



Newsblast

April 5, 2023

Photo by Rod Long on Unsplash

A Message from VBFRC

Hello everyone! We hope you are doing well this Spring. As you enter into the season we wanted to share some upcoming trainings, events, and announcements from across the state. 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 Highlight

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council is hosting their Basic Grazing School for Producers in Madison County on May 2-3, 2023. All the details are [on their website](#). This school is a great educational event for any producer who wants to learn the principles of pasture and grazing management. Attending this school improves the knowledge, skill, and confidence needed to manage their grazing system as part of their conservation plan. If the program sounds interesting, please register and attend, you will not be disappointed! There are only 25 seats available at this school so register soon.

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Training Series

2023 Master Cattlemen's Program (Virtual)

Virginia Cooperative Extension will be offering the Virginia Master Cattlemen's program virtually in 2023. This program will consist of seven sessions that provide essential information for beef producers in the areas of Economics, Genetics, Reproduction, Nutrition, Forages, Herd Health, and Marketing. Participants will receive a certificate as a Virginia Master Cattleman upon successful completion of all seven sessions of the program. The goal of the program is to build foundational knowledge which can be applied to advanced beef cattle educational programs. The program will be held on zoom at 6:30-8:30 pm on March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6 and 13. For more information, contact Phil Blevins, pblevins@vt.edu or 276-676-6309. Please register to attend.

Senior Produce Vouchers Program Expanding Across Virginia

VAFMA has partnered with DARS, VDACS, VSU, VDH & the Area Agencies on Aging to expand access to the Senior and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program across Virginia. The Farm Market Fresh program, also known as the Senior & WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP) is a federal and state nutrition program administered by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). DARS authorizes farmers to accept Virginia's Farm Market Fresh for Older Adults and WIC Program (S/FMNP) vouchers at farmers' markets. The purposes of the program include providing fresh fruit and vegetables and nutrition education to participants; promotion and use of farmers markets as a direct marketing outlet for Virginia farmers; and promotion of Virginia fresh fruit, vegetables and cut herbs. Find out more information on their website.

Step 1: Fill out the [Senior and Wic Farmers Market Nutrition Program Farmer Application](#)

Step 2: Return your Completed Application & Agreement to sfmnp@dars.virginia.gov

Step 3: Attend **ONE** VADARS Virtual Training & Information Sessions to learn program details. You may choose one from the following dates (you only need to attend one):

April 17-3PM

May 15-3PM

June 19-3PM

July 17-3PM

Zoom Link: <https://vadars.zoom.us/j/83031797463>

Password: farmer

Producer Pastureland Ecology Webinar Series

Why pastureland ecology? An understanding of Pastureland Ecology is critical when implementing an Adaptive Grazing Management Program. The faculty of the Amazing Grazing Program will present an introduction to various management practices to all species of livestock, with a discussion of special management needs to horses and small ruminants. Topics include: soil health, pasture evaluation and renovation, grazing management, power of one wire, pasture layout and design, plant growth and physiology, grazing systems for horses, grazing systems for small ruminants, grazing systems for beef cattle, biological basis for soil health. For questions, contact April Shaeffer, [April Shaeffer@ncsu.edu](mailto:April.Shaeffer@ncsu.edu). Registration required.

Mapping with Drones (Virtual, 4 dates)

This 2-day virtual workshop will prepare participants with the knowledge necessary to take the FAA Remote Knowledge Aircraft Test (aka Part 107). All workshop materials are provided to participants (via snail-mail) prior to the workshop. The workshop has been well received by educators (high school, 2-year, 4-year), state & federal agency employees, the private sector (ranging from engineers to realtors), Cooperative Extension, and a slew of folks from various NGO's. This workshop is a great place to start for individuals who are considering using drones to support business applications, or managers who want to make solid decisions regarding drone issues moving forward.

