

Newsblast

April 7, 2022

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A Message from VBFRC

Hello everyone,
Happy Spring! We are excited to send along our monthly newsblast with over 60 events coming up in the next few months. We also have featured publications and professional opportunities we collected from Coalition partners. Additionally, a section is included with materials from our partner initiative, 4 the Soil. We hope you enjoy!

The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition is a state-wide and coalition-based Extension program, housed in Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education. Funding is sponsored by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Award #2020-49400-32326. This funding is led by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program.

Partner Highlights

Two of our Coalition mini-grant awardees will be offering educational trainings coming up in the next month. Check them out!

April 20: Greater Piedmont Farmland Marketing Conference (Standardsville, VA)

A workshop for Real Estate Agents and Appraisers to learn about marketing tools to improve the sale of farmland.

May 7: Vermicomposting Workshop (Rapidan, VA)

A hands on training session where you can build your own worm farm to recycle food scraps.

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Publications

Updates to the Whole Farm Planning Curriculum

Our three Virginia Cooperative Extension Peer Reviewed Whole Farm Planning Curriculum documents have been freshly updated and are available on the VCE website. Check them out!

[Introduction to Whole Farm Planning](#)

[Land Acquisition and Tenure](#)

[Whole Farm Business Management and Planning](#)

Taste of Farming Video Archive

The Taste of Farming Series has completed its first season with 17 videos by Virginia Extension Agents sharing topics of their expertise that are important for beginning farmers. All videos on topics ranging from business planning to hydroponic production are available on [our website](#) and on [our YouTube page](#). Check them out!

[The Virginia Black Farmer Directory by Briana Stevenson](#)

This is a timely news item on a project spearheaded by the Local Food Hub's Grower Outreach and Diversity Coordinator Briana Stevenson aimed at centering Black farmers, their stories, and their businesses. The directory serves as a central location that connects Black farmers in Virginia with consumers as well as Black farmers to a variety of resources. Responding to the need for farmer visibility and the disconnect between Black farmers and consumers, the directory spotlights prominent farmers and their businesses. According to the article, the project was a collective effort initiated by the food justice interns at Cultivate Charlottesville and Michael Carter Jr. of Africulture and Carter Farms. To the initiators, this comes at a time when there is a call to give a voice to those who have been systemically oppressed in their relationship with food and land.

Professional Opportunities

[Fresh Produce Grower Cost-Share Opportunity](#)

If you are a fresh produce grower looking to upgrade, improve, or invest in infrastructure for your business operations to meet Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) food safety standards and certifications, you may be eligible for a 33% reimbursement on your purchases up to \$5,000. In support current and new commercial produce growers in Southwest Virginia, the FRESH START: On-Farm Produce Safety Investments from Farm to Market is offered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Pumpkin Growers Association, and sponsored by the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. This project helps produce growers examine ways of improving or investing in infrastructure for best food safety practices, builds understanding of the importance of GAP certification, and introduces fundamentals of value-added processing and methods. See the flyer linked in the title for more details.

[Saunders Brothers Farm Market Manager Position](#)

Saunders Brothers is a wholesale nursery and orchard family farm in central Virginia. Saunders Brothers is looking for a Farm Market Manager. This employee will oversee the daily operations of our retail Farm Market in Piney River, VA. Applicants must have excellent management and interpersonal skills, enjoy meeting new people, and enjoy the friendly atmosphere of a family owned and operated farm market.

The Local Environmental Agriculture Project in Roanoke, VA is hiring

Our partner, [Local Environmental Agriculture Project \(LEAP\)](#) is a 501c3 non-profit based in Roanoke City. LEAP nurtures our food community to create an equitable food and farming system which prioritizes health and abundance. They do this by supporting community initiatives, markets, farms, and farmers. They are accepting applications for three seasonal positions: a [Farm Share Assistant](#), a [Mobile Market Manager](#), and a [Local Food Systems Intern](#). Find more information on the linked flyers.

Future Harvest's Agricultural Leadership Development Initiative (Applications Due: April 15)

This nine-month program offers leadership skill training for those who want to champion policies and lead others to advance minority farmer access to land and resources. The goal of the [Agricultural Leadership Development Initiative \(ALDI\)](#) is to deepen BIPOC and Veteran farmer engagement in the Chesapeake Region by building a multi-state collaborative of standout BIPOC and veteran farmer leaders, stakeholders, and future policy makers. The program will offer tailored, culturally sensitive, free, multi-modal training (including classroom curricula, on-farm and online learning, and one-on-one mentorship). Through the Initiative, socially disadvantaged beginning farmers will access enhanced training, education, and mentorship, enabling these farmers to master skills needed to advance their careers and master the skills necessary to run a successful and profitable farming operation.

