



# Newsblast

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February 26, 2020

## *A Message from VBFRC*

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Wishing you well as Spring takes root here in Virginia. As you prepare for warmer weather, check out some of these amazing events and opportunities.

If you are interested in an event listed below, you can find more details by clicking link that will take you to flyers and websites, or by visiting the Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition website ([Click here](#)). 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](mailto:ketrozzo@vt.edu)

## *Partner Highlights*

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Reserve your spot for the Veteran Farmers Conference “Boots to Roots” held at Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia from March 17-18!

**\*\*[Click here for the link](#)\*\***

Join veteran farmers, landowners and agriculture professionals for an opportunity to hear about available resources, smart business strategies, and successful production practices—especially for those new and beginning farmers who want to learn more about what it takes to farm profitability and sustainability.

# Webinars

## [Agritourism Safety in Virginia Webinar Recording](#)

In case you missed Livvy Preisser's webinar on February 12, we have posted the recording and powerpoint slides on the Virginia Beginning Farmer Website. An overview of Virginia Agritourism, as well as the importance of the industry to the Commonwealth, was presented. Agritourism Safety was explained and discussed for producers that have agritourism operations or producers that are possibly looking to diversify and begin an agritourism operation. Topics included: insurance, signage, employee and visitor safety, and much more.

## [Risky Business: Managing Risk for Produce Success Webinar Series Recording](#)

Appalachian Sustainable Development is offering a series of webinars for produce farms in central Appalachia and beyond. These webinars will present foundational concepts in a number of topics and point farmers to reliable resources to learn more and implement practices on the farm. Webinars will be held from 6 PM to 8 PM on the scheduled day. Past webinars are archived on website and are available for free streaming.

# 2020 Series

## [The Fauquier Education Farm 2020 Workshop Series \(Warrenton, VA\)](#)

The Fauquier Education Farm has announced their 2020 workshop series including topics such as heirloom tomatoes, regenerative agriculture, cut flowers, and 3-D Deer fencing. See their full schedule at the link above.

## [VSU's Small Farm Educational Outreach Programs from January to June 2020](#)

These educational workshop, demonstrations, and tours across the state are offered by Virginia State University and Virginia Cooperative Extension and intended to help pave the way to sustainable farming.

# New Listservs!

## **Central Appalachian Young Farmers Coalition Listserv**

Central Appalachian Young Farmers Coalition is a new network of farmers in southwest Virginia and the surrounding areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and North Carolina. It is a chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition ([www.youngfarmers.org](http://www.youngfarmers.org)) and in the beginning stages of development. If you would like to join and/or participate in the formation of this chapter, please subscribe to the google group listserv by emailing [erdobson7@gmail.com](mailto:erdobson7@gmail.com) with subject "CentApp NYFC listserv". They will share meeting information, educational opportunities, volunteer events, and relevant news. Their first gathering will be **Sunday, March 22** in the Blacksburg/Christiansburg area, details TBD. Further information will be shared over the listserv.

## **Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation Listserv**

The Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation is launching a new listserv to connect practitioners, researchers, and community members who focus on food systems and community transformation work. [Click here for more information about the Center.](#) If you would like to join the listserv, please request to be added by emailing Katie Trozzo at [ketrozzo@vt.edu](mailto:ketrozzo@vt.edu) with the subject line "Join Center listserv."

# March 2020

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## [Urban Agriculture Certification Course March to May 2020 \(Petersburg, VA\)](#)

Registration is now open for the 12-weeks Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certificate Program. The program **starts on March 7th** and runs through May 30th, 2020. Instruction consists of morning lectures and afternoon hands-on outdoor and lab activities. The registration fee is \$250 payable by the February 28th deadline.

## [Allegheny Mountain Institute's 2020 Farm and Food Fellowship](#)

The Allegheny Mountain Institute is accepting applications for their 2020 fellowship program until **March 9, 2020**. AMI's fully sponsored 18-month Fellowship prepares and empowers individuals to become teachers and ambassadors for a more vibrant and accessible local food system. Fellows spend six months in immersive training (Phase I) and one year in non-profit service (Phase II).

## [FSA Application Deadline on March 16th](#)

If you have not already visited your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office to make your election for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and to sign your annual enrollment contract, you should call and make your appointment now. March 16, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

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## [March 5: Prince Edward County Cannery Open House \(Farmville, VA\)](#)

Virginia Food Works is hosting an Open House on March 5th from 4-7pm at the Prince Edward County Cannery. They operate the commercial operations of the cannery, and their mission is to guide food producers in taking their product from recipe to retail. The Open House is a chance for farmers, food entrepreneurs, and home canners to tour the facility, taste samples of in-house recipes, see a demonstration, and learn more about VFW's services.

## [March 6-8: The Organic Growers School Spring Conference \(Mars Hill, NC\)](#)

"The Spring Conference is a one-of-a-kind event that offers regionally specific workshops on organic growing and sustainable living. Our mission is to provide down-to-earth, practical advice while remaining affordable and accessible."

## [March 12: Virginia Berry School \(Petersburg, VA\)](#)

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 12: 51<sup>st</sup> Virginia Pork Industry Conference \(Goochland, VA\)](#)

The Fifty-first Virginia Pork Industry Conference will be held March 12, 2020 at the new Cultural & Educational Center in Goochland, VA. There will be a morning session with interest to all pork producers and an afternoon session specific for Small-scale and Niche Market pig farmers. There will also be a few vendors present and many educational displays that will be staffed by people that can answer your questions. The cost of the meeting is only \$10 per person and pre-registration by March 5, 2020 is required. Click the link in the header here for the informational brochure and registration form.

## [March 17-18: Veteran Farmers Conference: Boots to Roots \(Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA\)](#)

Join veteran farmers, landowners and agriculture professionals for an opportunity to hear about available resources, smart business strategies, and successful production practices—especially for those new and beginning farmers who want to learn more about what it takes to farm profitability and sustainability. Register soon to reserve your spot! Click the link in the header for more information.

## [March 25-May 2: An Introduction to Getting Your Hand Dirty \(Warrenton, VA\)](#)

The Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program (NPBFP) is pleased to offer, An Introduction to Getting Your Hands Dirty. This is a 6 week course with 2 Saturday labs at the Fauquier Education Farm and one farm tour. This course is

intended for serious gardeners and Beginning Farmers who want to sharpen their production skills by broadening their basic level knowledge of the tools and concepts of professional crop production. ([Click here for the Program Flier](#)).

### **[March 30-April 1: Virginia Agritourism Conference \(Smithfield, VA\)](#)**

A two-day conference including agritourism farm tours and educational programs for beginning agritourism producers, experienced agritourism producers and marketing programs. Monday-Farm Tours will tour Surry, Isle of Wight, Suffolk and Southampton Agritourism operations. Tuesday-Wednesday will offer tracks for beginning agritourism producers, experienced agritourism producers and marketing programs. Click the link in the header for more details and/or the link for the program schedule ([Click here for the program schedule](#)).

## April 2020

### **[April 9: Art, Community, Ecology, and Health: Brandi and Carlton Turner \(Blacksburg, VA\)](#)**

At 4:00pm at the Blacksburg Public Library, Brandi and Carlton Turner will speak on using the arts and agriculture to support rural community, cultural, and economic development in their hometown, Utica, MS. They are leaders in a new research project that will investigate how creative approaches to community development may tackle the problem of access to healthy food in Utica, a low and moderate income, predominantly Black rural community in Mississippi.

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) and the Southern Risk Management Education Center Grant. For more information about the program or funding, contact Kim Niewolny, Program Director and Extension Specialist, at [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu) or 540-231-5784.