- May 31 – June 1, 2023
- August 14 – 15, 2023
- December 14 – 15, 2023
- January 4-5, 2024

Spring Venture Outdoors (Northern Piedmont, 3 locations/dates)

Are you a woodland owner interested in tree identification, invasive plant/insect management, hardwood management, and stream water quality? If so, this spring your Central District Extension Forestry Program, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Forestry, is offering one-day short courses on management options for your timberland in Southside. Courses run from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm and cost \$10, which includes lunch.

- May 11 - Red Oak
- May 18 – Halifax
- June 9 -- Bedford

Woodland Owner Retreats (2 Locations in Virginia)

Developed for those new to actively managing their woods, the Retreats combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland management.

- May 19-20: Galax, VA
- September 8-9: Providence Forge, VA

Online Woodland Options for Landowners, June 5-August 11

This 10-week self-paced online course teaches the fundamentals of forest management. Upon completion of the class, you can have a draft forest management plan. The class wraps up with an optional end-of-the-semester hands-on field trip in Appomattox on Saturday August 5th. \$55/family. Register [online](#) or register by mail.

Announcements

Soil for Water Regenerative Grazing in the Mid-Atlantic Webinar Recordings

If you missed NCAT's recent webinars on regenerative grazing in the Mid-Atlantic, check them out! [Brent Wills of Bramble Hollow Farms](#) and [Guille Yearwood of EVBC Grassfed Beef](#) both shared their expertise in recent webinars.

[American Farmland Trust is Hiring](#)

A number of positions are open for hire at American Farmland Trust including Mid-Atlantic Smart Solar Specialist, Mid-Atlantic Farmer Outreach Associate, and Mid-Atlantic Farmland Programs Manager.

[Plenty! Farm and Food Bank Internship](#)

This internship with Plenty! In Floyd, VA is ideal for anyone interested in learning about small scale agriculture and community food security. No previous farming experience necessary, however applicants must be able perform physical tasks outdoors.

[Weathertop Farm Apprenticeship](#)

We're looking for folks interested in and passionate about preserving sustainable agriculture systems within our local food-shed communities. Weathertop Farm accepts 4 to 6 farm-hand-apprentices each year for the duration of our season beginning in March through mid-December. We give preference to those who can commit to the full season. Find more information on their website.

[There is Still Time to Fill Out the 2022 Census for Agriculture](#)

The Census of Agriculture allows producers to tell the story of U.S. agriculture, and it's not too late to respond. Since data collection began last fall, over a million producers across the country have returned their questionnaires. USDA will continue to collect completed 2022 ag census forms through the spring to ensure all producers have the chance to be represented in these widely used data. Producers can respond online at agcounts.usda.gov or by mail. Census data inform decisions about policy, farm and conservation programs, disaster assistance, infrastructure and rural development, research, education, and more. The stronger the response, the stronger the data. For America's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service is continuing to contact producers via mail and telephone to collect information. If you are a producer who has already submitted your 2022 Census of Agriculture, thank you. You may disregard any additional ag census letters and forms.

A Taste of Farming

Are you aspiring to farm or just starting out with farming? If so, this series is for you. We designed this "learn as you go" online series so you can get a taste of different farming practices and concepts to help you explore your interests, gain a basic understanding of many different farming topics, avoid common pitfalls, and get to know the Extension professionals in Virginia who are here to assist you.

In this Series, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) agents and VSU Small Farm Outreach Program Associates post short videos (15-20 min) highlighting key information and considerations about different farming practices and concepts on topics they have had years of experience helping aspiring and new farmers navigate. Season 1 ran from October 2021 to March 2022 and videos are archived on [the VBFRC website](#). Season 2 ran between October 2022 and March 2023 and was just completed. Videos were posted each month and Q&A Sessions were held with the speakers. See the full list of our videos below and on [our website](#).

