

Newsblast

May 1st, 2025

Photo by Tina Xinia

A Message from VBFRC

Step into Summer! As the days grow longer and the season shifts into full bloom, this month's NewsBlast is packed with exciting opportunities to support your agricultural journey. Explore upcoming grants, educational series, immersive farm tours, and engaging events designed to inspire and equip you. Dig in, gear up, and make this summer one to grow on!

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

**Don't miss
Virginia State University's
Farmer Field Day!!**

May 21, 2025
7 AM to 2 PM
VSU Randolph Farm

This will be a dynamic, hands-on event designed for Virginia farm producers.

**Learn more and register here:
[VSU FIELD DAY](#)**

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

Emergency Resilience Grant – American Farmland Trust

The AFT Brighter Future Fund offered Emergency Resilience Grants of up to \$10,000 for farmers facing financial hardship due to disasters, market loss, or funding delays. Priority was given to small to mid-size, for-profit farms practicing environmental stewardship. Applications closed April 26, but future opportunities may be announced.

Repeal of Virginia's Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine

Effective March 27, 2025, the Virginia Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine has officially been repealed. This action removes all regulatory requirements for intrastate movement of the spotted lanternfly or associated articles within Virginia. However, businesses must still comply with regulations from other states or countries when shipping potentially infested products across borders. Originally established in 2019 to contain the spread in Frederick County and the City of Winchester, the quarantine expanded over time to 12 counties and 10 cities. With spotted lanternfly populations now confirmed in 67 localities across Virginia, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) determined the quarantine is no longer effective. Businesses may still need permits, compliance agreements, or phytosanitary certificates for interstate commerce. For more information contact the VDACS Office of Plant Industry Services at (804) 786-3515.

Now Hiring: Coalition Assistant Coordinator – Virginia Soil Health Coalition

Virginia Tech is seeking an Education and Outreach Specialist to support the Virginia Soil Health Coalition. This role involves coordinating partnerships, managing communications, and leading outreach and education initiatives that promote soil health across the state. Responsibilities include organizing coalition meetings and events, creating content, and engaging farmers, conservation professionals, landowners, and policymakers. Ideal candidates will bring strong communication and project coordination skills, along with a passion for sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation. years.

James River Buffer Program – Free Riparian Forest Buffers for Farmers

If your farm is located within the James River watershed, you may be eligible for a free riparian forest buffer to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and support farm biodiversity. The James River Association, Virginia Department of Forestry, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation are partnering with farmers and landowners to design, install, and maintain forest buffers for three years at no cost. The program allows you to select tree species, including income-generating options like sugar maple for syrup production. Learn more and get involved today!

Farm Crew (Seasonal) – Glade Road Growing

Glade Road Growing, a Certified Naturally Grown farm in Blacksburg, is hiring seasonal farm crew members to assist with vegetable production, pasture-raised pork and poultry, and farm stand operations. No agricultural experience is required—just a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and willingness to learn. Candidates must be physically fit, adaptable, reliable, and able to lift 40 lbs. Benefits include free produce, homemade lunches (M-F), discounted farm meats, and meal discounts at Rising Silo Brewery.

Adopt an Established Market Garden Near Charlottesville!

A rare opportunity awaits an experienced grower/entrepreneur to take over an established ¼-acre market garden—without land or major infrastructure costs! This unique arrangement allows the tenant farmer to grow and sell rent-free, retaining most of the net profits, with the goal of ensuring the garden's long-term sustainability. Key Features: Organic/regenerative practices required, including no/low-till methods, Fenced plot with irrigation in place, Well-established beds ready for cultivation, Ideal for a dedicated farmer looking to expand or establish their own market garden operation. If interested, please contact John Murphy at resolutionfarms@gmail.com.

Wholesale Market Producer Survey: Now Open (Online)

Black, Hispanic, and Tribal farmers and ranchers are invited to share their wholesale needs and experiences by participating in this important survey. Conducted by researchers from Virginia Tech and the Illinois Institute of Technology, this project aims to understand the distinct technical assistance needs of producers when accessing and scaling into wholesale markets. For more information or assistance, please contact Pratyosh Kashyap at pratyosh@vt.edu or Weslyne Ashton at washton@iit.edu.

We Want Your Feedback on the Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Program!

Your input is vital to strengthening the Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Program. Whether you currently sell through the program or not, your feedback will help shape its future and ensure it meets the needs of Virginia's beef producers.

