



Newsblast

December 1, 2025

Photo by Jullian Amatt

A Message from VBFRC

As December arrives, the year begins to draw to a gentle close, offering a moment to breathe, gather, and look forward. Fields may be resting, but the work of reflection and renewal continues. For many farmers and growers, this is a season of taking stock—celebrating progress, learning from challenges, and envisioning what the coming year could hold. This month, we're featuring events and programs that create space for connection, skill-building, and thoughtful planning. Whether you're refining next year's goals or simply seeking community during the winter months, we hope these opportunities support your journey. Here's to wrapping up the year with insight, intention, and a hopeful eye toward the growing seasons ahead.

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 was sponsored by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Award #2023-49400-40885.

Partner Highlight

American Farmland Trust's Regenerate Virginia initiative is supporting farmers and ranchers across the Commonwealth in building healthier soils, strengthening farm operations, and securing the future of Virginia agriculture. There will be two grant opportunities again this December for producers advancing regenerative practices and long-term farm viability. Grant Opportunities (Applications Open December 1–19, 2025)

Healthy Soils Grant

- Awards: Up to \$30,000 for a single producer or \$50,000 for a group
- Focus: Innovative on-farm practices and systems that build soil health, enhance resilience, and fill gaps not covered by other programs
- Eligibility: Individual farmers and farmer groups in Virginia
- More information [available here](#). Grants open December 1.

Farm Vitality Grant

- Awards: Up to \$25,000 per producer
- Focus: Business planning, farm succession, enterprise diversification, and transitions to regenerative practices
- Eligibility: For-profit Virginia farmers, including startups with documented production experience
- More information [available here](#). Grants open December 1.

Learn More: Producers can join one of our Q&A & webinars to learn more:

- [Monday, December 1, 1:00 PM](#)
- [Monday, December 15, 7:00 PM](#)

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

Call for Proposals – 2026 Southern SARE Producer Grants

Farmers and farmer groups in the Southern region are invited to apply for the 2026 Producer Grant program. Individual producers can request up to \$20,000, and farmer groups up to \$25,000, for a two-year project starting April 1, 2026. This competitive grant is designed for on-farm research into sustainable farming practices — think developing and evaluating new production or marketing approaches that farmers themselves test and share with peers.

Key details to note:

- Deadline: December 5, 2025, at 12 p.m. EST
- Eligible: Commercial farm businesses or farmer-led organizations in the Southern SARE region (including Virginia)
- Funds are for research and outreach projects; they *can't* be used for general operating costs, major equipment, or standard business expansion.
- Applicants must map out a clear research plan, timeline, outreach component, and budget, justifying every expense.

If you're working on a sustainable agriculture innovation and ready to test it on your operation and share the results, this could be a great fit. [Click here to learn more about this opportunity.](#)

New Grants for Regenerative Agriculture to Virginia Farmers

American Farmland Trust's Regenerate Virginia initiative is supporting farmers and ranchers across the Commonwealth in building healthier soils, strengthening farm operations, and securing the future of Virginia agriculture. Thanks to a generous donor, support from the Virginia Soil Health Coalition, and AFT's Brighter Future Fund, there will be two grant opportunities again this December for producers advancing regenerative practices and long-term farm viability. **Grant Opportunities (Applications Open December 1–19, 2025)**

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Virginia Grown Website

VDACS has updated the Virginia Grown website. Please check the member directory to verify that all of your information is correct. If not, edit or add your operation details here: <https://vagrown.vdacs.virginia.gov/>

Box Tree Moth in Virginia

Box Tree Moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*, has been recently detected in Virginia in the counties of Clarke, Frederick, and Loudoun, and the City of Winchester. Boxwood is an essential plant in the nursery trade, and the Box Tree Moth has become a serious pest of Boxwood in Europe and parts of the United States. If you suspect this pest, don't hesitate to contact the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

Virginia Farm Voluntary Ag BMP Survey

Virginia Cooperative Extension is gathering information on conservation practices farmers have already implemented, such as stream exclusion, cover crops, rotational grazing, and more. Even if you didn't receive cost-share or use it, your efforts can still contribute to the state's water quality goals and demonstrate the actual impact of voluntary farm stewardship. Fill out the survey below to get credit for the conservation practices you've already put in place. Here is a link to information about the survey: [Virginia Farm Voluntary Ag BMP Inventory - Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts](#)

Applications for the 2026 Agroforestry Training Academy are now open!