- **How to Interpret a Soils Test by Nicole Shuman, Goochland County VCE Ag Agent**
[Watch the video now!](#)
- **Information for New Pesticide Applicators by Mike Parrish, Dinwiddie County VCE Ag Agent**
[Watch the video now!](#)

- Floriculture by Erin Small, Prince Edward County VCE Ag Agent
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Vineyard Establishment by Beth Sastre-Flores, Loudoun County VCE Commercial Horticulturalist
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Christmas Tree Production by Ashely Edwards, Carroll County VCE Ag Agent, and Kevin Spurlin, Grayson County VCE Ag Agent
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Sheep and Goat Production by Mandy Fletcher, VSU Small Farm Outreach Assistant for SW VA
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Direct Marketing Meat by Sarah Sharpe, Greene County VCE Ag Agent
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Seafood Safety by Katheryn Parraga-Estrada, VCE Muscle Food Safety Specialist
[Watch the video now!](#)
- Starting a Small Dairy (Cows and Goats) by Cynthia Martel, Franklin County VCE Ag Agent, and Jeremy Daubert, Rockingham County VCE Ag Agent
[Watch the video now!](#)

4 the Soil Highlights



[VA Soil Health Coalition Farmer-to-Farmer Mentor Program in Action](#)

Through the Virginia Farmer Mentoring Program, experienced farmers work with other farmers to increase implementation of practices that improve soil health and increase production. One of the organizations leading mentoring through the Virginia Soil Health Coalition is the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council (VFGC). VFGC leads farmer-to-farmer mentoring among graziers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Check out the new video highlighting the 2022 cohort of the program. The video was put together by Becky Szarzynski, Coordinator of the Coalition's Mentoring Program.

[Podcast Episode 23 – 7: Getting to Know the 4 the Soil: A Conversation Team](#)

Get to know your 4 The Soil: A Conversation podcast team. Jeff Ishee, Mary Sketch Bryant, Sarah Koth, and Eric Bendfeldt share their background and aha moments in learning about and building soil health. Jeff mentioned the influence of his father but also his library of soil health books he has accumulated since his retirement from the U.S. Navy. Mary recalled her earlier work in environmental and conservation studies and the importance of the human dimension in soil health and the protection of natural resources. Sarah highlighted her background in environmental communications and advocacy at James Madison University and her introduction to soil health in interning and volunteering with community-based organizations that were working to address food security and justice. Eric reflected on

his introduction to soil health and fertility issues working with the Mennonite Central Committee, the relief, peace, and development agency of the Mennonite church, in Tanzania, East Africa.

[Podcast Episode 23 -6: Why I farm the Way I do with Becky Szarzynski of Mountain Glen Farm](#)

Why do I farm this way? Context, values, and passion are all part of the equation and reason. Becky Szarzynski of Mountain Glen Farm is a well-spoken, highly knowledgeable young, innovative farmer in the Shenandoah Valley. Becky shares specifically why she farms the way she does and emphasizes the importance of walking your land, observing what is happening in the ecosystem, and not being afraid to try something new because you might be surprised by a hawk, Bobwhite quail, or dung beetle.

[4 The Soil Blog: New posts every week!](#)

Have you visited the [4 The Soil Blog](#) yet? There are new posts every week on the four core principles, soil health champions across the state, and more. Check it out and share with your family, friends, and colleagues!

April Events

[April 4, 9:00-10:00 am: Pesticide Applicator License Webinar \(Virtual\)](#)

This is the season for new hires, and applicator license renewals are due June 30, 2023. Participate in this webinar to ensure your new hire applications for authorization to test, and license renewals go smoothly. Learn how to: Create a user profile, assign permission to your company to maintain your licensing account, apply for authorization to test, submit a change of information form, and add a category to your certification.