Series

Ask an Agroforester Spring Webinar Series: Now Open for Registration (Online)

Join Appalachian Sustainable Development and the Farming with Trees Collective for a free spring webinar series exploring the intersections of agroforestry, advocacy, land stewardship, and community voices. All sessions are held from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM ET and feature expert speakers and live farmer panels.

- Thursday, May 8, 2025: Findings from FWT's Farmer Listening Sessions – With Steve Gabriel (Wellspring Forest Farm)
- Wednesday, May 14, 2025: Findings from FWT's Nurseries Listening Sessions – With Jonathan McRay (Silver Run Forest Farm)

Backyard Poultry Zoom Series: Now Open for Registration (Online)

Join us for this engaging Zoom series on backyard poultry care and management. Each session is free and will be held from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM ET.

- Thursday, May 8, 2025: Going to the Market: Regulations & More

Agroforestry Trainings for Natural Resource Professionals: Registration Open (Multi-State)

Are you a land manager or natural resource advisor looking to strengthen your agroforestry knowledge? This professional development series—led by Appalachian Sustainable Development and partners—offers in-person and online training on silvopasture, alley cropping, and forest farming fundamentals. Ideal for those providing technical assistance in forestry and land stewardship.

- Tuesday, May 13, 2025: Silvopasture Fundamentals (Old Fort, NC)
- Tuesday, May 27, 2025: Silvopasture Fundamentals (Berea, KY)
- Tuesday, June 17, 2025: Alley Cropping Fundamentals (Asheville area, NC)
- Tuesday, June 24, 2025: Silvopasture Fundamentals (Goldsboro, NC)
- Tuesday, July 8, 2025: Silvopasture Fundamentals (Raphine, VA)
- August TBD: Forest Farming Intensive (VA – Details coming soon)
- Friday, September 26, 2025: Silvopasture Fundamentals (Carthage, TN)

2025 Agroforestry Farm Tour Series: Now Open for Registration (Multi-State)

Join Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) for a regional tour series showcasing silvopasture, alley cropping, forest farming, and more. These on-farm events highlight how producers have successfully integrated trees and shrubs into their farming operations to support sustainability and productivity. Space is limited—register early to reserve your spot!

- Wednesday, May 14, 2025: Forest Farming at BC Farm (Estill County, KY)
- Tuesday, June 3, 2025: Alley Cropping at ASD (Bristol, VA)
- Friday, June 13, 2025: Silvopasture at Bellaire Farm (Charlottesville, VA)
- Wednesday, July 30, 2025: Forest Farming at Boring Roots and Herbs (Dunlap, TN)
- Thursday, September 25, 2025: Silvopasture at Caney Fork Farm (Carthage, TN)

4 the Soil Highlights



Episode S5 - E7: Grow-It-Yourself (GIY) with Nicky Schauder of Permaculture Gardens (Podcast Part 1)

Nicky Schauder and her family founded Permaculture Gardens to make growing food and permaculture practices accessible for all—especially families and children. In this episode of *4 The Soil: A Conversation*, Nicky shares her journey of continuous learning and hands-on experimentation with hosts Mary Sketch Bryant, Marian Dalke, and Jeff Ishee. As a two-time recipient of USDA-SARE Producer Grants, Nicky offers insight into how research, compost tea, and permaculture can transform home gardening into a resilient, community-rooted practice.

Episode S5 - E8: Ins and Outs of Compost Tea with Nicky Schauder of Permaculture Gardens (Part 2)

In this follow-up episode of *4 The Soil: A Conversation*, Nicky Schauder continues sharing her experience with permaculture and dives deep into the science behind compost tea. Joining Mary Sketch Bryant, Marian Dalke, and Jeff Ishee, Nicky discusses her USDA-SARE funded research focused on compost tea's effects on plant growth, yield, soil biodiversity, and soil health stability. Tune in to hear how she tested whether compost tea could help certain leafy vegetables grow bigger—and what she discovered along the way.

4 the Soil Blog

Check out the latest 4 the Soil blog!

May

May 2, 9:00AM–11:00AM: Marketing Tour of the Central Virginia Produce Auction (Dillwyn, VA)

Join this informative tour of the Central Virginia Wholesale Farmers Market to explore small-volume auction marketing strategies. Attendees will observe how the auction operates, learn about market standards, and consider how this model can complement broader farm marketing plans. This opportunity is ideal for producers seeking diversified sales approaches.