Farmland Lease in Chesterfield, VA

60 acres (34 wooded & 26 cleared for planting) of farmland in Chesterfield, Va, available for lease for planting of crops. Farm equipment available that can be part of the lease as well as storage barn. Farm Equipment available for leasing is a 1968 Ford 3,000 Diesel Tractor/2.9L three-cylinder diesel engine with a 3 point hitch and road clearing blade. Other equipment includes a plow, cultivator, 6ft brush hog, and a farm disc (approx. 8ft/7inches wide). We also have one farmhand that can operate the equipment, if needed. We never had a soil survey completed, however, from a visual review, the cleared acreage has dark soil, plus some red clay. Historically the property was excellent in growing corn, wheat, and hay. Contact Robert Leslie for more information 614-638-1913 or zmbigten@gmail.com

4 the Soil Highlights

Podcast Episode 22- 7: Nourishing Soil and Human Health with Nicolette Hahn Niman author of Defending Beef Part II

Nicolette Hahn Niman author of Defending Beef states there is a very strong connection between what we are doing on our farms and human health. Is the way we are farming fully supporting human health? Nicolette emphasizes we can learn from nature and do less tinkering with natural systems to focus on principles, practices, and real whole foodsthat are truly nourishing and humane for soil, animals, and humans.

4 the Soil New Blog Posts

4 the Soil has new blog posts [on their site](#) on the following topics, "Diversity Builds Soil Health and Community Health" and "Water Quality: Co-Benefits of Soil Health Series."

4 the Soil Photo Contest

To celebrate Earth Month, the Virginia Soil Health Coalition is challenging all earth lovers to share their photographs highlighting soil health. Capture a winning shot and not only will your credited photo be featured throughout 4 The Soil, but you'll receive a 4 The Soil "swag bag"! Submissions are due at this page by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, April 19th.

April 21, 5:30-8:00pm: 4 the Soil, 4 the Earth Event at Glade Road Growing (Blacksburg, VA)

Join 4 the Soil and Glade Road Growing in discussing soil health and why it is important for the health of our planet. From 5:30-7:00pm there will be a farm tour of Glade Road Growing to look at some of their agricultural practices that are implemented for soil health. Then 7:00-8:00pm, there will be a panel conversation at Rising Silo Brewery discussing the importance and relevance of soil health. This event is open to producers, the community, students, and all walks of life. We all have a part to play in securing the health of our soils and our planet. Reach out to Mary Sketch Bryant at mksketch2@vt.edu with any questions or for more information.

April Events

April 6: Managing and Selling Your Timber (Rapidan, VA)

Join fellow forest landowners and the Small Farm Outreach Program for a workshop designed to help you manage your timber in a biological and economically sound manner. We'll look at current trends and issues that impact your forest ownership interests, such as markets, timber sales, harvesting dynamics, and other unique opportunities. Neil Clark, a Forestry Educator with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, will lead the workshop.

April 7: Berry and Ginger Production (Rapidan, VA)

Dr. Reza Rafie, Extension Specialist and Professor of Horticulture at VSU will present this workshop. Attendees will learn about innovative methods for producing berry crops, including blueberry, blackberry, and raspberry. You will also learn about growing ginger. He will go over new varieties and comparative production data, planting methods and improved cultivation practices, and yield in field production compared to growing in a high tunnel. This workshop will highlight applied research that will benefit small farmers.

April 7: Record Keeping for Greater Profit

Farming is a business, and good recordkeeping is essential for a successful farming operation. Recordkeeping provides valuable information on which methods work best on your farm. It can help you predict changes in inputs, expenditures, and sales. Keeping accurate records has its benefits, such as helping to plan a complete realistic forecast for the coming year. It may also be a requirement for some lending institutions. Greg Carter will lead this workshop. He grew up on a small farm, but worked in the corporate world, retiring from a major box store as a manager. After retirement, he returned to his roots and started a small diversified farming operation. Recordkeeping was an essential part of his business career, and he is able to use that experience on the farm.

April 7: Cover Crop Benefits and Management

Join VCE Ag Today for a virtual session with Dr. Hunter Frame and Dr. Michael Flessner on cover crop benefits and management. Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/vceagtodaylive> Join by Phone: Dial 1 (929) 436-2866 and enter Meeting ID : 344 371 334 when prompted.