Offered by the Center for Agroforestry at the University of Missouri, the Agroforestry Training Academy is an intensive educational program designed for agriculture/natural resources professionals & farmers to gain an in-depth understanding of agroforestry practices, planning and design concepts, species selection and management, economics and marketing, and more. The Academy is a 5-week online course with an optional 3-day in-person field experience in Mid-Missouri to complement the online coursework.

- 5-Week Online Course: April 13 – May 17, 2026
- 3-Day In-Person Field Experience: May 26 – 29 & June 2 – 5, 2026

The current application deadline is November 30th, though it may be moved to December depending on the volume of applicants. Find out Link to Academy page: [Agroforestry Training Academy | The Center for Agroforestry](#)

Good news for farmers, ranchers, researchers & educators in the Southern region! Apply for SARE Grant

Southern SARE has released new Calls for Proposals for its grant programs. Southern SARE funds several competitive grant programs, each targeting a specific audience. Each year, Southern SARE invites applicants to submit proposals for the various grant opportunities offered. SARE grants are open to farmers/ranchers, researchers, educators, graduate students, government agencies, community groups, non-profit organizations, NGOs, and agribusinesses.

CattleCon 2026: The National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Annual Convention and Trade Show

Registration is now open for CattleCon 2026, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's annual convention and trade show—coming to downtown Nashville, Tennessee, for the first time! CattleCon is where the beef industry gathers for education, innovation, and connection. Attendees can explore the latest in cattle production, animal health, and marketing while networking with producers and industry partners from across the country. Cattle producers attending are also eligible for the Rancher Resilience Grant, which reimburses registration costs and up to three nights of hotel stay. Applications must be submitted within 30 days of the event (February 3–5) to qualify. Learn more about CattleCon 2026 [here!](#) Apply for the grant [here!](#)

Regenerate Mid-Atlantic Market Program: Build Healthy Soils with Aerial Seeded Cover Crops

The Conservation Innovation Fund's (CIF) Regenerative Mid-Atlantic Market Program is helping farmers adopt regenerative agriculture practices over the next five years—beginning with cover crops that improve long-term soil and water health. Through this program, Swift Aeroseed LLC, an aerial drone seeding company, provides precision seeding of diverse, multispecies cover crops using U.S.-made drones and software for maximum accuracy and performance. Even better—Swift Aeroseed's services and seeds are fully covered for five years through the program. Learn more [here!](#)

Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

Join us for two days of workshops, lectures, farmer-to-farmer and caucus chats, delicious farm fresh meals, an all-star lineup of speakers, and lots of networking at our 27th annual conference. Registration is open with early-bird prices through December 14th. Early bird saves you \$25! Learn more about scholarships [here](#). Please note that if you are a conference speaker, sponsor, exhibitor, or participant in the 2025 Beginner Farm Training Program, you will receive a code to access your complimentary ticket.

[Join the Roanoke Region Food & Farm Trail](#)

Interested in joining the Roanoke Foodshed Network's (RFN) Roanoke Regional Food & Farm Trail! As a Food & Farm Trail member, you will increase your exposure, broaden your network, connect directly with consumers, and be promoted every day of the year. About the trail: Founded by the Roanoke Foodshed Network, the Roanoke Regional Food & Farm Trail celebrates the region's vibrant farm and food culture. The Roanoke Regional Food & Farm Trail serves as a comprehensive website and storytelling campaign connecting residents and visitors with farms, food businesses, and culinary experiences across the region. This campaign will unify and amplify the voices of our farm and food businesses, positioning them as key assets for economic growth, tourism, and community vitality. The [Roanoke Foodshed Network](#) cultivates community to address food systems change in the Roanoke region. The goals of this network have evolved over the course of a decade of conversations with farmers, planners, and community members. Through region-wide collaborative efforts, there is work to cultivate a more resilient and accessible food system that produces health and abundance in the Roanoke region.

