integrated and more diverse research and extension team.

"We added a small fruit horticulturist last year, an entomologist this year and will have the benefit of Carol's horticultural expertise next year," Inglis said.

The center will also be adding a BIOAg specialist next year to work on new product development.

Miles will be working with that researcher on problems associated with product marketing, post-harvest handling and shipping.

Miles' interest in sustainable agriculture grew from her diverse international experiences in her youth and also in her early career.

Born in Rangoon, Burma, she attended grade schools in Turkey, Nigeria and Panama, graduating from high school in Afghanistan.

While in the Peace Corps, she taught vegetable crop production at a two-year college in Cameroon.

Being exposed to subsistence agriculture in all of these places and cultures, Miles' goal has been to work with farmers to create sustainable production systems that provide a source of well-being to both the farm family and the community.

"My focus is on researching and developing vegetable production systems that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable," Miles said.

Miles received her B.S. in bio-agricultural science from Colorado State University and her M.S. and Ph.D. in vegetable crops from the Department of Fruit and Vegetable Science at Cornell University.