May 3, 9:00AM–2:00PM: AgCULTURE Harmony Grove Community Build (Petersburg, VA)

Join Virginia State University for a celebration of AgCULTURE and the construction of “Harmony Grove” at the Crimson Garden. As part of the Lead to Change project, this tea house and garden space will support the community with wellness teas and a tranquil area for reflection and connection.

May 3, 9:00AM–12:00PM: VSU SFOP Seed Exchange (Afton, VA)

Join the Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program for a community seed exchange supporting small and limited resource farms. This event will include free seeds, informational outreach, and networking opportunities. Attendees are encouraged to bring clearly labeled, prepackaged excess seeds to share. Thanks to Wanda Johnson for coordinating generous seed donations.

May 5, 9:00AM–11:00AM: Increasing Soil Health with Cover Crops (Virginia Beach, VA)

Join this hands-on field demonstration to explore how cover crops can boost soil health and support resilient farming systems. Participants will learn how to begin the “Spiral of Soil Health,” enhancing nutrient uptake, reducing erosion, and improving drought resistance. This workshop is ideal for farmers seeking sustainable, soil-focused solutions to strengthen their crop production.

May 5 - 6, 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training (Online)

Virginia fruit and vegetable farms can now access the highly discounted Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training, fulfilling the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule training requirement. Thanks to VDACS funding, the registration fee is currently only \$50 for Virginia farms, and participants will receive a lifetime certificate.

May 6, 1:00PM–2:30PM: So You Want to Learn About Ticks? (Farmville, VA)

Learn how to identify, prevent, and treat tick-borne diseases in Virginia at this educational program led by Agriculture Agent Erin Small. The session will cover transmission and protection strategies for pets and livestock, and attendees will receive a “tick kit.” Local veterinarians will be on hand to answer questions. Registration is \$5. To sign up, contact Erin Small at erins96@vt.edu or call (434) 392-0300 by April 30.

May 7, 9:00AM–11:30AM: Management of Nutrients for Farmers (Ettrick, VA)

Join this educational session to learn how nutrient management strategies can improve yields, save money, and protect the environment. The workshop will cover best practices for timing, placement, and application rates of nutrients to support healthy soils and productive crops. A must-attend for farmers looking to optimize inputs while maintaining environmental stewardship.

May 7, 9:00AM–12:00PM: Agricultural Tax & Agribusiness Development (Milford, VA)

Join the Tennie Agriculture Group for a practical workshop focused on tax and accounting strategies tailored to farmers, ranchers, and urban growers. This session will address common financial challenges in agriculture and provide tools to support sustainability, scalability, and profitability in your operation.

May 7, 4:00PM–6:00PM: Introduction to Permaculture (VSU Randolph Farm, Petersburg, VA)

Explore the foundational principles of permaculture in this interactive workshop led by Patrick Johnson of Nanih Farm and Garden Inc. Learn how permaculture applies ecological design and systems thinking to farming and urban agriculture, with a focus on the ethics of Care for People, Care for the Earth, and Fair Share.

May 7–9: Virginia Forestry Summit (Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA)

Join forestry professionals, landowners, and natural resource experts for the *Virginia Forestry Summit*, a premier event featuring discussions on forestry management, conservation, and industry trends. This three-day gathering offers educational sessions, networking opportunities, and a special Urban Forestry Tour exploring the green spaces of Roanoke and Salem.

May 9, 10:30AM–2:00PM: Pond Management Program (Farmville, VA)

Join Virginia Cooperative Extension for a practical, hands-on workshop covering pond management essentials. Learn to control and identify aquatic weeds, manage your fish population, and improve water quality. Bring a sample of your aquatic weeds in a ziplock bag for personalized identification and treatment recommendations.

May 9, 12:30pm – 4:30pm: Urban Forestry Tour (Roanoke, VA)

Experience an in-depth tour of Roanoke's urban forestry efforts, including Lunch and a guided tour at the historic Fishburn Mansion, featuring insights on Missouri Gravel Beds, tree propagation, and community gardens. A visit to Virginia Western Community College, Bee Campus USA, with a guided tour of their arboretum. A stop at Sherwood Memorial Park in Salem to learn about Virginia's Big Tree Program, see the Champion Atlas cedar, and discuss efforts to protect urban ash trees from the emerald ash borer. Registration opens in March. Contact Jennifer Gagnon, jgagnon@vt.edu, 540-231-6391 for more information.