Series

[Out of the Woods: Growing Income from Your Forest](#)

Red Maple, Real Results: Yields, Flavor & Smarter Tapping Red maple isn't just a pretty canopy—it's a serious production opportunity. In this Out of the Woods webinar, Dr. Abby van den Berg breaks down current research on red maple yields, syrup flavor profiles, and tapping guidelines. The webinar will cover site factors, timing, and trade-offs that producers actually face, then translate the findings into practical steps for woodwork and sugarhouse decisions. Whether you're expanding beyond sugar maple or pressure-testing your red maple strategy, come for clear takeaways and research-backed answers.

Time shows in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

- Dec 18, 2025 07:00 PM
- Jan 15, 2026 07:00 PM
- Feb 19, 2026 07:00 PM

[Woods & Wildlife Conferences](#)

The long-standing Blacksburg and Culpeper Conferences will be held in February.

- February 21
 - [Squires Student Center](#), Blacksburg
 - Agenda and registration in December
- February 28
 - [Daniel Technology Center](#), Germanna Community College, Culpeper. Agenda and registration in December.

[Landowner Retreats](#)

Beginning Retreats provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning, management planning, and more. Beyond the Basics Retreats take a deep dive into a specific forest management topic. All Retreats combine classroom instruction, field trips, and hands-on activities. Registration opens 10 weeks before events.

- Beyond the Basics Woodland Owner Retreat: Managing Your Forest for Timber Income
 - March 13-14
 - [Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center](#), Appomattox
- Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 8-9
 - [Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center](#), Abingdon
- Southeast Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 11-12
 - [New Kent Conference Center](#), Providence Forge

Visit the [Blue Ridge PRISM](#) website for programs on nonnative invasives

4 the Soil Highlights



S5 - E24: Health and Nutrition Start with the Soil with Dr. Robin "Buz" Kloot, Part II

Health and nutrition start with caring for the soil. Food can and should be our medicine. Dr. Robin "Buz" Kloot of the [University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health](#) and [Soil Health Labs](#) shares his perspective on connections with soil health and public health with Eric, Mary, and Jeff in this episode. Buz reflects on his own research but also points out what he has heard from farmers and ranchers he has worked with through the years. Building on the idea that eating is an agricultural act and food can be medicine, Buz would like health professionals, agronomists, soil scientists, farmers, and ranchers to collaborate more on soil and public health research and education. In addition to your own research and study of soil and human health, Buz recommends reading Fred Provenza's book *Nourishment: What Animals Can Teach Us about Rediscovering Our Nutritional Wisdom*.

S5 - E23: A Fundamental Overhaul and Paradigm Shift in Soil Science with Dr. Robin "Buz" Kloot, Part I

Changing course is never easy, especially if the change requires a complete overhaul at the most basic, fundamental level. Dr. Robin "Buz" Kloot of the [University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health](#) and [Soil Health Labs](#) talks with Eric, Mary, and Jeff about this paradigm shift among farmers and within the soil science community. Buz explains how the shift in thinking and paradigms occurred. In many cases, people were more focused on the symptoms than on the causes, for instance, soil loss from erosion or poor water infiltration. Understanding the underlying cause required a whole-system approach. For Buz, an open mind toward farmers' stories and experiences, and a beginner's mindset as a scientist were required to grasp the dynamic nature of soil truly. If you are beginning your journey with soil health and cover cropping systems, the featured length [Under Cover Farms](#) video, Buz and his team produced, provides a good introduction and uplifts the initial experiences of farmers in South and North Carolina.

4 the Soil Blog Check out the latest 4 the Soil blog!

December

December 2, 5:30 - 7:30 PM: Start Smart: Building Your Agri-Business (Harrisonburg, VA)

Join the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center for an evening session to jump-start your agri-business. This workshop is designed to help beginning farmers build and develop a business and marketing plan. Learn about the SBDC's advising resources and Financial Wellness Center. This workshop will be geared to agricultural producers to address the specific areas of concern and growth related to farm enterprises. For more information, please get in touch with Marian Dalke at (540) 232-6010 or mdalke@vt.edu.