April 7-8: Solar-powered Water Pumping Systems for Livestock (Raphine, VA)

Please join us for an in-person and hands-on workshop focused on water pumping systems for livestock. Participants will learn the principles and applications of solar-electric water pumping. The primary focus will be on solar-powered water pumping systems, however, some other alternatives will be discussed too. Please join us to learn more about these systems, some considerations for their use, and hear farmer experiences.

April 8: For Beginning Small-Scale Farmers: What Markets are the Best Fit?

Did you know there are over 14 different types of farmers markets? With so many options, how do you

know which one to choose? In this class, VSU Small Farm Outreach Program's Dr. Theresa Nartea and Program Assistant Amanda Fletcher will share the different types of markets available to beginning farmers and help participants understand which markets are best suited to their personalities. If you are thinking about where to sell your farm products, and you are just getting started in farming, then this class is for you!

April 9: Micro-hydro Electric Systems (Riner, VA)

Please join us for an introductory workshop exploring micro-hydro systems and applications for energy generation. Participants will learn the principles and applications of hydro-electric water pumping. Learn more about these systems and some key considerations for their use. The session will begin with presentations in the morning through lunch, followed by an optional site visit in the afternoon to a field site approximately 6 miles away for in-person site assessment work. Please note, rugged terrain and difficult access to field site.

April 12-13: 2022 Virginia Agriculture and Natural Resources Summit: Farm, Forestry, Food, and Fiber for the Future, April 12-13 (Richmond, VA)

Through interactive sessions, networking events, and small breakouts, you can help identify opportunities for dynamic engagement in private-public partnerships to ensure that Virginia's ANR industries continue to prosper. As leaders from the agriculture, forestry, and natural resource sectors, you will gain perspective on Virginia Tech's expertise and potential for enhancing partnerships. Your ideas will help shape a future for Virginia Tech's ANR research and extension programs that will yield benefits for your enterprise.

April 13: Agritourism in Virginia's New Economy (Melfa, VA)

The Accomack and North Hampton Virginia Cooperative Extension programs are proud to partner with Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce to bring you this comprehensive workshop. Hear from several speakers on topics of Agritourism operations, safety, ordinances and more. There is no cost for the event and lunch is provided. RSVP by contacting Ursula Deitch ursula@vt.edu 757-678-7946 ext. 25 or Theresa Pittman tpittman@vt.edu 757-787-1361 ext. 10.

April 13: 2022 Fencing School (Hillsville, VA)

Join for the 2022 Fencing School hosted by the Virginia forage and Grassland Council and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Find more information in the flyer linked in the title. Call Steve Pottorff for more information (276) 266-4847.

April 13: Organic Gardening 101 (Surry, VA)

Organic gardening has been growing in popularity in recent years. Thinking about starting an organic farming operation? You will learn what is necessary to become a certified organic grower. The workshop will cover soil requirements, plant selection, and nutritional needs for optimal plant growth and production. You will also learn the Best Management Practices to control insects and diseases.

April 13: Farmers Market Preparedness Series – Session 1

Demand for healthy local food is increasing in the Commonwealth. Of course, the difficulty of getting your local produce to customers has increased too. VSU Small Farm Outreach Program is working with the Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA) to share strategies and approaches to selling at farmers markets. This is a three-workshop series focused on social media marketing, basic market preparedness, and food safety.

April 13-14: 2022 Virginia Cattleman's Association Field Day and the 2022 Virginia Beef Expo (Rockingham County, VA)

The VCA field day and Beef Expo will be held in conjunction this year in Rockingham County. Come join for this two-day event.

April 14: Forest Farming Goldenseal and other NTFPs

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are the backbone of forest farming. Understanding, stewarding and managing expectations around these unique species are key to a deeper understanding of forest farming practices. In this webinar, Jeanine, Margaret, and Joe will talk about growing woodland botanicals other than ginseng. They will put an emphasis on selling and marketing these plants and discuss several types of operations and realistic financial expectations.

April 18: Fundamentals of Marketing (Buena Vista, VA)

Using his lifetime of direct marketing experience, Joel Salatin will present the foundations for developing a marketing strategy. These include product selection, branding, messaging, and the ultimate transaction interface. Perhaps the hardest thing in farmer direct marketing is to think like a customer. The most rewarding thing is developing loyal customers. In this fast-paced presentation, he will explain what he's learned and confess to what he doesn't yet know.

