



Newsblast

VIRGINIA
Beginning Farmer & Rancher
COALITION PROGRAM

August 2, 2021

Photo by Andy Makely on Unsplash

A Message from VBFRC

Greetings! We hope you, your farm, family, and community are well as we enter August. This newsblast features a number of announcements, workshop series, and events coming up.

We send the newsblast out at the beginning of each month. If you would like your event added to our listserv, newsblast, and website, send an email with the event details to the coalition coordinator, Katie Trozzo, at ketrozzo@vt.edu

Partner Highlights

The [4 the Soil Campaign](#) has recently launched, which is part of a grant project funded and supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Agua Fund. The project aims to increase implementation of core soil health principles, raise awareness of soil as a critical resource, and work to encourage people to pledge to follow the four soil health principles.

1. Keep the Soil Covered
2. Minimize Soil Disturbance
3. Maximize Living Roots
4. Energize with Diversity

Join in the movement and [TAKE THE PLEDGE!](#)

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

4 the Soil Campaign

On June 23rd the 4 the Soil initiative launched, which is part of a grant project funded and supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Agua Fund. The project aims to increase implementation of core soil health principles, raise awareness on soil as a critical resource, and work to encourage people to pledge to follow the four soil health principles.

Common Grain Alliance Survey

The Common Grain Alliance (CGA), in partnership with Local Food Network and GO Virginia, is working to identify opportunities for food producers to collaborate around sharing and leveraging logistics infrastructure. This infrastructure could be dry or reefer truck space or dry or cold storage.

To achieve this, CGA is working to survey Virginia food producers to understand 1) the logistics landscape for small agricultural businesses and 2) survey participants' exact needs and logistics pricing models. Please fill out this survey to help connect Virginia food producers who can share or use extra storage and truck space to test a cooperative approach to logistics management.

To participate, please click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/local-i-program>

Please email any questions to local.i.program@gmail.com.

Beginning Farmer Program Coordinator Job Announcement

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association is hiring a beginning farmer program coordinator.

August Events

August 5: 2021 VA Ag Expo

The Virginia Agricultural Expo is an annual event and the largest agricultural field day held in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As an educational, marketing and social event, farmers and agribusiness look forward to the VA Ag Expo each year. The event is held on a working farm each year and moves from one location to another to showcase the diversity of the different areas of the state. The VA Ag Expo is sponsored by the Virginia Grain Producers Association and the Virginia Soybean Association, in cooperation with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. This year the event is set for Thursday August 5, 2021 at Corbin Hall Farm in Water View, VA. "Farming: A Foundation for the Future" is the theme for the 2021 Virginia Ag Expo.

August 9: Small Farm Orientation

The two-hour zoom course is geared to new and beginning farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Participants' are directed through the process of developing a productive and profitable farm operation. The developer and zoom meeting instructor has over 40 years of work experience in the Virginia agriculture industry. Participants also will receive a Small Farm Orientation Manual developed by the course instructor. For more information, contact Small Farm Outreach agent Vernon Heath at (804) 892-4518 or vheath@vsu.edu.

August 10: QuickBooks Workshop

This workshop presented by Michell Green, SFOP Financial Analyst, will help farmers and ranchers learn to manage accounting and recordkeeping for their businesses. The topics covered include setting up financial records, preparing a chart of accounts, entering payments, deposits and invoices, tracking customers and creating estimates, reconciling bank statements, analyzing financial data and printing reports. Training does not include QuickBooks software or licenses. For more information, contact Leonard Elam at (804) 894-3095 or lelam@vsu.edu.

August 10: Rabbit Grazing with Soil Management

Rabbit Grazing with Soil Management Rotational rabbit grazing is a grazing system designed to reduce commercial pellet usage while not sacrificing doe production and fryer growth. Maximizing grazing efficiency, protecting and improving soil and forage health. Many factors should be considered when developing a commercial rabbit grazing program. VSU Small Farms Outreach Program Nutrient Management Specialist Tammy Holler will discuss the steps to take and ways that you can work to improve soil and crop production.