December 2, 6:00 - 8:30 PM: Starting an LLC workshop: a Beginner's Guide for Virginia Farmers (Abingdon, VA)

This workshop provides an overview of the process of forming and managing a Limited Liability Company (LLC) in Virginia. Designed for aspiring, beginning, or experienced farmers, this workshop will equip you with the essential knowledge and practical steps to navigate the legal and administrative requirements of establishing an LLC in the Commonwealth. Tax benefits and considerations will also be discussed. For more information, please contact Amanda "Mandy" Fletcher at (804) 892-0108 or afletcher@vsu.edu.

December 3, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Basic Soil Fertility for Small Farmers (Street Ettrick, VA)

Now is the perfect time to prepare for next year's planting and crops! This Soil Fertility Workshop will discuss all 18 essential nutrients for plant growth and their effects on plant health. You will learn about the reasons soils become acidic, nutrients that hang around, and those that leave the site. Please explain the importance of liming, when to apply nutrients, and how to make the best use of them. For more information, don't hesitate to contact Timothy Sexton at (804) 524-1028 or tsexton@vsu.edu.

December 3, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Farm Tour - Epic Pastures Farm (Farmville, VA)

Join for a tour of Epic Pastures Farm with Bob and Maggie Allen. After relocating from Chicago, they have turned an underutilized property into a busy, thriving farming operation. They have started an orchard, built a greenhouse, and started producing vegetables. They have recently added sheep to their farming operation. Their plans include continuing to improve the quality of their land for future farm expansion. For more information, please contact Marilyn Estes at (804) 481-0485 or mestes@vsu.edu.

December 4, 9:00 - 11:30 AM: Aerial Imagery for Farmers (Rapidan, VA)

Learn how aerial imagery can revolutionize your farming practices! This workshop will cover practical techniques for using aerial imagery to detect diseases and pests early, make real-time decisions, and address skips and overlaps in planting, spraying, fertilizing, and liming. Discover how these methods can help you even out yields and tackle potential issues before they escalate, ensuring a more efficient and productive farming operation. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact Roland Terrell at (804) 892-4612 or rterrell@vsu.edu.

December 4, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Farm Bookkeeping Basics webinar (Virtual)

Get your books ready for tax season! In this session, you will learn basic tips and strategies to help you clean up your books before the end of the year. Not sure where to start? This session will guide you in the right direction. Topics include: Initial bookkeeping and digitization, Creating a budget & business plan, Assessing overall farm profitability. Got a question for our team? Send an email to hello@goodagriculture.com.

Dec 5, 9:00 – 11:30 AM: Kohl Centre's Agribusiness Workshop: Strengthen Your Row Crop Strategy (Warsaw, VA)

This interactive session will help row crop producers evaluate how alternative business models — such as regenerative practices or niche grain markets — can offer an edge in today's volatile commodity markets. Participants will explore financial tools and marketing approaches that support diversified revenue streams, while hearing success stories about those who have leaped. Location: Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 2229 Menokin Rd, Warsaw, VA. Format: In-person and virtual. *Featured Presentation: Eric Chou, Business Development Manager, Hodo.* RSVP whether you are attending in person or to receive the Zoom link: <https://forms.gle/u1vBzoaLuheBNBNb7> Event site: <https://kohl.aaec.vt.edu/events/agribusiness-workshops.html>

December 5, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Using Trees to Take Pigs & Poultry to New Heights (Kutztown, PA)

Join other experimental and insightful pig & poultry farmers at Rodale Institute for a full day of learning together about how to integrate pigs, poultry, and trees into our landscapes to create nutrient-dense foods, beautiful and functional farms, and humane ways of raising livestock.

- Listen as John Arbuckle of Singing Pastures rhapsodizes over alternative feeds to finish pigs.
- Tour Rodale Institute's organic pig operation.
- Dig the dirt from the panel of producers on tips that have made the most significant differences in their operations.
- Check out the techniques and genetics Trees For Graziers has incorporated into recent plantings.