May 14, 9:00AM–11:00AM: Agriculture Community Outreach (McCrum Parking Lot, Lexington, VA)

Join USDA Farm Service Agency and partners for a community outreach event focused on farm loan programs and cost-share opportunities. Learn about eligibility for FSA direct and guaranteed loans, and get assistance with applications for farm ownership and operating loans. Support is available for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.

May 14, 1:30PM–4:30PM: Garlic Workshop and Field Demo – From Clove to Market (Petersburg, VA)

Join Dr. Sanjun Gu, Horticulture Specialist and Southern SARE Coordinator, for a hands-on garlic workshop covering everything from planting to post-harvest. This session is ideal for farmers, gardeners, and garlic enthusiasts interested in improving production and marketing techniques.

May 15, 7:30AM–5:30PM: Spring Farmer Market Tour 2025 (Raleigh, NC)

New and beginning farmers, ranchers, and military veterans are invited on a bus tour to the State Farmers Market in Raleigh, NC. Explore one of the nation's top agricultural markets, meet vendors, and learn retail and wholesale marketing techniques for farm products. The market spans over 75 acres and features produce, meats, garden goods, and more from across North Carolina.

May 15, 9:00AM–4:00PM: Teaching Forestry in Concrete Jungles Urban Roots Workshop (Petersburg, VA)

Educators, 4-H leaders, and community educators are invited to this dynamic one-day workshop focused on bringing forestry education to urban classrooms. Learn hands-on, age-appropriate activities for teaching K–8 students, practice outdoor teaching techniques, and gain ready-to-use resources for engaging youth in city settings.

May 15, 9:00AM–12:00PM: High Tunnel Production (Rockingham, VA)

Join VSU Small Farm Outreach Program and NRCS for a hands-on workshop exploring high tunnel vegetable production. Participants will receive technical guidance from a high tunnel specialist, hear firsthand insights from an organic grower at Second Mountain Farm, and learn about cost-share opportunities for high tunnel installation.

May 15 & 22, 6:30PM–9:00PM: Protecting Family Land – Legacy Planning for Farm and Forest Owners (Abingdon, VA)

Join this two-part workshop to learn strategies for passing land to future generations while saving money and maintaining rural land use. Participants will receive a copy of *Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners* and enjoy dinner during the session. Cost: \$20 for one person, \$15 for each additional family member.

May 16, 8:30AM–12:00PM: Hampton Seafood Industry Tour (Hampton, VA)

Join this behind-the-scenes tour of Virginia's seafood sector, featuring visits to LD Amory Seafood, Inc., Graham & Rollins, Inc., and the Virginia Seafood AREC. Learn about wholesale seafood operations, aquaculture research, and the legacy of East Coast crab processing. This immersive experience offers insights into seafood marketing, production, and sustainability from industry leaders.

May 16, 12:00PM–2:00PM: How to Create Worm Castings Workshop (Petersburg, VA)

Discover how worm castings can improve soil health by enhancing water retention, aeration, and nutrient availability. This hands-on workshop will guide participants through the benefits of worm castings and demonstrate how to produce them using different worm species. Perfect for gardeners, farmers, and educators interested in sustainable soil amendments.

May 17: CompostFest 2025 (Star City Compost & Lick Run Farm, Roanoke, VA)

Mark your calendar for the second annual CompostFest! Join us for a full day of community conversations, a plant walk with Eric Lewis, compost facility tours, music, food, art, and family-friendly fun. This year's event also celebrates Davey's 40th birthday and supports community permaculture projects and gardens through donation-based ticket sales. Stay tuned for the official flyer and full event schedule.

May 17, 9:00AM–1:00PM: Slade Farms Tour with Clif Slade (Surry County, VA)

Join third-generation farmer and retired VSU Extension agent Clif Slade for a guided tour of Slade Farms, where he transitioned from large-scale farming to Certified Organic production. Explore heirloom seed plots, garlic harvesting, cover crop selection, weed management strategies, and post-harvest practices. Slade supplies crops to Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance. This event is free and open to the public.