[April 5, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm: Drones in Agriculture \(Nelson, VA\)](#)

Drones designed for agricultural applications can help small-scale farmers improve yields and lower operational costs. In this workshop, we will look at a recently processed 3D active map on the Drone Deploy Platform. It is from aerial photography captured on a farm. We will see a 360° Panoramic active view, aerial photos of infrastructure, and a video of a farm. Leonel Castillo, UAS-FAA Pilot, will discuss how you can use this aerial photogrammetry with software on the Drone Deploy Platform that helps interpret the images to determine elevation differences, acreage, crop health, soil moisture and waterlogging. There are also tools to measure distances and acreage, and you can view structures and topography in 3D. Participants will also learn how spray drones perform for precision spray applications of nutrients and for insect and pest control, covering areas difficult to access by hand, tractor, or conventional aircraft.

[April 6, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm: Cover Crops & Regenerative Grazing with Dr. Allen Williams \(Fairfield, VA\)](#)

Dr. Williams will lead an indoor discussion on the principles of adaptive regenerative grazing along with insightful examples at Fairfield Fire and Rescue. Following lunch, we will drive to Mountain Glen Farm in Raphine, VA. Mountain Glen Farm, first established in 1985, is a family-run beef cattle operation in the Shenandoah Valley. The focus of the operation is raising grass-based animal genetics along with revitalizing the soils and local ecosystems by utilizing planted cool and warm season perennial pastures as well as other naturalized forages.

[April 6, 9:00 – 10:00 am: VCE- Ag Today: Grain Marketing Basics \(Virtual\)](#)

Robert Harper, Virginia Farm Bureau will cover the grain marketing options that farmers have, and the fundamentals, advantages, and disadvantages of each.

[April 8, 10:00 – 2:00 pm: Spring Social at Lick Run Farm \(Roanoke, VA\)](#)

Lick Run Farm is planning to kick off the year in earnest on April 8 with a farm bike ride and easter egg hunt ! This fundraiser is open to the public and will include community art projects, a food truck, and

farm tours. If you can ride a bike at all, this farm ride won't be hard for you! And you get extra farm snacks! Buy bike ride tickets through [Roanoke Mountain Adventures](#). The kids egg hunt will run all day and include candy prizes. The (slightly more competitive) grown-up hunt will start at 12:00pm sharp and costs \$10 each.

April 11, 2:00-3:30 pm: Agritourism: How to Fully Utilize Your Land & Resources (Virtual)

Have you explored ways to bring more customer engagement & revenue to your CSA? Come listen to a few farmers share stories of creative land & resource use with agritourism. Making your farm a destination for the community can deepen relationships & build greater interest in what you have to offer.

April 12, 9:00-3:00 pm: Filing Farm Taxes (Rapidan, VA)

Even if you hire an accountant to assist with filing your farm taxes, there is important information that you need to know as a farmer. This workshop will cover the following topics: 1) New tax laws and changes, 2) Completing Schedule F, 3) Recordkeeping, 4) Reporting business expenses & deductions, 5) Managing enterprise sales, 6) Social security management, 7) Managing wages, and 8) Working with nonprofits. Darrell Tennie, the founder and CEO of the Tennie Group, LLC, a tax and accounting firm located in Raleigh, North Carolina, will be leading this workshop. Lunch will be served.

April 12, 4:30-6:30 pm: Introduction to Permaculture (Petersburg, VA)

Permaculture is more than just a new system of recordkeeping and urban agriculture. It is an ecological design system based on observations of systems found in nature. Patrick Johnson, of Nanih Farm and Garden, Inc., will lead this workshop. He will help participants to understand the key concepts surrounding the broader aspects of permaculture.

April 13, 10 – 12 pm: Successful Lambing in Southside (Green Bay, VA)

The Katahdin is a breed of domestic hair sheep, developed in Maine. It is a breed known for meat-type conformation, high fertility, and flocking instinct. Most Katahdin ewes will have a 200% lamb crop. Spend two hours with Sekou Abdus-Sabur and learn how he manages his lambing season and how he raises his market lambs successfully. Space is limited to 15 participants

April 15, 11:00 am – 5:00 pm: Goat & Sheep Workshop (Shepardstown, WV)

Windward By Lost Acre is hosting a day long DVM led goat and sheep educational workshop for owners and farmers of all skill level. Please join us as Dr. Margi Dunlap and a few guest speakers provide us with essential knowledge so that you can manage your herds to the best of your ability!

