



# Newsblast

May 4, 2023

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## A Message from VBFRC

Hello everyone! We hope you are doing well in this cool spring weather. As you prepare for summer, 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

Coalition partners and mini-grant recipients, Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont and Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC, are offering a Vermicomposting workshop on May 18 from 5:30-6:30 pm in Fredericksburg, VA.

This in-person training session is designed to demonstrate and promote the basics of vermicomposting as a natural cost-effective method of recycling organic matter (e.g., like garden/farm 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.

Learn more about this event [in their flyer](#).

Note: Green underlined text is a link

## Training Series

### Introduction to Getting Your Hands Dirty at the Fauquier Education Farm

This 6-week course, held on Wednesdays from 7-9 pm from May 24 to June 28, offered by the Fauquier Education Farm gives you the basic tools and concepts involved in growing a crop in the field.

### **Small Farm Outreach Program-DCR Farmer Field Days in May**

Four FREE events to help you improve your farm and the environment! These farm tours will demonstrate how you can improve the health of your soil, your grazing animals, and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Hosted by the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, these private farms demonstrate conservation best practices such as nutrient management, cover crops, grazing-land management, continuous no-till, and nitrogen split applications. Access valuable resources. Discover major funding available to implement these effective practices. Join us at any or all of the following field days:

Saturday, May 13, 2023 · 9 am–noon · Joe Gray’s Farm, Remington, VA · Lunch will be served · For more information, contact Michael Carter Sr. at 804-481-1163 or [mcarter@vsu.edu](mailto:mcarter@vsu.edu).

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 · 9 am–noon · Albert McGee’s Farm, Louisa, VA  
For more information, contact Roland Terrell at 804-892-4612 or [rterrell@vsu.edu](mailto:rterrell@vsu.edu).

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 · noon–3 pm · Anthony and Tonja Martin’s Farm, Penhook, VA · Lunch will be served · For more information, contact Clifford Somerville at 804-892-4581 or [csomerville@vsu.edu](mailto:csomerville@vsu.edu).

Thursday, May 25, 2023 · 10 am–1 pm · Glenn Slade’s Farm, Surry, VA · Lunch will be served · For more information, contact Derrick Cladd at 804-892-4489 or [dcladd@vsu.edu](mailto:dcladd@vsu.edu).

### Appalachian Sustainable Development’s Ask and Agroforester Webinar Series

An opportunity for us to come together for a deep dive into detailed information about specific Agroforestry topics. Bring your questions for our regional Agroforestry heroes! All webinars are from 7PM – 8:30PM EST.

**May 9: Johnathan McRay – Wildly Homegrown: Sourcing, Selection, and Storytelling**  
Hop into the melting pot of Silver Run Forest Farm’s nursery program as we learn from Jonathan McRay about grass-roots wild collection, resourceful sourcing, regenerative propagation and cultural storytelling

**May 11: Eliza Greenman – Live Agroforestry/Silvopasture Design Consultation**  
Join for a talk with Eliza Greenman, one of our premier fruit explorers and germplasm specialist in the region, as we talk about her work and explore design considerations for persimmons and other tree crops in silvopasture. Eliza will conduct a live agroforestry consulting session to review initial planting plans for hog production in silvopasture on a Central Virginia farm.

**May 16: Mark Kracwycz – Getting Started in Coppice Agroforestry**  
Getting Started in Coppice Agroforestry with Mark Krawczyk, the author himself! Join us as we break down the hardest part of a project – getting up the nerve to actually start. You’ll hear the basics of what is increasingly referred to as “resprout silviculture” as we move from goals and site context all the way to making those first cuts.

### Introduction to Solar Energy Workshop Series

You are invited to join for an introductory educational workshop exploring solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. Session speakers will include representatives from Virginia Cooperative Extension, Azimuth Solar Training, and others. Space is limited and registration is required (\$20), and includes lunch. The sessions are made possible with support from the Virginia Department of Energy.