May 17, 10:00AM–12:00PM: 5 Pillar Meats Facility Tour (Farmville, VA)

Start at the Prince Edward County Extension Office for a guided discussion on preparing livestock for low-stress, value-added processing. Then travel to 5 Pillar Meats, a family-owned USDA-certified facility serving traditional and Halal markets, for an in-depth tour of their operations. Learn how to complete custom processing forms and understand the ins and outs of small-scale meat processing.

May 17, 1:00PM–3:00PM: Birds, Bees, & Urban Trees Workshop (Petersburg, VA)

Take a deep dive into the relationships, benefits, and functions of birds, bees, and urban trees within urban forestry ecosystems. Hosted at VSU Randolph Farm, this engaging workshop explores how these vital species interact and how urban development impacts them.

May 19, 3:00PM–6:00PM: May Farm Tour with Lazy Pigg Farm (Ferrum, VA)

Join the Roanoke Foodshed Network, the Virginia Association for Biological Farming, and partners for a farm tour at Lazy Pigg Farm, a 45-acre multigenerational operation in Franklin County. Dana and Sean Lydon raise Dexter cattle, Katahdin sheep, and laying hens using intensive rotational grazing. Tour highlights include a new five-acre silvopasture system and perennial crops grown for the Blue Ridge Flower Exchange.

May 20, 9:00AM–12:00PM: Small Farm Orientation (Virtual or Newport News, VA)

New to farming? This two-hour introductory workshop is designed for farmers with 0–5 years of experience. Join VSU Small Farm Outreach Program's Ben Dukes and Derrick Gooden, along with Dr. Theresa Nartea, to learn the steps for building a productive and profitable farm operation. Participants will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual. Attend virtually or in person at 633 20th St., Newport News.

May 21, 7:00AM–2:00PM: VSU Farmer Field Day (VSU Randolph Farm, Petersburg, VA)

Join Virginia State University for an exciting hands-on field day designed for Virginia farm producers. Explore practical demonstrations, research updates, and networking opportunities tailored to small and mid-sized farms across the state.

May 21, 9:00AM–11:00AM: Grazing and Pasture Management for Small Farmers (Ettrick, VA)

Discover how effective pasture management can improve soil health, increase weight gains, enhance meat quality, and reduce supplemental feeding. This workshop will introduce practical grazing techniques for maintaining healthy forage year-round and boosting herd performance. Space is limited to 30 participants.

May 21, 10:00AM–11:30AM: Growers Protections under PACA (Online – Microsoft Teams)

Learn how The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) protects growers and businesses dealing in fresh and frozen produce. This online session will explain how PACA enforces fair business practices, helps resolve disputes, and supports growers' rights in the produce industry. Topics include trade terms, payment requirements, and federal inspection certificates

May 24, 10:00AM–12:00PM: Native Tree Species Benefits and Maintenance (Rapidan, VA)

Join this hands-on workshop at the Rappahannock Conservation Nursery to explore the importance of native tree species on farms. Participants will learn about pruning, irrigation, and other key tree maintenance practices that support productivity and long-term tree health.

May 27, 10:00AM–1:00PM: Cut Flower 360 Discussion Group – Session 3 (Freckled Flower Farm, Montpelier, VA)

Join River City Flower Exchange, Freckled Flower Farm, and Breemar Flower Farm for Session 3 of the Cut Flower 360 Discussion Group, focused on *Building a Community of Producers*. This session highlights farmer collaboration, strategic growing, and market niche development. Lunch is included.

May 28, 6:30PM–8:00PM: Growing Ethnic Vegetables in a High Tunnel (Unionville, VA)

Join Michael Carter Jr. of Carter Farms for a hands-on workshop on best practices for growing ethnic vegetables in high tunnels. This session will cover soil preparation, seed selection, spacing, and planting methods—highlighting profitable crops and production strategies for niche markets. The event takes place on-site at Carter Farms.

May 29, 1:30PM–4:00PM: Faba Bean Field Day (VSU Agricultural Research Station, Petersburg, VA)

Enjoy a hands-on experience learning how to grow, harvest, and cook with VSU-grown faba beans. Dr.

Shahram Torabian will share exciting cultivar research, while Dr. Theresa Nartea will highlight marketing and recipe ideas. Participants will harvest faba beans to take home and receive a free seed packet.