Let's learn together how to elevate monogastric production to new heights by utilizing trees for shade, fodder, and crops rich in protein, energy, and micronutrients. Let's go beyond grass (and grain) into the world of tree crops for non-ruminants.

December 5, 1:00 -3:00 PM: Updates on Solar Regulations, Soil/Forage Research & Agrivoltaic Project Initiatives from the Region (Virtual)

Agrivoltaics attempts to combine agricultural production with solar energy generation on the same plot of land. The session will include updates on: related policies and regulations, soil and forage research from solar sites, summaries from dual-use project initiatives from the region, and more. Join us for this webinar to hear the presentations and ask your questions. The session will be recorded and later posted at the [Info Webinar Series Page](#). A link to the recording will be sent to all session registrants.

December 6, 1:00 - 4:00 PM: Grow Your Own Medicine (Foster, VA)

Have you ever wondered how you could grow your own medicinal herbs? This workshop will discuss herbal wellness and how to create your own personalized medicinal herb garden. This class will also discuss how to cultivate these herbs and the best time of the year to harvest them. For more information, please get in touch with Roland Terrell at (804) 892-4612 or rterrell@vsu.edu.

December 7, 2:00 - 4:00 PM: Mushroom Cultivation 2 pm (Norfolk, VA)

Mushrooms are a small yet mighty culinary ingredient with numerous health benefits, including cancer prevention and improved brain health. Jason Hess, owner/operator of The Tidewater Mushroom Company LLC, will introduce participants to common gourmet mushroom varieties and their uses. Participants will learn about the mushroom life cycle, nutrition facts, and statistics on superfoods, as well as the day-to-day operations of this unique indoor urban mushroom farm. Each participant will receive an inoculated grow bag to take home after a farm tour that includes a Q&A session and an explanation of the lab, equipment, and growing media. For more information, please get in touch with Ben Dukes at (804) 731-7916 or bdukes@vsu.edu.

December 7, 5:00 - 7:00 PM: Mushroom Cultivation 5 pm (Norfolk, VA)

Mushrooms are a small yet mighty culinary ingredient with numerous health benefits, including cancer prevention and improved brain health. Jason Hess, owner/operator of The Tidewater Mushroom Company LLC, will introduce participants to common gourmet mushroom varieties and their uses. Participants will learn about the mushroom life cycle, nutrition facts, and statistics on superfoods, as well as the day-to-day operations of this unique indoor urban mushroom farm. Each participant will receive an inoculated grow bag to take home after a farm tour that includes a Q&A session and an explanation of the lab, equipment, and growing media. For more information, please get in touch with Ben Dukes at (804) 731-7916 or bdukes@vsu.edu.

December 8 - 10, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM: International Conference on Public Health and Health Care System (Paris, France)

This prestigious conference provides a premier platform for public health professionals, policymakers, researchers, and healthcare practitioners to discuss the latest advancements, share critical insights, and explore collaborative approaches to addressing complex health challenges. ICPHHCS-2025 will bring together a distinguished group of global experts in public health, health policy, and healthcare systems. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in thought-provoking keynote sessions, dynamic panel discussions, and hands-on workshops, all designed to foster collaboration, stimulate innovative thinking, and promote actionable solutions. For more information, contact us at contact@conplusmeeting.com.

December, 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM: The Art and Science of Pressed Plant Vouchers (Asheville, NC)

This annual WNC Medicinal Herb Growers Voucher Workshop guides you in preparing plant vouchers for your medicinal herb business. Pressed plant vouchers are a vital record-keeping tool for commercial herb farmers, hobby growers, and home gardeners alike. Beautiful and functional, plant vouchers are often requested by herb buyers to ensure proper plant identification. In this workshop, you will learn how to mount and prepare vouchers to meet industry standards, or enjoy them as a work of art! The summer and early fall seasons are ideal for collecting and pressing plant material, including roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and seeds, for creating vouchers. Bring your own pressed and dried plant material; all other materials will be provided. Questions? Contact Meghan Baker at meghan_baker@ncsu.edu

December 9, 6:00 - 8:00 PM: Recordkeeping on your Computer or Smart Phone (Virtual)

Farming is a business, and good recordkeeping is essential for a successful farming operation. Using the tools you have, you can keep thorough records. These records will provide valuable information on which methods are most effective on your farm. They can help plan a realistic forecast for the coming year and may also be required by lending institutions. Greg Carter will lead this workshop. He grew up on a small farm but worked in the corporate world. After retirement, Greg returned to his roots and started a small, diversified farming operation, utilizing the lessons he had learned in business. Now he shares this knowledge with other farmers! For more information, please contact Michael Carter Sr. at (804) 481-1163 or mcarter@vsu.edu.

