



VIRGINIA
Beginning Farmer & Rancher
COALITION PROGRAM

March 4, 2021

Photo by Eric Bendfeldt

A Message from VBFRC

March Greetings! Wishing you warm sunny days ahead as the growing season begins. This newsblast features a number of announcements, workshop series, and events coming up in March.

If you are interested in a listed event, you can find more details by clicking the hotlink titles, or by visiting [the Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition website](#). Not all events announced in this email are sponsored by the VBFRC, and not all events in Virginia may be included in this list.

Please share this flyer with your networks. If you would like your event added to our newsletter, website, and calendar, send an email with the event details to the coalition coordinator, Katie Trozzo, at ketrozzo@vt.edu

Partner Highlights

VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program has their beginning/small farmer orientations as well as a diverse array of workshops listed out until June. [Check out their offerings!](#)

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

Farm and Food System Fellowship-Applications due March 10

Allegheny Mountain Institute's 18-month Farm and Food System Fellowship is a tuition-free, educational program that fully sponsors, trains, and empowers individuals to become teachers and advocates for a food system that is socially, environmentally, and economically just. Selected Fellows spend six months in experiential, residential Farm and Food Study at AMI's Allegheny Farm Campus, followed by a Community Action Year, applying their training in partnership with regional non-profit organizations.

Request for Proposals: Small Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont expands farm to fork and food to table initiatives

The Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont will contract with up to seven minority, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers to grow and supply fruit, vegetables, herbs, meat, and other commodities to local food banks. In essence, MVFP will "purchase" produce from these farms, and ask that instead of delivering the food to us, that the farms directly supply the Rappahannock, Madison, Orange, Fauquier, and Greene Food Banks. Payments will be made in two installments following commodity drop-offs. The farmer will be awarded a grant of up to \$3,000 for their contributions throughout the growing season.

Growing Herbs for Profit with Appalachian Sustainable Development

ASD's Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub is seeking farmers to supply herbs to national and international buyers! Diversify your farm income when you grow for the Herb Hub this year. See the quantity and species list on the page hotlinked in the title. Email Robin Suggs, Procurement Manager, at rsuggs@asdevelop.org by 3/8/21 if you are interested in supplying ALL or PART of this demand.

Virginia SBDC Food and Beverage Accelerator-Central Virginia and Shenandoah Valley Cohort

The Virginia Small Business Development Center and Create Courses invite companies in the Charlottesville and Shenandoah Valley regions to apply for the inaugural cohort of the Food and Beverage Accelerator. This free, intensive 6-week program is designed to help the founders and CEOs of growth-oriented food and beverage producers acquire the competencies required to grow and scale existing operations and to consider the next steps in strategic growth opportunities through wholesale, retail, and direct-to-consumer sales channels.

Training Series

Fauquier Education Farm's 2021 Workshop Series

The Fauquier Education Farm Workshop Series is a learning resource for farmers and home gardeners of all experience levels. You can pick and choose any workshops that may interest you with no expectation that you need to attend them all. These workshops are free and open to everyone. These will be held rain or shine and children are always welcome. Unless otherwise indicated, all workshops are held at the Fauquier Education Farm: 8428 Meetze Rd, Warrenton, Virginia.

VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program Workshop Series

SFOP provides outreach and learning opportunities to small farmers for production management, financial and risk management, marketing, USDA assistance programs and more. Check out their upcoming workshops!

Virginia Sustainable Farms and Agribusiness Education

Running from January to April and including 20 webinars, this series developed by the Virginia Tech Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics gets to the heart of what sustainability is and what it looks like for your farm and agribusiness.

March Events

March 4-5 Virginia Virtual Berry School

The two-day school will provide experienced and beginning Virginia berry growers with the latest research and information about starting a berry enterprise and production management of berry crops, including blueberries and blackberries.

March 6: Gardening in the Valley Symposium-A Virtual Event

This full day educational symposium features four speakers and topics, as well as short talks during the lunch break. All proceeds from the Symposium benefit the NSVMGA Memorial Scholarship Fund for high school seniors.

March 6: Principles and Practices of Biodynamic Beekeeping: Part One: Getting Started

This is Spikenard's basic class in biodynamic/sustainable beekeeping methods held virtually. This workshop will offer in-depth advice for those who want to have bees and for those who had bees and want to start again.

March 6-12 Starting and Improving Farms Conference

Penn State Extension is presenting a virtual conference beginning March 6th, 2021 with over fifty webinars covering many topics.

March 9 and 10: 2021 Farm Management Institute

Join the Farm Credit Knowledge Center for the 2021 Farm Management Institute to be held virtually. This year's content and lecture will be relevant to those who are lifelong learners, including young farmers, potential young farmers, parents, 4-H and FFA students and those continuing or expanding their farming operations. Registered participants will hear from two renowned speakers.

March 11: Farmer-to-Farmer Chat: Non-Profit Farming

Join your fellow non-profit farmers (and managers) from 11:00-1:00 pm EST for a collective discussion hosted by Future Harvest about the unique challenges and benefits to farming as a 501c3. Are you a farm manager? Volunteer? Board member? How do you navigate running a successful farm while also fulfilling your organization's mission. This event is a facilitated open discussion. Depending on attendance numbers, we will either participate in one large group discussion or head into smaller moderated breakout rooms. Free, suggested \$10 donation.

March 12: Building Soil Health to Sustain Virginia's Farms and Protect Water Quality: An Organic Approach with Mark Schonbeck

Six Principles of Soil Health Management, and strategies and methods through which organic producers put these principles into practice will be discussed. Mark will explore how healthy agricultural soils can protect Virginia's natural resources including the Chesapeake Bay, sustain farm resilience and economic viability, and help address the climate crisis. The webinar will include examples of how working organic farms successfully apply these principles on some of Virginia's predominant soil types.

March 11: Quickbooks Online Training

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.

March 11: Farmers Market Preparedness Part IV "How to Tell Your Story"

Virginia Cooperative Extension Small Farm Outreach Program at Virginia State University in conjunction with the Virginia Farmers Market Association will share how to craft and tell your farm story. You will learn about marketing/branding/social media. In addition, you will hear about different ways to market your business and what works and more importantly what hasn't worked in this new market reality. For more information, contact Michael Carter, Jr. at (804) 691-0490 or micarter@vsu.edu.

March 12: Beginner/Small Farmer Orientation

The program 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 operation. Small Farm Outreach agent Vernon Health, developer and instructor for the program, has over 40 years of work experience in the Virginia agriculture industry. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation Manual developed by the instructor.

March 16: Hispanic Field Day

A VSU hosted event. Registration opening soon.

March 18: Small Ruminant Weaning for Success

A VSU hosted event. Registration opening soon.

March 20: 11th Annual Gardening Symposium

Join Loudon County Master Gardeners for a full day of online inspiration, information and insight! This webinar will be recorded so you can watch all of it, some of it, or none of it on Saturday, March 20 and then access the recording for a 10 day period after the event. The registration fee of \$40 helps offset the costs to produce this educational program.

March 24: Laying Plastic and Using a Seed Planter

A VSU hosted event. Registration opening soon.

March 27: Small Engine Maintenance

A VSU hosted event. Registration opening soon.