



Newsblast

VIRGINIA
Beginning Farmer & Rancher
COALITION PROGRAM

May 4, 2021

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A Message from VBFRC

Greetings! hope this newsblast finds you, your farm, family, and community well as the growing season begins. 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

We would like to take this moment to recognize our Coalition Advisory Group. The group is comprised of farmers and service providers who meet with our management team monthly to provide guidance and input about the direction of our Coalition activities. They play a big role in supporting the efforts of the Coalition and we are very grateful for their engagement and commitment to the work of supporting beginning farmers and ranchers in Virginia.

So on behalf of the Coalition we send a big thank you to Andy Seibel, Anita Roberson, Brent Wills, Jay Dunbar, Eugene Triplett, Brent Noell, Jacob Gilley, and Pat Banks.

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Training Series

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!

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.

Summer Online Woodland Options for Landowners

This 12-week, self-paced course will allow you to gain an introductory level understanding of basic forest management principles and techniques and to use this understanding to become better land stewards. It is intended for private forest landowners of any acreage; this course is not intended for forest landowners who have substantial experience working alone or with natural resource professionals in the management of their forests. Teachers, local leaders, and interested citizens are also welcome to join.

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.

May Events

May 3: Conservation Incentives for Farmers

Join us for a webinar on conservation incentives programs for farmers and the interface between resource conservation and farm profit. Presented by Dr. Maria Bowman, USDA Economic Research Service.

May 5: High Tunnel Types and Construction

A high tunnel is an agricultural structure that allows a grower to extend the growing season and protect crops from adverse weather conditions. Workshop participants will learn about using high tunnels to grow horticulture crops. Topics covered will be structure selection, management, maintenance and costs associated with high tunnel production. Special emphasis will be placed on all phases of high tunnel construction. Participants will learn about proper crop selection for protected culture. Also covered will be resources for materials and supplies.

May 5: 2021 Fencing School Hot Springs, VA [In person]

Hosted by the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council and Virginia Cooperative Extension

May 6: Faces of Virginia: Real Farm Moms of Virginia

Faces of Virginia Farming is featuring a panel of Real Farm Moms of Virginia in their second episode on May 6th at 8 p.m. People can register by clicking on the link above and questions can be sent to facesofvafarming@vafb.com.

May 6: Pastured Poultry Workshop

The Small Farm Outreach Program will hold a virtual panel discussion in reference to small farmers raising and pasturing poultry. Topics will include layers versus breeders, space needed, disease management, predator management, processing and markets.

May 10: Small Farm 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.

May 11: Aquaculture for Farm Ponds

In Virginia, it is estimated that there are 80,000 farm ponds. Anyone having a farm pond can do aquaculture. The program will cover various aquaculture production systems, including cages and fish species suitable for these ponds. The program will cover the stocking of fish, feeding, and marketing, and selling of fish.

May 11: Advocating for Agriculture

Join the Knowledge Center as we host the 3rd part to our advocacy series. We will have speakers who will be focusing on communicating within your local and virtual communities. They will discuss how to get started, tools that are at your fingertips and even some stories from the trenches and how to come out more resilient on the other side. Registration for the event gives you access to view the panel videos and to participate in the live panel discussion.

May 11-12: 2021 Grazing School [In person]

A two-day intensive course to teach you everything you need to know to better manage grazing on your farm. Designed with beginning and experienced producers in mind. You will have hands-on opportunities to work with grazing tools and try out fencing materials. Features a hands-on exercise in which you will work with an instructor to begin developing a grazing plan outline for your farm.

May 12: Soil Health...To Go! Lunch & Learn

Join the Million Acre Challenge online for a quick bite of soil health information during this half hour lunch and learn. In this session, we chat with Washington, Iowa farmer Mitchell Hora. Mitchell is a 7th generation farmer and the Founder/CEO of Continuum Ag, a soil health data company. On their 700 acre farm, the Horas are 40+ years into no-till, 6 years into cover crops, and have experimented with relay-cropping, interseeding, 60" corn, diverse crops, and more.

May 12: Hispanic Field Day

Registration opening soon.

May 12: Flower Field Walk and Demonstration Part II

This month's flower field walk at Randolph Farm's SFOP plot with Susan Cheek will include demonstration of installing transplants into plastic, harvesting flowers from the field, and checking

irrigation system. The audience both young and old will have a chance to see more as the season progresses at the flower field at the farm. Flowers give a hope and beauty to look at as well of a means of making a little or a lot of extra cash if managed correctly. We are hoping to show our past, present, and future visitors of the farm a little ray of sunshine on the horizon.

May 12: Working Lands for Wildlife—The Long View: Sustaining Our Oak Forests

In this webinar, we will take the “Long View” by looking back in time to see how human history has influenced the oak forests we have today. This historical grounding will allow us to look forward and consider how our actions today can ensure we restore and sustain oak forests into the future.

May 13: Aquaponics

Aquaponics is the integration of growing plants and fish into one system. Find out how to begin small scale aquaponics systems for hobbyists, schools, and as an enterprise for a farm or urban setting. A small scale aquaponics unit will be demonstrated as part of the workshop.

May 14: Orange Women in Agriculture Gathering [In person]

This Gathering provides women farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

May 18: Buckingham Women in Agriculture Gathering [In person]

This Gathering provides women farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

May 18: Growing Ethnic Vegetables

Registration opening soon.

May 19: Cover Crop Field Day and Demonstration

Registration opening soon.

May 21: Wytheville Women in Agriculture Gathering [In person]

This Gathering provides women farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

May 21: Suffolk Women in Agriculture Gathering [In person]

This Gathering provides women farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

May 22: WV Forest Farming Field Day at Yew Mountain Center [In person]

The West Virginia Forest Farming Field Day is an in-person event at the Yew Mountain Center in Hillsboro, West Virginia. Six Groups of 10 will spend the day rotating through seven field stations, each with a different forest farming topic. COVID safety protocols will be in place and participants will be required to follow them; facemasks will be worn. This event will happen rain or shine!

May 27: Medicinal and Culinary Herb Workshop [In person]

Future Harvest and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore Small Farms Program invite you to experience a medicinal and culinary herb plot in action while you learn from herbalist Henriette Den Ouden about which plants are grown for their leaves, roots, flowers, or seeds, and more!

May 26: Hispanic Field Day

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

June Events

June 10: Retirement Planning Considerations for Farmers and Agribusiness operators

Join us for a webinar on retirement planning considerations for farmers and agribusiness operators. Presented by Dr. Travis Mountain, Assistant Professor of Financial and Economic Well-Being, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech.

June 14: Small Farm Orientation

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

June 15: Flower Field Walk and Demonstration

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

June 16: Marketing Your Farm Products (Promotion, Pricing, Packaging & Display)

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

June 19: Bees and Mushrooms—Farm Field Day

Participants will celebrate the upcoming national Pollinator Week by learning how native bees and managed bees enhance crop production. A farm tour of The Old Virginia Farm's new endeavor of growing several varieties of forest mushrooms will display the importance of giving bees a feeding location, along with helping protect bees from viruses. Local honey will be available. Experienced beekeeper and mentor with Highlands Beekeeping Association, Maria Jenkins, will be sharing her expertise and suggestions for ways you can help protect our vital pollinator partners. Free pollinator garden seeds will be available for participants.

June 24: USDA Information Session

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

June 30: Hispanic Field Day

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

Fall Events

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...

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...

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...