April 18, 9 – 11 am: Small Farm Orientation (Virtual)

This two-hour Zoom course is for new farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. James Gibson, regional program assistant for the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, will walk attendees through the process of how to develop a productive and profitable farm. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual. Space is limited to 40 participants. Registration closes at 1:00 pm on April 4.

April 18, 2:00-4:00 pm: Vermicomposting 101 for Flowers and Vegetables (Fredericksburg, VA)

Composting with worms is an easy way to make rich, affordable fertilizer for your farm and garden, and it is eco-friendly too! Since soil is the foundation to successful growing, join Anita & Tom Roberson of Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC to learn the basics of vermicomposting to improve your farm's productivity.

April 18, 6:00 – 8:00 pm: Emergency Preparedness (Milford, VA)

Being prepared in an emergency is essential to surviving natural and man-made disasters. Caroline

County firefighters and first responders will share tips on how to prevent fires and other accidents around the home and farmstead. They will also explain what items are needed for emergency situations, including first aid kits and the equipment to keep on hand.

April 20, 6:00 – 7:00 pm: Specialty Crops Using High Tunnels (Unionville, VA)

Michael Carter Jr. of Africulture and Carter Farms will demonstrate various specialty crops you can grow and cultivate in high tunnels and potential markets for the crops. With high-tunnel greenhouses you can have a year-round shelter for all of your gardening needs. High tunnels increase growth time and crop production.

April 21, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm: Farm Pond Management Program (Farmville, VA)

Learn to control aquatic weeds, manage your fish population, improve water quality, and establish exclusion fencing. Boxed lunch included. Cost \$10.

April 22, 10:00 – 12:00 pm: Laying Plastic Mulch in Your Operation (Rapidan, VA)

Have you ever wanted to use plastic mulch in your farming operation, but you didn't have the proper equipment? This on-site demonstration of the plastic mulch layer will show you how to lay black plastic and install drip irrigation tape all at once. The plastic mulch layer is one of the best risk management tools a grower can use when planting a new crop.

April 22-23: Seed Saving, Foodways, and Agroecology

Join Ira Wallace and Acorn Community Farm - Seed Savers Exchange on 4/22 for a day of learning, farm tours, seed saving, seed swap, and enjoy a pot luck lunch. On 4/23 join Amyrose Foll of Virginia Free Farm for Farm tours, learn about Nixtamalization, Indigenous foodways, and pot luck lunch. Bring your favorite seasonal dishes.

April 24, 3:00-6:00 pm: Roanoke Foodshed Network Farm Tour and Farmer Social at Singing Spring Farm (New Castle, VA)

Join for a farm tour and networking social at Singing Spring Farm in Craig County, Virginia. Adam Taylor and Eliza Spellman Taylor owners and operators will share about their Whole Diet Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farming operation including heirloom veggies, fruit, meat, cheese, fiber, medicine and milk. Their farm also includes a tiny house cabin used as an agritourism destination and a hand hewn home built with logs from their land. Learn what it takes to manage a homestead and diversified farm from two leaders in the sustainable agriculture movement. For more information, contact Shawn Jadrnicek at shawnj@vt.edu. See the attached flyer or visit [the MN Event Page](#). Please register to join: <https://tinyurl.com/RFNfarmtourAPRIL>

April 25, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm: Broiler and Chicken Production & Soil Health (Centreville, MD)

Join Future Harvest on [Where Pigs Fly Farm](#) in [Centreville, Maryland](#), for an in-depth look at the inner mechanics of running a broiler chicken operation (among several other enterprises) and how to institute a robust soil health management plan within this diverse system. In the first portion of the workshop, we'll learn how they raise, process, market, and sell meat birds, offering up tricks of the trade and insight on financials they've learned over the years.