April 19: Embracing Spring Cooking and Zero Waste

Join the Allegheny Mountain Institute as they cook a Spring Minestrone Soup with herb pesto and homemade bread that is delicious, zero waste, and embraces spring! In this workshop, participants will learn tips on how to reduce food waste, while making a delicious seasonal meal. It will cover: making pesto, creative ways to freeze greens, infusing sauces and vinegars, and creating a perfect veggie stock. There truly isn't a better time to cook and reduce our waste than in the spring! This class is the first in their three-part series focused on Food Waste and Sustainability at the Allegheny Mountain Institute Farm at Augusta Health in Augusta County Virginia.

April 19: How to Make Goat's Milk Soap (Toano, VA)

Maureen Anderson, of The Home Farm in Toano, Virginia, will lead this presentation. She makes 'Tasha's Own Goat's Milk Soap,' using Nubian goat's milk and farm-grown herbs and honey from her beehives. She will provide an in-person demonstration on how she makes her soap. She will also advise on marketing strategies for homemade soap.

April 19: USDA Informational Session

Learn about eligibility requirements and how to apply for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans as well as programs, service and cost share opportunities from other USDA agencies. Beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers can get help to prepare applications for farm ownership and operating loans and learn about the requirements for borrowing.

April 19-20: Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Workshop

This course is offered to help produce growers learn about the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and help them fulfill the educational requirement associated with the Produce Safety Rule. All non-exempt farms are required to have at least one person on the farm who has attended an approved FSMA PSR training, like this one. Even if you are exempt, you are required to keep specific records, which we will cover in the workshop. There will be time for discussion, so participants should come prepared to share their experiences and questions. From beginners to experienced growers, everyone can benefit from taking the time to think about food safety on their farm! The course will include remote delivery over two days. Each day, trainers will spend approximately four hours of instruction time covering content contained in seven modules.

April 20: Greater Piedmont Farmland Marketing Conference (Standardsville, VA)

This conference is an opportunity for area real estate agents and appraisers to learn about marketing tools to improve the sale of farmland. The purpose of the conference is to provide realtors with the background knowledge in agriculture, conservation and open space preservation to advise new landowner to the appropriate resources to help them make land management decision. In addition, the

program will provide hands-on computer applications for GIS and soil mapping. Our lunch speaker for the day will discuss low impact development and the economic and environmental value of this development technique. \$25 per person.

April 20: The Social Science of Agroecology: Policy and Praxis Implications

Agroecology is a systems-based agenda for food system transformation towards human and planetary health. Agroecology combines agricultural and social sciences with participatory practices, including the co-production of knowledge between scientists and farmers. However, research indicates the social science of agroecology may be less commonly employed among agricultural scientists, which diminishes its possibilities for effecting social change. To address this gap, Dr. Kelinsky-Jones will discuss the social science of agroecology by focusing on both policy for agroecology and agroecology for policy. For the former, Dr. Kelinsky-Jones will briefly discuss her research on how the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) policy influences agroecological possibilities at sampled land-grant universities. To attend to agroecology for policy, she will provide a short overview of a science policy outreach project where her team employed an agroecological lens to develop policy possibilities for climate-resilience in Southwest Virginia. The aim of this presentation is to generate an open dialogue with participants on their questions, perceptions, and use of agroecology through a social science lens, including its possibilities for policy and community development practice. Please register to attend.

April 20: Local Food and Farming Systems in Western North Carolina: Building Connections from Farms to Markets to Schools

Molly Nicholie, executive director of Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) based in Asheville, NC will present on ASAP's twenty years of experience and collaboration in developing and supporting local food and farming systems through the Appalachian Grown program in a sixty-county region. ASAP has three primary program areas: the Local Food Campaign, Growing Minds Farm to School Programs, and the Local Food Research Center. ASAP's vision for the region is of strong farms, thriving local food economies, and healthy communities where farming is valued as central to the region's heritage, character, and future. In this session, Molly will share about ASAP's services for farmers and food businesses as well as how they have tracked local food sales and impacts through the years. Please register to attend.

April 20: Hispanic Vegetable Hoop House Tour (Lawrenceville, VA)

Pedro Lopez, Hispanic Mentor Farmer, will host participants on a tour of his activities in four hoop houses. He grows ethnic Hispanic crops, local vegetables, and an assortment of hot peppers. He will show participants how he uses reusable geotextile fabric over the beds instead of plastic for total weed control and water conservation. He will also show how he uses solar panels and heaters that burn firewood to run the fans at night.