December 9, 6:30 - 8:00 PM: Planning for Opportunities & Grants in 2026 (Virtual)

Join us in looking for opportunities for your farming operation in 2026. Michael Carter Jr of Carter Farms and Africulture will share some different opportunities and options available for your farming operation in 2026. This is the time to start planning, as spring will be here before you know it; let's plan for our success next season. For more information, please contact Michael Carter Sr. at (804) 814-2581 or mcarter@vsu.edu.

December 10, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Niche Crops for Small-Scale Farmers (Rapidan, VA)

Discover profitable niche crops perfect for small farms. Discover how to optimize returns through niche markets and sustainable farming practices. Niche crops are non-traditional crops in high demand for their unique properties. These crops are often grown on a small scale and can generate significant profits for farmers. This workshop will discuss niche crops for specific customers and dedicated buyers. For more information, please get in touch with Roland Terrell at (804) 892-4612 or rterrell@vsu.edu.

December 10, 7:00 - 8:20 PM: Small Ruminant Webinar Series - Reproductive Management (Virtual)

Join us for an engaging and informative monthly webinar series dedicated to small ruminant production and management. Designed for farmers, extension agents, educators, and industry professionals, this series covers a wide range of topics critical to the success and sustainability of sheep and goat operations. Each session features expert speakers, practical insights, and opportunities for Q&A. Whether you're just starting or looking to refine your practices, this series offers valuable tools and knowledge to support your success. For more information, contact Dahlia O'Brien at 804.892.4489 or dobrien@vsu.edu.

December 11, 3:00 - 5:00 PM: VSU SFOP and USDA Information Update (Buena Vista, VA)

The VSU Small Farm Outreach Program's events and services will be highlighted at a booth at the Buena Vista Farmers Market. The marketing rules will be available to individuals considering being vendors at this market. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about various marketing practices and have their questions answered. For more information, please contact Forrest Hobbs at (804) 892-5310 or fhobbs@vsu.edu.

December 12, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM: Introduction to Mushrooms (Part 3 of 3) (Courtland, VA)

This is Part 3 of a three-part series on mushroom cultivation. In this segment, you will learn the crucial conditions for Mushrooms to fruit. Proper Humidity, CO₂, and Lighting are vital. Participants will learn to create mason jar grain spawn samples and receive guidance on transferring them to substrate. They will also build a small Mushroom Monotub fruiting chamber for home cultivation. For more information, contact Garry Banks at (804) 760-3615 or gbanks@vsu.edu.

December 13, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM: The Weather and Climatology of Winter in Virginia (Clintwood, VA)

Winter is a challenging time for residents of Virginia. This can be especially true for farmers, growers, livestock owners, and pet owners who often must deal directly with the wild, short-term fluctuations that this season brings. Regardless of how severe the conditions become, those whose livelihoods depend on working outdoors or traveling from point A to point B must deal with whatever Mother Nature throws at them. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Cumberland Mountains, Virginia is characterized by diverse landscapes that each have distinct winter concerns. The workshop will provide you with a much better understanding of winter, covering both short-term (weather) and long-term (climate) conditions and trends to help you plan and prepare for potential developments. An open question-and-answer session will invite attendees to ask anything of interest to them. For more information, don't hesitate to get in touch with Wayne Browning at (804) 760-3932 or wbrowning@vsu.edu.