April 26, 9:00 -1:30 pm: Small Farm Spring Forum (Rocky Mount, VA)

Join USDA, VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program, Blue Ridge SWCD, and Virginia Cooperative Extension for a program to hear different resources for small farmers in the region.

April 26, 8:00 am – 12:30 pm: VA Forestry Summit VFLEP Workshop: Trophy Hunting for Trees (Williamsburg, VA)

Before the Virginia Forestry Summit begins, join Big Tree Hunter Byron Carmean and Colonial Williamsburg Arborist Charles Gardener to learn about the big, remarkable, and historic trees in the Williamsburg area. Byron will demonstrate how to measure big trees using the historic Compton oak. This program will be partially outdoors and will require some walking around town (0.5 – 1 mile). You do not need to register for the Summit to attend. \$25 registration cost, includes lunch.

April 26-28: Virginia Forestry Summit (Williamsburg, VA)

Enjoy numerous opportunities to connect with your peers, experts and policymakers. The Virginia Forestry Summit brings everyone from landowners to leaders of Virginia's forestry community together. This year's Summit features a dynamic lineup on the hottest topics in Virginia forestry today. Whether you're looking for insightful, big picture perspective on markets, or are more keenly focused on challenges and opportunities closer to home, the 2023 Summit has something for you.

April 27, 8:30 – 10:00 am: Southwest Virginia Friends & Farmers Breakfast (Bristol, VA)

Enjoy a free breakfast, visit with other farmers and friends of agriculture, and hear from Mike Felty about farm insurance. A lot goes into finding the right coverage for buildings, animals, and personal property, among other things. Farm insurance policies are generally highly customized. Fundamentals include how to insure buildings, dwellings, livestock, seed, hay, tools, and equipment. Mike will give a short overview and answer your questions, such as whether a homeowners policy is good enough.

April 27, 10 am – 12 pm: Making Dollars and Sense Out of Backyard Poultry (Virtual)

Partly due to the pandemic and the new trend towards homesteading, many homeowners want to keep poultry in their backyards for meat, eggs or profit. This workshop is for people with little or no experience raising poultry. Learn the basics of housing, feeding, disease control and predator control. Adrian Gilbert, of Thankful Acres Farm and Stephanie Miller, of Mystic Pines Farm will share their personal stories.

May Events

May 2-3, 2023: Virginia Forage and Grassland Council Basic Grazing School (Madison County, VA)

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council is hosting their Basic Grazing School for Producers in Madison County on May 2-3, 2023. All the details are [on their website](#). This school is a great educational event for any producer who wants to learn the principles of pasture and grazing management. Attending this school improves the knowledge, skill, and confidence needed to manage their grazing system as part of their conservation plan. If the program sounds interesting, please register and attend, you will not be disappointed! There are only 25 seats available at this school so register soon.

May 3, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm: Creating Flower Container Gardens and Hanging Baskets (Virtual)

Hanging baskets are decorative, suspended from a front porch or filling an empty wall, but they are also a great marketing tool. Cut flower growers can add value to their garden sales by creating potted containers of blooms and colorful hanging baskets. Join Anita Roberson of Botanical Bites and Provisions, LLC, as she shares the process of how to create them, using easy designs and layouts.

May 3, 10:00-12:00pm: Farm Tour (Brodnax, VA)

Participants will tour the historic Cabbage Farm in Brodnax, Virginia. Mary Anna Boze is known for growing some of the most delicious strawberries in Southside. At age 89, she works seven days a week helping to maintain the strawberry crop, three high tunnels, and field vegetable crops. She also starts vegetable and flower seeds in her greenhouse for her customers to purchase as transplants. Please join us for an enjoyable morning farm visit.