April 20: How to Grow Mushrooms on Logs (King William, VA)

Tracy Porter, VSU Small Farm Outreach Program Regional Program Assistant, will host an in-person workshop to teach you all the steps needed to grow mushrooms on logs. Topics will include tools, equipment and supplies, tree species, mushroom varieties, when to cut and inoculate your logs, how to maintain your logs, when and how to harvest, how to sell fresh and value-added mushroom products, and marketing strategies. This event is free and open to the public.

April 20: Farmers Market Preparedness Series – Session II

Demand for healthy local food is increasing in the Commonwealth. Of course, the difficulty of getting your local produce to customers has increased too. VSU Small Farm Outreach Program is working with the Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA) to share strategies and approaches to selling at farmers markets. This is a three-workshop series focused on social media marketing, basic market preparedness, and food safety.

April 21, 5:30-8:00pm: 4 the Soil, 4 the Earth Event at Glade Road Growing (Blacksburg, VA)

Join 4 the Soil and Glade Road Growing in discussing soil health and why it is important for the health of our planet. From 5:30-7:00pm there will be a farm tour of Glade Road Growing to look at some of their agricultural practices that are implemented for soil health. Then 7:00-8:00pm, there will be a panel conversation at Rising Silo Brewery discussing the importance and relevance of soil health. This event is open to producers, the community, students, and all walks of life. We all have a part to play in securing the health of our soils and our planet. Reach out to Mary Sketch Bryant at mksketch2@vt.edu with any questions or for more information.

April 21: Interpreting Forage Analyses

Join VCE Ag Today for a virtual session with Dr. Gonzalo Ferreira, dairy specialist, on interpreting forage analyses. Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/vceagtodaylive> Join by Phone: Dial 1 (929) 436-2866 and enter Meeting ID : 344 371 334 when prompted.

April 21: Whole Farm Planning (Petersburg, VA)

Whole Farm Planning helps beginning farmers to maintain or improve profitability while enhancing their sustainability. With Whole Farm Planning, beginning farmers define long- and short-term goals to achieve a better quality of life at home and in the community.

April 21: Virginia Farm to School Strategic Plan Webinar

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Virginia Farm to School Leadership Team are pleased to release the five year Virginia Farm to School Strategic Plan. Join them for a webinar on April 21, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. to learn about the objectives and activities listed in the Strategic Plan. Topics will include local food procurement, food safety, delivery and distribution, school gardens and education, and farm to school activities happening throughout Virginia. Register in advance for this exciting event.

April 22: Fitting Annuals into Your Forage System (Brodnax, VA)

Interested in adding winter and/or summer annuals into your livestock grazing plans? If so, join for an on-farm look to see how annuals can enhance your grazing and haying programs! Hosted at R+A Farms on Robinson Ferry Road in Brodnax, VA (follow VCE signs from Route 58) from 2-5 pm. RSVP and call if you have questions: VCE Brunswick at 434-848-2151

April 22: 2022 Annual Blueberry Field Walk (Petersburg, VA)

Blueberry is the fastest-growing berry crop in many states including North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Market demand for blueberry continues to grow, and profit potential for growing locally grown blueberry is considerable. One major issue for blueberry growers is the planting of the new blueberry cultivars (varieties) that are becoming available with superior fruit size, taste, color, and pest, and disease tolerance. In this event, the participants will learn about the characteristics of the blueberry varieties grown at Randolph Farm. Also, the production potential of container-grown blueberry will be discussed. Currently, there are 43 different blueberry varieties planted at Randolph Farm. These varieties are from three different blueberry types, Rabbiteye, Southern Highbush, and Northern Highbush. This field walk is free and open to the public.

April 27: Intro to Infusions & Tincturing with Farmed & Foraged Ingredients

Join Alleghany Mountain Institute to explore the art of infusing alcohols, tinctures, vinegars, and simple syrups with herbal aromatics and other delicious ingredients. From the history of this process in Appalachia to the chemistry occurring behind the scenes, to the culinary and mixology applications of infusions - they will discuss several different infusing methods to capture the delicious flavors of nature - many of which can be found in your own backyard!

April 27: Hive Inspection and Expansion (Petersburg, VA)

State Apiarist, Keith Tignor, will present an in-person lecture at the VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion large classroom, followed by a hands-on demonstration at the VSU Randolph Farm Bee Yard. He will demonstrate how to open a hive for inspection, how to expand hives before they swarm, and methods for collecting swarms to start a new hive. Topics will also include bee ecology, hive components and construction, beekeeping equipment, bee nucs, bee packages, feeding and caring for bees, integrated pest management, and colony collapse disorder. This workshop is intended for people with no experience up to 5 years of experience. To attend the Bee Yard demonstration, you must provide your own bee suit, wear light colors and closed-toe footwear, and make sure not to wear any cologne or perfume.