December 17, 2:00 - 4:00 PM: Nutrient Management Workshop (Petersburg, VA)

Join as you learn to navigate the interpretation of soil test results and recommendations. Also, learn how to properly collect and prepare soil samples. Understanding which nutrients are deficient and which are excessive in your soil will help you develop healthier soils and increase production. Please dress appropriately for the weather; you will be spending time outdoors. For more information, contact Tammy Holler at 804.895.9472 or tholler@vsu.edu.

December 18, 6:30 -8:00 PM: Forest Farming: Maple Syrup (Virtual)

Discover the fundamentals of forest farming and explore the rewarding process of maple syrup production—from sap collection to syrup creation. Learn how non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like forest plants and fungi can provide food, medicine, and artistic materials for personal use or income. Whether you're curious about sustainable harvesting or looking to expand your knowledge of agroforestry, this session offers practical insights. All registrants will receive access to recordings, ensuring you can revisit the material whenever needed. This event is being provided at no charge to participants. Registration is required to obtain the webinar link.

December 20, 10:00 AM 12:00 PM: Poultry and litter Management (Warfield, VA)

If you are thinking about starting a homestead, farm, or want to sharpen your farming skills, this workshop is for you. Join for a Poultry 101-type workshop. You will learn the basics of raising and marketing poultry, as well as incorporating composted poultry litter into a nutrient management plan. Please dress appropriately for the weather; this is an outdoor event. For more information, contact Tammy Holler at 804.895.9472 or tholler@vsu.edu.

January

January 9-11: 26th Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference (VABF) (Roanoke, VA)

Coming up next year, from January 9-11, at The Hotel Roanoke is the 26th Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference! The Virginia Biological Farming Conference brings together farmers, gardeners, eaters, educators, industry professionals, and advocates of sustainable, regenerative, biological, and organic agriculture. The three-day Conference includes: Pre-Conference intensive workshops on Friday, 56 concurrent sessions on Saturday and Sunday with 60+ speakers, locally sourced farm meals prepared by the amazing chefs at the Hotel Roanoke, a Farmer Listening Session, and 50 agricultural tradeshow exhibitors. Registration is open NOW! For more information, [visit the events page here!](#)

January 14: Tree Crop Workshop

Join us for a professional development opportunity that brings together leaders in sustainable agriculture and tree crop industry innovation. This workshop is designed for growers, natural resource professionals, entrepreneurs, and enthusiasts seeking to advance their expertise in tree crop management and in integrating agroforestry. Participants will gain valuable insights from distinguished industry leaders, leading researchers, and innovative farmers. This workshop will host structured breakout sessions designed to foster meaningful dialogue and learning in small group settings. Come prepared with your questions.

January 15, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM: 2026 Agroforestry Symposium: Growing Opportunities in Emerging Tree Crop Industries (Columbia, MO, OR online via Zoom)

Join the Center for Agroforestry for our 17th Annual Agroforestry Symposium! This year, the webinar will bring together farmers, researchers, industry professionals, and stakeholders to explore tree crop production and agroforestry systems. The symposium features expert panels on farm-level management and economics, regional development opportunities, and mixed species agroforestry systems.

Whether you're interested in scaling tree nut industries, exploring specialty crop development, or learning about sustainable farming practices, this hybrid event offers both in-person networking opportunities and virtual participation options to dig deep into these intertwined subjects. *More details and registration coming soon!*

January 22, 8:00 AM - January 23, 5:00 PM: Future Harvest's 27th Annual Conference: Pivot, Care, Grow (MD)

Get ready to learn, create, and nourish yourself at the 2026 Conference. Whether you want to improve your marketing, deepen your soil care, rethink your business model, or explore healing food traditions, there's something to meet you right where you are. Explore hands-on and thought-provoking offerings like Herb & Fruit Drying and Processing for Market, Documenting Foodways, Let's Talk About Farmer Cooperatives, The Happy CSA Farmer, Cultivating Community: The Agrovillage Model, Wool in the Soil, and Growing for Diversity. Check out the full agenda and speakers in the [Program Preview](#), now live online. With more than 30 sessions, including Farmer Meet-ups, there's something for everyone—from new growers to seasoned producers. [learn more & register](#). More than 30 sessions on a range of topics for advanced and beginning farmers, activists and educators, two keynote addresses, farmer-to-farmer chats & more!