August 12: DCR Informational Session

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation CostShare Programs are administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). The goal of these cost-share programs is to improve water quality in our streams, rivers, and the nearby Chesapeake Bay. As an incentive, costshare assistance is offered to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). Participation in these programs is voluntary, and we offer our expertise at no cost. Funding is based on what our District has available and how your practice ranks compared to other applications we receive; though funding is not guaranteed. SPACE IS LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS. For more information, contact Derrick Cladd at (804) 892-4489 or dcladd@vsu.edu.

August 12: Increasing Profits through Value Added Products

Georgiatown Farm owner Karen Doyle uses multiple value added techniques to keep her farm profitable. Karen will explain how unique marketing strategies has helped grow her small business. We will be hearing about how she has added value to her home raised sheep, pigs, poultry and turkeys. As well as the creative uses of normal by-products such as Sheep wool, milk and pork fat. Georgiatown Farm is all about utilizing as much of an animal as possible. For more information, contact Marilyn Estes at (804) 481-0485 or mestes@vsu.edu.

August 13: On Farm GAP Audit

Accompany Michael Carter Jr. at Carter Farms and be an auditor for the evening and audit the farm with your own (Carter Farms will provide) food safety plan and see how close to GAP certification the farm will be. Michael Carter, Jr., coordinator of the Virginia Small Farm Resource Center, will guide you through a working, mix-use farming operation and highlight do's and don'ts related to GAP certification and requirements. USDA's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification is achieved through voluntary audits performed by USDA federal or state agency representatives that verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored as safely as possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. SPACE IS LIMITED TO 30 PARTICIPANTS. For more information, contact Michael Carter Jr. at (804) 691-0490 or micarter@vsu.edu.

August 17: Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture

Leonel Castillo, UAS-FAA Drone Pilot, will introduce the concept of precision agriculture by means of drone applications such as map interpretation and utilization and how to detect for soil conditions and plant health. Participants will also learn about drone options, such as precision spray applications of inputs for nutrition and pest control, that can cover areas difficult to access by hand, tractor, or conventional aircraft applications which are costly and more difficult to mobilize. For more information, contact Leonel Castillo at (804) 731-0230 or lcastillo@vsu.edu. SPACE IS LIMITED TO 15 PARTICIPANTS.

August 17: Spring Potatoes and Fall Cabbage, A Rotation to Maximize Your Productivity at the Fauquier Education Farm

Rotating your crops is a proven way to be more successful, but this rotation from spring potatoes to fall cabbage can allow you to plant two crops in the same space each year. We'll talk about the growing needs of each crop and why they work so well on the same ground. This is an easy opportunity to double your garden's yield.

August 18: Fall Crop Production in High Tunnels

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 18: Sample and Control of Varroa Mite and Small Hive Beetle

Keith Tignor, VDACS State Apiarist will provide a lecture on the life cycle of the Varroa Mite and the Small Hive Beetle, how to inspect for these and other pests and discuss various integrated pest management strategies to control these pests. Following the lecture, we will move out to the bee yard on Randolph Farm where Keith will demonstrate how to inspect a hive to identify, sample and control these pests. All participants going to the bee yard must bring their own bee suit and wear light colored clothes, gloves and closed toe shoes. Please do not wear fragrances or perfumes. Those allergic to bee venom must bring their own epipen. For more information, contact the Small Farm Outreach Program at (804) 524-3292 or smallfarm@vsu.edu.

August 18: QuickBooks Training Workshop

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 19: Financial Planning

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 19: Aquaponics

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 19: Small Farm Spotlight Series: Sheep Nutrition and Breeding

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 23: Pastured Poultry

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 24: Exploring Agritourism

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

August 26: Ethnic Vegetable Workshop

Increasing demand for ethnic food offers small farmers tremendous opportunities to diversify their food production systems to appeal to immigrants, particularly African (West and East African), Caribbean, Asian (Indian and Chinese) and Hispanic populations. Small Farm Resource Center coordinator and chief grower for Carter Farms Michael Carter Jr. will lead this workshop to show small farmers how to grow and market specific crops that appeal to these customers.