May 29, 2025, 2:00PM – 3:00PM ET: Supporting BIPOC Farmers Through Institutional Procurement (Virtual)

Join the University of Virginia and UVA's Sustainable Food Collaborative for a virtual discussion on how they're increasing local procurement from BIPOC farmers. Hear from Michael Carter Jr. (Carter Farms & Africulture), Allie Berry (Aramark/UVA Dining), and Tom McDougall (4P Foods) as they share how UVA's BIPOC Procurement Program connects minority producers with institutional buyers, supports chef-producer relationships, and educates culinary teams on sourcing and using fresh, local foods.

May 29, 3:00PM–4:00PM: Revisiting UVA's BIPOC Procurement Initiative (Online)

Join the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation for the Spring 2025 Fellows Speaker Series. This virtual session explores the successes, challenges, and future opportunities of the University of Virginia's BIPOC Procurement Initiative to increase institutional purchasing from BIPOC farmers and food businesses. Hear from community experts and stakeholders working to build more equitable food systems.

May 30–31: Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Abingdon, VA)

Join the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension for the *Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat*, designed for landowners new to forest management. This retreat provides valuable insights into both hardwood and pine forest management while offering opportunities to connect with natural resource professionals and fellow landowners. Participants will gain hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more, as well as receive essential information on estate planning, management planning, and certification. Agenda and registration will be available in March. Stay tuned for more details!

June

June 1, 2:00PM–3:30PM: Farm Profitability Workshop (The Brambleton Center, Roanoke, VA)

Join ANR agent Shawn Jadrnicek and CPA Kevin C. Jones for a workshop focused on improving farm profitability through direct-to-consumer strategies. The session will review market data, research on farmers market sales, and the role of CSA programs. Case studies and regional insights will be shared, with time for questions and discussion.

June 2, 1:00PM & June 3, 9:00AM: Backyard Poultry Processing Workshop (Blacksburg, VA)

Join Virginia Cooperative Extension for a hands-on backyard poultry processing workshop. Each \$75 registration includes lunch and two chickens to process and take home. Choose from two sessions: June 2 at 1PM or June 3 at 9AM. Limit 10 participants per session.

June 2, 6:00PM–8:00PM: Solar Energy on Small Farms (Fredericksburg, VA)

Join Farmer Thomas Roberson for an on-farm discussion about using solar energy to support small-scale agriculture. Learn how he powers electric fencing, cools high tunnels, and operates a well on his 10-acre farm. This workshop will cover solar system design basics, functionality, and cost-effective applications for small farms.

June 4, 9:00AM–12:00PM: Basic Soil Science for Farmers (Ettrick, VA)

Gain a deeper understanding of Virginia's diverse soils in this interactive workshop. Learn about soil formation, mineral composition, particle size, and structure—and how these factors influence plant growth. The session will also explore organic matter, soil-water relationships, and how to use the Soil Survey for better decision-making on your farm.

June 6, 10:00AM–1:00PM: Pasture Walk (Warfield, VA)

Take a guided walk through working pastures to learn about prescribed grazing practices, soil health improvements, and using sheep for brush and weed control. This informal, educational event will also cover fencing options and provide information on DCR Soil and Water Conservation and NRCS programs.

June 6, 12:00PM–2:00PM: The Basics of Biochar (VSU Randolph Farm, Petersburg, VA)

Learn how biochar—made from hardwood charcoal and rich in microbial life—can rejuvenate poor soils and boost nutrient capacity. This introductory workshop will explore the history, preparation, and practical applications of biochar as a sustainable soil amendment.

June 11–12, 9:00AM–4:00PM: From Traditional to Digital Forestry (Petersburg, VA)

This two-day workshop offers practical skills and insights for farmers, landowners, and enthusiasts interested in both traditional and modern forestry methods. Participants will explore foundational practices alongside emerging digital technologies transforming agriculture and forestry. Ideal for anyone eager to expand their land management knowledge through hands-on learning.

July

July 21–23, 2025: Beef Cattle University (The Inn at Virginia Tech & VT German Club, Blacksburg, VA)

We are thrilled to announce Beef Cattle University 2025, a premier event bringing together beef producers, industry leaders, and experts for three days of education, networking, and innovation. This all-inclusive experience will feature engaging educational sessions on herd health, marketing, nutrition, business management, reproduction, and meat science. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the latest advancements in beef industry technology through a vibrant trade show, connect with fellow producers during entertainment and networking opportunities, and gain valuable insights to empower and inspire their work in the beef industry.

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