January 27, 8:00 AM: 2026 Forage Conference-Wytheville (Wytheville, VA)

Registration begins at 8:00 am - 8:50 am, with the conference itself beginning at 8:50 am. Join us for a discussion about managing for healthy animals and healthy soil on grazing operations. Learn how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation! Dr. Terry Swecker, DVM, PhD, is retired from the VA-MD School of Vet Medicine, where he spent 44 years in teaching, research, and practice. Doug Peterson is retired from NRCS, where he served for over 30 years, and most recently as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Missouri and Iowa.

January 28, 8:00 AM: 2026 Forage Conference-Catham (Catham, VA)

Registration begins at 8:00 am - 8:50 am, with the conference itself beginning at 8:50 am. Join us for a discussion about managing for healthy animals and healthy soil on grazing operations. Learn how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation! Dr. Terry Swecker, DVM, PhD, is retired from the VA-MD School of Vet Medicine, where he spent 44 years in teaching, research, and practice. Doug Peterson is retired from NRCS, where he served for over 30 years, most recently as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Missouri and Iowa.

January 29, 8:00 AM: 2026 Forage Conference-Warrenton (Warrenton, VA)

Registration begins at 8:00 am - 8:50 am, with the conference itself beginning at 8:50 am. Join us for a discussion about managing for healthy animals and healthy soil on grazing operations. Learn how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation! Dr. Terry Swecker, DVM, PhD, is retired from the VA-MD School of Vet Medicine, where he spent 44 years in teaching, research, and practice. Doug Peterson is retired from NRCS, where he served for over 30 years, and most recently, as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Missouri and Iowa.

January 30, 8:00 AM: 2026 Forage Conference-Weyers Cave (Weyers Cave, VA)

Registration begins at 8:00 am - 8:50 am, with the conference itself beginning at 8:50 am. Join us for a discussion about managing for healthy animals and healthy soil on grazing operations. Learn how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation! Dr. Terry Swecker, DVM, PhD, is retired from the VA-MD School of Vet Medicine, where he spent 44 years in teaching, research, and practice. Doug Peterson is retired from NRCS, where he served for over 30 years, and most recently, as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Missouri and Iowa.

January 30, 8:00 AM: 2026 Forage Conference-Weyers Cave -Livestream (Weyers Cave, VA)

Registration begins at 8:00 am - 8:50 am, with the conference itself beginning at 8:50 am. Join us for a discussion about managing for healthy animals and healthy soil on grazing operations. Learn how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation! Dr. Terry Swecker, DVM, PhD, is retired from the VA-MD School of Vet Medicine, where he spent 44 years in teaching, research, and practice. Doug Peterson is retired from NRCS, where he served for over 30 years, and most recently, as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for Missouri and Iowa.

February

February 11, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Agriculture, Floriculture & Greenhouse Systems Student Tour (Petersburg, VA)

This tour introduces students to agriculture, floriculture, greenhouse systems, and career pathways within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). Students will meet faculty and staff, learn about USDA scholarships, internship opportunities, MANRRS, and careers in agricultural sciences. Demonstrations include drone technology for pasture management, indoor production in Cropbox units, aquaculture greenhouse activities, trolley talks, and hands-on experiences such as weeding or hydroponic transplanting. The visit also includes an overview of academic majors, success stories of former students, scholarships, and admissions guidance. Ideal for schools exploring agriculture careers, STEM pathways, and hands-on learning. For more information, contact Tabitha Bugg at 804.892.2997 or tbugg@vsu.edu.

March

March 11, 10:00 - 11:00 AM: Web Soil Survey Basics (South Hill, VA)

Learn the benefits of using the USDA online program, Web Soil Survey. WSS provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. The soil survey is a detailed report on the soils of more than 95 percent of the nation's counties. It has maps with soil boundaries, photos, descriptions, and tables of soil properties and features. This will be a hands-on computer workshop. Using the Web Soil Survey program, we will look at each farmer's farm soil data. For more information, contact Tammy Holler at 804.895.9472 or tholler@vsu.edu.

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