Sessions are scheduled from 10 AM - 3 PM, and to be held:

- Wednesday, May 31: Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Painter, VA
- Thursday, June 1: Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Hampton, VA
- Friday, June 2: Clermont Farm in Berryville, VA

### 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](mailto: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):

May 15-3PM

June 19-3PM

July 17-3PM

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

Password: farmer

### 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

### Virginia USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Virginia NRCS has \$400,000 available through CIG State Program funding to stimulate the development and adoption of innovation conservation approaches and technologies with an emphasis on soil health and forestry. Proposals are due May 29th, 2023.

### Virginia USDA NRCS Conservation Partnership and Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreements

Virginia NRCS has announced the potential availability of funding for the purpose of leveraging NRCS resources to encourage collaboration with partners in providing strategic conservation delivery assistance and/or provide tools or data that enhance the ability of the agency to support conservation. Proposals are due May 28th, 2023.

### USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Funding Opportunity

USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production is soliciting proposals to host a composting and food waste reduction (CFWR) pilot project. Proposals are due June 15th, 2023.

### Farm Credit of the Virginias Charitable Contributions Fund Grant Program

Farm Credit of the Virginias is excited to announce the launch of our Charitable Contributions Fund for 2023! Eligible organizations that support agriculture and rural communities in our footprint are now able to apply for grant opportunities. Your organization may have an interest in the program, or you may work with organizations who may wish to apply. Please feel free to share information and help us promote this funding opportunity! Grant applications for the current funding cycle will be accepted May 1 through

June 30, 2023. Grants will be awarded in August, 2023, and will provide funding for projects in 2023-2024.

### National Hemp Report

The National Hemp Report is now available to download!

### 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](https://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.

## 4 the Soil Highlights



### Summer 2023 Soil Health Show & Tell On Farm Visits

Join the Virginia Soil Health Coalition for one of three Soil Health Show & Tell Farm Visits to learn about how soil health champion farmers across Virginia are implementing soil health on their operation, what challenges and opportunities they are realizing, and how you can most effectively work with producers to implement holistic soil health systems. All sessions are 10:30 am – 2:00 pm.

May 18: Broadfork Farm

June 6: Radical Roots Farm

July 18: Bramble Hollow Farm

### June 1, 1:00-3:00 pm: VA Soil Health Coalition Quarterly Meeting

All of the Coalition's Quarterly Meetings are open to anyone interested and are a great way to find out more about all things soil health in Virginia.

### Episode 23 - 9: Soil Health by Trial and Error with Mike Parrish with VCE Dinwiddie County

Farmers, gardeners, and homeowners can face different challenges in managing and building soil health. Mike Parrish, senior extension agent with Virginia Cooperative Extension in Dinwiddie County, encourages everyone to do their own research and side-by-side trials. Learning by trial and error allows for direct

comparisons and works in a specific context. Mike works closely with commercial growers who grow everything from corn, soybeans, cotton, cereal rye, and other agronomic crops, but also provides educational programming to homeowners and other landowners who might have a problem with soil compaction, water holding capacity, or other common soil ailments.

Mike emphasizes that cover crops are applicable to cropland, a garden, and even a lawn where the soil is ailing and not functioning as it should. For gardeners and homeowners, Mike advises everyone to take advantage of Virginia Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener programs and resources.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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!

## **May Events**

### **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, 1:00-2:30 pm: Berry Field Walk (Virginia Beach, VA)**

See the ongoing studies at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center on 1) Non-chemical alternative treatments to fumigation in strawberry, 2) Biostimulant treatments in strawberry production, 3) Evaluation of different strawberry varieties for botrytis control, and 4) New way of training blackberry on T-trellis.

### **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 18, 8:00 am -12:00 pm: 2023 Virginia Small Grain Field Day (Warsaw, VA)**

Join for the latest from the Virginia Tech small grain breeding team! CCA and pesticide credits will be available. BBQ and seafood lunch will be provided. Register to attend.

**May 22, 6:00-8:00 pm: Lettuce Make You Some Money (Warrenton, VA)**

Have you ever considered selling your produce? Come join the Fauquier Education Farmi in this workshop where they will go over a financial analysis of lettuce and discover how to make your crop profitable. Free, no registration required.