May 15, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm: Filing Farm Taxes (South Hill, VA)

Even if you hire an accountant to assist with filing your farm taxes, there is important information that you need to know as a farmer. This workshop will cover the following topics: 1) New tax laws and changes, 2) Completing Schedule F, 3) Recordkeeping, 4) Reporting business expenses & deductions, 5) Managing enterprise sales, 6) Social security management, 7) Managing wages, and 8) Working with nonprofits. Darrell Tennie, the founder and CEO of the Tennie Group, LLC, a tax and accounting firm located in Raleigh, North Carolina, will be leading this workshop. Lunch will be served.

May 16, 9:00 – 11:00 am: Small Farm Orientation (Virtual)

This two-hour Zoom course is for new farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Roland Terrell, regional program assistant for the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, will walk attendees through the process of how to develop a productive and profitable farm. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual. Space is limited to 40 participants. Registration closes at 1:00 pm on May 2.

May 17, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm: Boots to Roots 3: Carving Out Opportunities – Save the Date (Rapidan, VA)

This program is an on-the-farm event for military-veteran farmers, ranchers and landowners. New and beginning veteran farmers who want to learn more about how to farm profitably and sustainably will find this event especially helpful. Come tour the Carver Research Center farm and learn about various enterprises, such as urban farming, vermiculture, herb gardening, vegetable production, berry production, high tunnels and the support provided to farmers through the USDA and other agency partners.

May 18, 4:30-6:30 pm: How to Start an Ecological Farm (Petersburg, VA)

Farming with natural inputs can be challenging, even somewhat daunting. From pest control to fertilizing, this workshop will help take the mystery out of this approach to farming and ease some prior concerns. Patrick Johnson, of Nanih Farm and Garden, Inc., will lead the workshop. He will also share some basic business startup concepts with participants.

May 18, 5:30 - 6:30 pm: Vermicomposting Workshop (Fredericksburg, VA)

Join the Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont and Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC on Thursday, May 18, 2023, from 5:30 pm until 6:30 pm, to learn about the benefits of vermicomposting at Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC, located at 4738 Massaponax Church Road, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22408. Rain date will be Thursday, May 25, 2023, from 5:30 pm until 6:30 pm. 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 damaged vegetables, newspapers, and some forms of common kitchen waste) to transform it into productive soil amendments by creating a worm station (worm farm). This workshop is limited and will be offered to the first 25 people who sign up. Seating is limited and only people with confirmed registrations will be able to attend.

May 22, 3:00-6:00 pm: Roanoke Foodshed Network Farm Tour and Farmer Social at Rivenwood Gardens (Floyd, VA)

Join us for a farm tour and networking social at Rivenwood Gardens, a small farm outside Floyd, Virginia. Corey Hamza and Christine Mann, owners and operators of Rivenwood Gardens, will show you their integrated farming systems designed to reduce external inputs. Corey and Christine bring their backgrounds in ecology to farming by combining animals, vegetables, cover cropping and organic no-till systems to create nutrient dense food. Participants will get to see and hear about their experiences with various organic no-till farming practices. Shawn Jadrnicek, cover crop and organic no-till expert and Roanoke VCE Ag agent, will also share about his experience with organic no-till in vegetable production. Networking social to follow the event with beverages and cookies. For more information, contact Shawn

Jadrnicek at shawnj@vt.edu. Directions will be shared with registrants. See the attached flyer or visit [the MN Event Page](#). Please register to join: <https://tinyurl.com/RFNfarmtourMAY>

May 23, 2:00-4:00 pm: Bringing Basic Solar Energy to Your Home (Fredericksburg, VA)

Solar energy can provide farmers with invaluable power options on the farm. It provides convenience along with excellent cost savings. Join Farmer Thomas Roberson as he discusses solar energy options in use on his small 10-acre farm. Tom will discuss design basics, solar operations, and uses such as electric fencing, powering his well, and cooling his high tunnels during the summer.