August 26: USDA Information Session

Join us for an inviting conversation with various agencies of USDA including Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) among others. USDA officials from around the state will share the agencies programs and opportunities for small farmers and will answer your questions concerning eligibility and participation. Join us to stay informed on all the new and current programs USDA has to assist our Virginia farmers. For more information, contact Michael Carter, Jr. at (804) 691-0490 or micarter@vsu.edu.

August 27-28: Beginning Woodland Owner's Retreat (Southwest Virginia)

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

August 27-29: Southern Ohio Forest Farming Conference (In Person)

The Southern Ohio Forest Farming Conference will provide participants with opportunities to learn about multiple forest farming topics and strategies, including wild simulated ginseng, goldenseal, and mushroom cultivation, post-harvest handling considerations for herb producers, as well as herb walks and value-added product demonstrations. The conference has a great line-up of highly experienced teachers that will help participants gain a broad understanding of the many facets and opportunities of forest farming.

August 30: Value Added Hemp Production

Ben Clark is a successful beginning farmer and owner of Glow Holistic, an all natural online retail store for CBD and hemp value added products. He will provide a tour of his farm and discuss the regulations, marketing and financial risk management challenges and strategies for the production of hemp and hemp value added products. For more information, contact the Small Farm Outreach Program at (804) 524-3292 or smallfarm@vsu.edu.

September Events

September 8: Cover Crop Field Tour and Demonstration

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 10: Small Diversified Veteran Owned Farm Tour

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 11: 2021 Family Farm Day

The objective of Family and Farm Day is to educate the general community about the benefits and importance of agriculture. Hands-on, inquiry-based learning activities are used to educate the next generation about all the exciting aspects of agriculture and science.

September 13: 2015-2020 Farmer of the Year Bus Tour

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 13: Small Farm Orientation

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 14: Drip Irrigation for Backyard Gardens

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 15: How to Dig, Cure, and Store Sweet Potatoes

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 16: Nature Walk on Randolph Farm's Trail in the Woods

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 17-18: Forest Farming Intensive Propagation to Processing

Whether you're just getting started with forest farming, or looking to ramp up production for market, this intensive has something for everyone. On Friday evening, spend time networking with other aspiring and experienced forest farmers over dinner and enjoy a keynote from Dr. Jeanine Davis. On Saturday, get ready to dig in with intensive learning stations covering site selection, propagation, syrup production and sustainable harvest at Appalachian Cove Forest Farm, and post-harvest handling and processing at the Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub. From propagation to processing for sale - we look forward to seeing you for a day and a half of networking and learning from experienced forest farmers, researchers, technical service providers, and herb brokers!

September 18: Small Engine Maintenance

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program and the Catawba Sustainability Center. Registration opening soon.

September 21: How to Make and Market Goat's Milk Soap

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program and the Catawba Sustainability Center. Registration opening soon.

September 23-24: Beginning Woodland Owner's Retreat (Southeast Virginia)

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

September 25-26: Forest Farming Intensive Growing Under the Forest Canopy

This weekend intensive will provide an overview of forest farming from the forest floor to the shelf.

We'll explore the basics of growing woodland medicinals, the economics of forest products, value-added and natural product development, Academic and industry experts will address regionally adapted, sustainable forestry operations from propagating and cultivating, to harvesting, processing and marketing forest products. Participants will gain knowledge on a variety of plants including ginseng, goldenseal, black cohosh, and various tree nuts. On Sunday, a choice of Farm Tours will be available to see hands on what growers are doing on the ground. The goal of this workshop is to train beginning forest farmers, both novices and experienced farmers, landowners and land lessees, to develop income streams and economic growth while also promoting forest health and diversity.

Fall and Winter Events

October 22-23: Beginning Woodland Owner's Retreat (Central Virginia)

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

November 17: How to Winterize Bee Hives

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

January 22-24: 22nd Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference

The three-day Conference includes: Pre-Conference intensive workshops, 48 sessions, presentations and panel discussions, 50 tradeshow exhibitors, locally sourced farm meals and book sales with author signings. The Conference highlights include a Silent Auction and networking opportunities including regional meetings and fireside chats, morning yoga and the Taste of Virginia Expo & Social.