**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](mailto: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, 3:00-4:00 pm: A Unique UVA-Africulture-Aramark-4P-Local Food Hub Collaboration: Growing an Equitable Regional Food System with Institutional Purchasing Power to Support BIPOC farmers (Virtual)**

How might universities use their institutional procurement power to support sustainability goals while also supporting regional food systems and advancing food equity and justice? One answer might be that it is a “very long game” and takes pounds of persistence and patience by many passionate individuals who bring minds, hearts, and organizations together to work for common cause. You will learn about how a

unique partnership between the UVA Sustainable Food Collaborative, Aramark/UVA Dine, 4P Foods, Local Food Hub, and Carter Farms & Africulture, along with funding from the UVA Sustainability Committee, is pushing and stretching the concept of a bottom-line maximizing profit economical food supply chain into a something different – a more value-driven, relation-building proposition that is seeking to address the historical impacts of racism by supporting and working with BIPOC farmers to meet their needs, reduce barriers, and create advantages for participating in the university institutional food supply chain. Still in its very early stages, the initiative is already bearing fruit. Members of the partnership will share the vision and goal, challenges they've encountered, and innovations and strategies to keep the initiative moving forward.

#### 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.

**June 21, 10:00-2:00 pm: Garlic Harvest and Drying at Snickers Run Farm (Round Hill, VA)**

Join Future Harvest in Bluemont, Virginia for a short course in garlic presented by Peter Durand, owner and operator of Snickers Run Farm, and hands-on experience harvesting and drying. Using natural growing methods, the farm specializes in growing hard-neck garlic varieties such as their new, special “Bluemont Music,” German Extra Hardy, Chesnok Red, and Asian Tempest.

## July Events

**July 11, 3:30-6:30 pm: Flower Production Field Day (Rohrersville, MD)**

Join Future Harvest at Winding Root Farm for an in-depth field day on the inner mechanics of running a flower farm operation from production methods to diversifying sales modes.

**July 18, 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. Brent Noell, 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.

**July 19, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm: Summer Vegetable Marketing Tour –Raleigh State Farmers Market**

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

**July 20, 6:00-8:00 pm: Growing Ethnic Crops for Soil Health and Nutrient Density (Unionville, VA)**

Join us at Carter Farms to explore how various ethnic specialty crops impact soil health, soil erosion, resource management and native pollinators. We will learn about leaf nutrient analysis and how these plants compare to more traditionally grown produce in Virginia. We will also discuss Climate Smart Agriculture and how to practice it in your farming operations. Learn with Michael Carter Jr. of Carter Farms and Africulture as we dive deeper into the soil and the plants he grows.

### **July 27-29: Beef Up: Efficient, Progressive, Profitable, Beef (Blacksburg, VA)**

The School of Animal Sciences, in collaboration with VT Meat Center, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Virginia Beef Industry Council will be hosting Beef-Up on July 27-29 on campus. Beef-Up is a 3-day hands-on beef processing course aimed at improving the efficiencies and capacities of beef processing workforce and facilities within the Commonwealth. Through hands-on learning of both beef harvesting and fabrication, participants will be able to learn progressive processes and techniques to help improve their skill-sets and production goals. Furthermore, participants will engage in informative learning sessions covering an array of topics aimed at increasing current understanding of food safety and regulatory compliance, as well as methods for producing high quality beef that meets the modern consumers demands. Individuals who are seeking to expand their knowledge of beef processing, as well as individuals who are currently working within the beef processing industry, or those who are looking to enter it - are highly encouraged to attend. Spaces are limited and application process is required.

## **August Events**

### **August 22, 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. Marilyn Estes, 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.

### **August 22, 4:00-6:30 pm: USDA Information Session (Petersburg, VA)**

Learn about eligibility requirements and how to apply for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans as well as programs, service and cost share opportunities from other USDA agencies. Beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers can get help to prepare applications for farm ownership and operating loans and learn about the requirements for borrowing. Find out about the resources and current grants that are available from USDA, including the Rural Development Renewable Energy for America (REAP) grant and loan guarantee program, Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program, and Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs are also available. These programs can help you implement conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters.

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