May 23, 6:00 – 9:00 pm: Ag & Conservation Partners Expo (Glade Spring, VA)

Come enjoy a meal, network with other farmers, and connect with your local agriculture and conservation partners. Professionals from USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS), Holston River Soil & Water Conservation District, and others will share information, including: 1) NAP (Non-insured Crop Disaster Program), 2) Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL), 3) Farm Loan Programs, 4) NRCS Programs & Earth Team, 5) HRSWCD Highlights, Programs, and Producer Spotlights. Options for Socially Disadvantaged, Beginning, and Limited Resource Farmers.

May 24, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm: Urban Forestry: The Need for Riparian Buffers (Petersburg, VA)

A riparian buffer is a perennial vegetated strip of land composed of trees and shrubs. This strip reduces runoff of soil, chemicals and other pollutants into the waterway. Riparian buffers aid in reducing flooding. They also recharge groundwater and help with biodiversity. Joel Koci, Urban/Community Forestry Extension Associate, will discuss installation methods, plant choice and maintenance procedures. He will also go over possible funding sources for the implementation of riparian buffers.

May 25, 10:00 – 1:00 pm: A Conversation about Cover Crops (Surry, VA)

Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program, working with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Soil & Water Conservation District, will demonstrate how with the use of cover crops, farmers and landowners can improve soil health and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay for future generations. New farmers and landowners need to understand how they can take part in improving the watershed.

May 25, 4:00-6:00 pm: Emergency Preparedness (Petersburg, VA)

Being prepared in an emergency is essential to surviving natural and man-made disasters. Chesterfield County firefighters and first responders will share tips on how to prevent fires around the home and farmstead. They will also explain what items are needed for emergency situations—such as first aid kits and equipment to keep on hand.

June Events

June 7, 9 am – 3 pm: VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion (Petersburg, VA)

Even if you hire an accountant to assist with filing your farm taxes, there is important information that you need to know as a farmer. This workshop will cover the following topics: 1) New tax laws and changes, 2) Completing Schedule F, 3) Recordkeeping, 4) Reporting business expenses & deductions, 5) Managing enterprise sales, 6) Social security management, 7) Managing wages, and 8) Working with nonprofits. Darrell Tennie, the founder and CEO of the Tennie Group, LLC, a tax and accounting firm located in Raleigh, North Carolina, will be leading this workshop. Lunch will be served.

June 8, 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Exploring Organic Certification (Petersburg, VA)

Organic is one of the fastest areas of growth in agriculture. Organic certification verifies that your farm or handling facility complies with USDA organic regulations. Patrick Johnson, of Nanih Farm and Garden Inc.,

will explore these regulations and explain how and why they work. Come learn how to establish organic farming and ranching systems to suit your needs.

June 8, 6:00 – 9:00 am: Southwest Virginia Sheep & Goat Farmer Gathering (Glade Spring, VA)

A lot of producers are unaware how important it is to understand the danger of parasites in their flocks. Bring your family and join other small ruminant farmers for an opportunity to learn about: 1) Managing Parasites, 2) FAMACHA Certification Basics, 3) Nutritional Needs, 4) Q & A Session about upcoming, 5) Livestock Antibiotic changes, 6) Marketing Strategies & Updates.

June 20, 9:00 – 11:00 am: Small Farm Orientation (Virtual)

This two-hour Zoom course is for new farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Derrick Cladd, state program assistant for the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, will walk attendees through the process of how to develop a productive and profitable farm. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual.

June 21, 1:00 – 3:00 pm: Dug in Farm Tours (White Stone, VA)

Dug In Farms is a small market farm located just miles from the Chesapeake Bay. As a thriving 12-month production farm utilizing many of Virginia's nutrient management practices, Dug In Farms has quickly adopted a variety of sustainable and organic methods to reduce non-point pollution in the Bay. Join us for a delightful afternoon farm tour with Carolyn Quinn as she shares her challenges and successes while growing her farm business, utilizing the available resources provided to farmers through DCR, FSA and NRCS.

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