April 27: Farmers Market Preparedness Series –Session III

Demand for healthy local food is increasing in the Commonwealth. Of course, the difficulty of getting your local produce to customers has increased too. VSU Small Farm Outreach Program is working with the Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA) to share strategies and approaches to selling at farmers markets. This is a three-workshop series focused on social media marketing, basic market preparedness, and food safety.

April 27: 2022 Fencing School (Maurtown, VA)

Join for the 2022 Fencing School hosted by the Virginia forage and Grassland Council and Virginia Cooperate Extension. Find more information in the flyer linked in the title. Call Bobby Clark for more information (540) 333-3227.

April 28: Producing and Marketing Produce for Maximum Profits (Cullen, VA)

Learn how members of the Southside Virginia Fruit and Produce Growers Association grow and market their products to major grocery chains and local farmers markets. In this workshop, you will find out how producers from several counties came together as an association to purchase a refrigerated truck, acquire warehouse space, set up a delivery schedule, and market a variety of vegetables and fruits.

April 28: Small Ruminant Production: Hands On Fecal Egg Count (Glade Spring, VA)

The time of year for parasite burden is unfortunately upon us, so why not be proactive in developing a parasite management plan for your farm! This session will help sheep and goat producers realize the importance of avoiding blindly and routinely treating for parasite infection. Instead, farmers will learn to consider the true needs of their flocks/herds and then develop an appropriate plan. Attendees will gain a hands-on opportunity to understand the importance and implementation of fecal egg counting using the McMaster Egg Counting procedure. Dr. Dahlia O'Brien, Sheep and Goat Specialist from the VSU College of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension, will provide instruction; and Mandy Fletcher from VSU Small Farm Outreach Program will assist small ruminant farmers with fecal analysis. All necessary workshop supplies will be provided, but BYOF (bring your own fecals).

April 30: Farming with Two-Wheel Tractors (Carver Center in Culpeper, VA)

Are you a beginning farmer, urban farmer with compact space, or rural landowner looking for a tractor solution to fit your specific needs and budget? Join the Small Farm Outreach Program for a workshop demonstrating how two-wheel walking tractors can be the perfect solution for starting your farm or increasing productivity in your garden. We'll have a hands-on demonstration of the two-wheel tractor operating various mowing and soil-working attachments, and an overview of maintenance for these machines. Charlotte Maitland, a Virginia small-scale farmer and representative for BCS America, will lead the workshop.

May Events

May 3: Forest Farming Calculator Webinar

Join Appalachian Sustainable Development and the USDA National Agroforestry Center for a tutorial of and input webinar for the up-and-coming Forest Farming Calculator tool. The Calculator is a forthcoming Microsoft Excel-based tool that will provide general estimates of income potential from harvesting and selling medicinal forest botanicals (i.e. ginseng, goldenseal, black cohosh) from a forest farming operation. They look forward to your feedback to help finalize the tool to best meet your planning needs!

May 3: NRCS Transition to Organic Webinar

This webinar will provide an overview of the new EQIP Conservation Planning Activity (CPA), Design and Implementation Activity (DIA), and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA) system and pairing options, and then focus on CPA 138: Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition and DIA 140: Transition to Organic. The process, requirements, and deliverables for each transition to organic plan will be discussed in detail, including potential opportunity for a transition to organic CEMA to be developed in the future. A Q&A session will be included. This webinar is geared towards technical service providers, NRCS staff, and anyone who is interested in learning more about CPA 138 and DIA 140.

May 3-6: 2022 Virginia Forestry Summit (Blacksburg, VA)

Join landowners and natural resource professionals in beautiful Blacksburg for a week of learning and fellowship. A special Landowner Extravaganza is being planned for the end of the Summit. Stay tuned for details!

May 4: For Beginning Small-Scale Farmers: What Markets are the Best Fit?

You can't afford not to take this class before growing crops or raising animals! If you spend money on farming and don't have a market, imagine what money problems you will have! Did you know there are over 14 different types of farmers markets? With so many options, how do you know which one to choose? In this class, VSU's Marketing and Agribusiness Specialist, Dr. Theresa Nartea, and Program Assistant Tracy Porter will share the different types of markets available to beginning farmers and help participants understand which markets are best suited to their personalities. If you are thinking about where to sell your farm products and you are just getting started in farming, then this is the class for you! REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS: To receive your FREE class materials for this class, please send an email request to tnartea@vsu.edu with the SUBJECT LINE: Send me the May 4th marketing class materials.

May 5: Forest Landowner Extravaganza (Blacksburg, VA)

Join us in Blacksburg after the Virginia Forestry Summit for an afternoon of fellowship and learning. Participants will enjoy a catered lunch and have the chance to win fabulous door prizes (Stadium Woods oak seedling, autographed copy of Remarkable Trees of Virginia, a year's membership to VFA). After lunch, choose from 5 educational opportunities.

May 5: 2022 Legacy Planning (Blacksburg, VA)

Join the Generation NEXT Team and experienced conservation, legal, and financial advisors to learn how to pass your land on to the next generation while keeping it intact, in forest, and in family. Registration opens 6 weeks prior to each event.

May 7: Vermicomposting Workshop (Rapidan, VA)

This in-person training session is designed to demonstrate and promote the basics of vermicomposting as a natural cost-effective method of recycling organic matter (e.g., like garden/farm and some forms of common kitchen waste) and transforming it into productive soil amendments by creating a worm

station (worm farm). Program sponsors will supply each participant with instruction and helpful tips to get started. Attendees will also receive an initial supply of composting worms, coir and newspaper bedding, and a transportable container to create their own vermicomposting station to take home so that they can incorporate this valuable composting technique in their vegetable/flower production garden/farm and prevent the often-needless added expense of relying on store-bought amendments. This vermicomposting workshop is limited and will be offered to the first 25 people who sign up. Find more information in the linked flyer in the title. Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/worms-4-9>

May 7-8: The Virginia Farm Festival at Meadow Event Park (Doswell, VA)

The vision for the Virginia Farm Festival grew out of a desire to expand the educational components of the State Fair of Virginia into a new spring event in order to tell the story of spring planting and bring families together as we work to grow our yearlong commitment to serving Virginia's youth, families, and agricultural communities as Virginia's Largest Outdoor Classroom. Join as an attendee or vendor!

May 9: Small Farm Orientation

The two-hour Zoom course is geared to new farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Vernon Heath, a VSU Small Farm Outreach Program Assistant with over 40 years of experience in the Virginia Agricultural industry, will teach the course. He will walk attendees through the process of how to develop a productive and profitable farm. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual.

May 10: How to Start a Farm

This workshop is perfect for anyone who is thinking about getting a farm started. It will cover some basic farm planning and how to decide what to grow and then how to sell it. A few different resource agencies will be available to talk about how they can help new farmers. This series will start on May 10th and run for 3 weeks with in person, virtual, and hybrid attendance options. Registration can be found here: www.tinyurl.com/howtostartafarm2022

May 11: Growing and Harvesting Garlic Scapes (Surry, VA)

Clif Slade, owner of Slade Family Farm in Surry, Virginia, is a retired Extension Agent and VSU SFOP Agent. Clif will demonstrate how to plant, grow and harvest elephant garlic scapes. Clif will also describe his garlic trials under different colored plastic mulch and offer insights on marketing scapes. In the event of rain, this event will be rescheduled for May 18, 2022, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

May 12: Agricultural Marketing Bus Tour (Petersburg, VA)

New and beginning farmers, ranchers, and military veterans are invited to take a bus trip to the State Farmers Market in Raleigh, North Carolina, to learn about retail and wholesale marketing of agricultural products. Participants will have an opportunity to talk with vendors and learn techniques for selling products to the public. The farmers market is one of the nation's premier markets, with over 75 acres of indoor and outdoor specialty shops, restaurants, and a garden center that sells fruits, vegetables, meats, and gifts from across the state.

May 12: Berry and Ginger Production (Halifax, VA)

Dr. Reza Rafie, Extension Specialist and Professor of Horticulture at VSU will present this workshop. Attendees will learn about innovative methods for producing berry crops, including blueberry, blackberry, and raspberry. You will also learn about growing ginger. He will go over new varieties and comparative production data, planting methods and improved cultivation practices, and yield in field production compared to growing in a high tunnel. This workshop will highlight applied research that will benefit small farmers.

May 14: Agribusiness Production & Financial Management Program

Managing a farm is more than planting and harvesting crops or raising livestock. Farming is a business,

and like any business, its success depends on proper planning and financial management. Megan Harrison and Jordan Scott will conduct the program. They are both Virginia State University College of Agriculture alumnae with expertise in farm financing. The session will help new and established farmers and ranchers learn to develop business plans, keep efficient records and discover tips on mitigating business risks, as well as how to establish credit and borrow money. Participants will learn financial management strategies to help their businesses become more profitable and sustainable. They will also visit local farms through virtual tours and have an opportunity to talk with farmers about their business enterprises. Everyone will receive an Agribusiness Production and Financial Management Manual. At the end of the workshop, participants will know how to develop and maintain a business plan and set goals for their farm operations and enterprises.

May 18-19 2022 Virginia Forage and Grassland Council's Beginner Grazing School (Orange, VA)

This 2-day intensive course is designed with both beginning and experienced producers in mind. It will cover everything you need to know to better manage grazing on your farm including forage and plant ID, pasture assessment, fencing and water system options, matching forage quality and livestock needs, and understanding a forage budget. Most importantly it will involve many hands-on activities to reinforce the concepts covered in the classroom portion of the school.

May 20-21: National Cattleman's Beef Association Stockmanship & Stewardship Event (Blacksburg, VA)

Stockmanship & Stewardship is a unique two-day educational experience for cattle producers featuring low-stress cattle handling demonstrations, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) educational sessions, facility design sessions and industry updates that you won't find anywhere else. Registration is now open.

May 20-21: Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Galax, VA)

This retreat is hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension. It is geared towards landowners who are new to forest management, provide information on both hardwood and pine forests, offer chances for interaction with natural resource professionals from various agencies in Virginia, as well as with other landowners, provide information on estate planning, management planning and certification, and provide hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more.

May 21: Small Engine Repair (Catawba, VA)

Is your lawn and garden equipment ready to spring into action? Does your grass say "grow," but your mower says "no?" Does your garden scream "till," while your tiller sits still? Come and explore how something as simple as changing spark plugs, oil, and oil/air filters can increase the performance of your equipment and make your lawn and garden work a breeze. Attendees may bring in garden equipment such as lawnmowers, weed eaters, tiller, etc., to troubleshoot problems.

May 23: Sustainable Forestry Management (Halifax, VA)

Sustainable forestry management can be a complex project, with the need to manage trees, wildlife, and the environment. In this workshop, we will discuss topics such as determining your management goals, working with forest professionals, timber sales and harvest, water quality, forest health, wildlife, and other unexpected factors. We will also provide information on USDA programs and services relating to forestry management, tree planting, and financial assistance. At the conclusion of the workshop, we will visit two forestry sites.

May 24: Boots to Roots 2: Down on the Farm (Petersburg, VA)

This workshop is an on-the-farm event for military veteran farmers, ranchers, and landowners, especially for those new and beginning veteran farmers who want to learn more about what it takes to

farm profitably and sustainably. We will tour the Randolph Farm and learn about various enterprises such as urban farming, aquaculture, small ruminants, vegetable production, berry production, high tunnel production, and more. We will also learn about the USDA and other agencies that partner with us to support farmers.

May 24: USDA Non-Insured Crop Disaster Program for Farmers (Abingdon, VA)

Wayne Harless from USDA Farm Service Agency will be sharing information about the Non-insured Crop Disaster Program. A meal will be served! Register no later than May 20th to reserve your spot. Call, text, or email Mandy Fletcher at 804-892-0108 or afletcher@vsu.edu for more information.

May 26: Mapping & Crop Spraying with Drones for Precision Agriculture (Rapidan, VA)

With increasingly more potential benefits from the use of drones in agriculture and the availability of drones designed especially for agricultural applications, small-scale farmers need this basic introduction to drones in agriculture. New applications can readily facilitate information through aerial photography and maps to help to improve yields and lower operational costs. Leonel Castillo, UAS-FAA Drone Pilot, will introduce the concept of precision agriculture, employing drone applications such as map interpretation and utilization, and showing how to detect soil conditions and plant health. Participants will also learn about drone abilities such as precision spray applications for nutrition and pest control, which can cover areas difficult to access by hand, tractor, or conventional aircraft applications which are costly and difficult to mobilize.

June Events

June 1: Forest Carbon Symposium (Staunton, VA)

Forest carbon markets are expanding rapidly in the commonwealth. If you are a forester, landowner, county leader, or just interested in this topic, please consider attending the first ever Forest Carbon Symposium hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry. In this symposium, you will learn about the importance of forest carbon markets, what this market means to Virginia, and what opportunities are available for our state's forestry community.

June 4: Basic Beekeeping (Salem, VA)

Bee ownership is more than just the sweet taste of honey! Join us for the opportunity to see the inner workings of a beehive. This workshop will give you a basic understanding of what it takes to start your own hive, from site location to queen management, including an overview of what kinds of tools and equipment you will need, and the knowledge to treat pests and diseases.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.